

Eric Mauldin, Harbormaster, May 27, 2025

Transcript

Narrator:

You've tuned in to another edition of The Break Room. A weekly conversation about how the city of Saint Augustine works from those who do the work every day hosted by the City of Saint Augustine's Communications Director, Melissa Wissel. The Break Room offers a closer look at the different city departments and provides updates on current and upcoming projects and events and now your host Melissa Wissel.

Melissa Wissel:

Thanks for tuning in I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications Director for the City of Saint Augustine and we are officially into the summer building season school's out and Memorial Day is in our wake so it seems appropriate to head down to the Saint Augustine municipal Marina and hear from the city's harbormaster Eric Mauldin, Eric welcome back.

Eric Mauldin:

Oh thanks for having me back again.

Melissa Wissel:

It's a great holiday weekend it's time to get out on the water you guys are busy how is Memorial Day down there.

Eric Mauldin:

The weather's been beautiful really most of the spring weather has been really nice haven't had a whole lot of rain so it's been great boating weather for everyone luckily.

Melissa Wissel:

You come about this time every year when I was going through my notes you were here just about a year ago we had just dedicated harbormaster park in memory of Sam Duckwitz our beloved harbor master friend of ours and we also had a Spanish replica of Magellan 's ship staying at the Marina no Magellan ships this year.

Eric Mauldin:

No not this year there's talks and thoughts about maybe getting some other ships not this year but possibly next. Stay tuned on that.

Melissa Wissel:

And that's because you've got a lot coming up with repairs changes improvements.

Eric Mauldin:

Yes typical to just about every hurricane season for us it's about 10 times worse on the water than it is on the land so we occur quite a bit of damage each hurricane when they get close and unfortunately again we got damage from hurricane Milton that caused us to do more repairs to our breakwater dock.

Melissa Wissel:

You've got some really good stuff coming we have you and I were talking the other day we've got some actually some pretty significant Marina improvements you want to talk about that a little bit.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah yeah I'll. Go back to the dock for a second too. We did do repairs a little over a year ago year and a half ago and we did some mitigation efforts during that I just want to say all those mitigation efforts did not get damaged those actually helped save the dock even further so this storm damaged other areas of dock and then now we're looking at mitigation

for those areas of strictness so each storm we strengthen just a little bit more different areas until we will have hopefully a. Fully strengthened dock ready for them yes yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

Fully strengthened right and some of that is the one of those was new pilings I recall huge pilings.

Eric Mauldin:

Yes yes yeah we did uh 26 new pilings further embedment further height and larger stronger materials and those that amazing through the storm actually held the dock together very well.

Melissa Wissel:

If you've never noticed if you ever if those are your listening, you drive across the bridge of lions and any type of windy weather? Look North. And then look South there right at the Marina just at how calm it is in that base and that's the whole point of what it does.

Eric Mauldin:

A huge difference makes a huge difference.

Melissa Wissel:

Speaking about docks and moorings or looking out at the marina give us a reminder if you would have just come off Memorial Day let's talk a little bit about some of what you see in terms of boating activity lots of people on the water when the weather is beautiful particularly when summertime comes over to be out on the water sunny hot days swimming around what.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

What are some of the bigger things that we need to remind our listeners of our boating safety?

Eric Mauldin:

Really and it's a lot of the common sense issues you know looking at the weather making sure the weather forecast may be nice when you put the boat in the water boat there. Could be a forecast later in the day summer time can be this afternoon thunderstorms that roll in high winds lightning thunderstorms all that so you really gotta be mindful of that obviously the safety requirements per whatever vessel that you are on you to make sure that all of those things are on board and either expired or in good working order so that when you're ready to use them there? They're they're ready.

Melissa Wissel:

We don't like to have to wear life jackets so it's always good to Just have them on the boat. That's right wake zones remind us about the wake zones.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah so he's part of that is just about every. Bridge in Saint Johns county has a no wake zone area on one side or the other or both sides of the bridge typically they're 500 feet from the bridge near the Marina it's 750 feet from the bridge because of our fuel dock so that's one spot but you'll always see no wake or slow speed zone signs as you enter into those zones and then another one that says resume normal speed as you exit that zone. So they say it's just kind of pay attention on the waterways as far as the signage goes and it really won't be too hard to know where those zones are.

Melissa Wissel:

What can you tell us or can you tell us remind us about their over there recall a bird island Julia 's island that was a big discussion point a couple of years ago about that wake zone is it actually a no wake.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah so yeah so part of it and another thing with wakes is you're always responsible for your wake regardless if there's a no wakes out or not if there is no wake zone and you are creating a large wake and create damage to other property or other vessels you're still responsible even though you're out. Of a no wake zone so you gotta be mindful of that but as far as bird island goes on that backside in between hospital Creek and bird island we do have a small no wake zone or yeah no wake zone and it's the entrance of a hospital Creek and 300 feet from that entrance North and South behind bird island. That'll help us slowing the boating traffic down on the island as a lot of people like to pull up to that sandbar at low tide.

Melissa Wissel:

Yeah just keep an eye on it and sometimes it's smart to slow your lake even if it's not a no wake zone just be courteous of your fellow boaters.

Eric Mauldin:

Yes yeah yeah slow down sure the scenery and yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

Yeah if you're just now tuning in you're listening to The Break Room I'm Melissa Wissel, Communications Director we have Eric Mauldin in studio we're talking about summer boating. Boating safety reminders give us a quick reminder down there at the Marina how do I get in there there's dock space there's mornings can I just come in for lunch.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah yeah so there's multiple ways to be able to come into the Marina if you're just like for wanting to go into lunch in downtown you can pull up to our fuel dock walk up into our office and check in majority I'd say 99% of the time we have hourly dockage available for most of the boats it's \$5.00 an hour with a Max of four hours. And I get you.

Melissa Wissel:

Is that a boat size?

Eric Mauldin:

Uh no no any boat size same rate for all boat size is just as the boats get largest depends on the availability at that time you know 4th of July, New Year's those type things we may be very limited on how much space we have but every time we won't we'll make some room to come into town and usually it's a lot easier way to get into town by boat than it is by car so people enjoy that.

Melissa Wissel:

Reservations if I want to come in.

Eric Mauldin:

And yeah reservations kind of the. Same thing too if. You can either pull up to a fuel dock. And check in. If we have something available or the best way is make reservations ahead of time you can call our office as you pass by on the VHF radio or we also have an online booking system on our website as well where you can? Make reservations and request reservations on there is citystaugmarina.com.

Melissa Wissel:

There you go pop quiz citystaugmarina.com to make an online reservation you can hail them on the radio 16 and.

Eric Mauldin:

16 and are working channel is 71.

Melissa Wissel:

71. An hourly rates if I've got a 20 foot boat or a 60 foot boat I can do hourly rates but if I stay for too long you're going to get into the overnight per foot rate yeah.

Eric Mauldin:

Yes yeah and that website that you just mentioned it has all of our rates daily and monthly rates and all of our rates for the mooring fields as well yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

Morning fields so let's talk a little bit about mooring. Fields that's we've got something coming up in June that I think people listeners would be very happy to hear about and that is derelict vessels.

Eric Mauldin:

Yes. That's all yes yes yes so something exciting is going to happen is we're going to soon remove 9 derelict vessels out of the waterways so that's a big deal it's the most vessels we've removed in one time and quite some time that spans all the way from salt run. Not necessarily right at downtown but more near the 312 bridge I'm sure a lot of you. Have seen? Both on the north side and South side banks along the banks there. And then up into the San Sebastian river as well there's a few of them up in that area.

Melissa Wissel:

OK that's up near like up near the Fish Camp that right in that area OK.

Eric Mauldin:

Yes yeah yeah yeah we've got 2 of them there and with derelict boats there's kind of. And say 2 different types of derelict boats so we self performed the local ones that are necessarily either public safety or easily removed by Florida inland navigation district in the port Saint Augustine they give us funding. For those but. Then there's another part of it where FWC has their own derelict boats. As well so as we are removing 9 you still may see a few of them here and there and those are just handled by a different agency that we're not able to perform those removals from some of those are left over hurricane boats which

takes a good bit of time for them to go through their process for removal but. Know that we are. Removing boats but there still will be a few boats still in town.

Melissa Wissel:

What's the process I mean I mean you say we're going to remove these boats process you can't just go say oh this boat 's been here for 3 years and so now? It's going I have to.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah we leave it to the local. Law enforcement agencies to handle that initial notification and contacts of the owner they have their process that they have to abide by for the state and then once they've done all that notification period in the waiting period then they give us a removal letter and then it's up to us to solicit. A contractor to remove the boat. So then they have to mobilize and come up with a plan to remove the boats and it can be quite costly per boat.

Melissa Wissel:

And you I mean. When you say 9 this is it's got to be a running the sort of a running gathering of boats you're not going to just do one boat you're going to do?

Eric Mauldin:

Yes yeah as we do these 9 there's yeah do them all at the same time so it'll probably be within. Ideally it will be only take 5 days but it could take a Max of 15 days based on weather but All in all fairly quickly.

Melissa Wissel:

So for those of you boaters that you've been very upset about these derelict boats because I know you and I have talked about this for a long time.

Eric Mauldin:

It's one of those things will always tire there's always going to be. One here and there so.

Melissa Wissel:

And time frame of when we're going to hopefully see this first we could June.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah first week of June they're mobilizing their numbering a couple of vessels over to the Marina to stay and then they're used the Marina as kind of a staging area to for their equipment to go home now.

Melissa Wissel:

Excellent keeping our waters beautiful and cleaning up that unsightly one last question or one last thing to talk about before we go we mentioned the breakwater repairs from hurricane damage and that sort of work that's being done we're we're also looking at maybe some pretty major construction changes.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah but we have some some plans and some design ideas to make some improvements to the Marina to better enhance the customers experience. And also to better enhance our infrastructure as we've seen the damage from these storms we're looking at other areas of the Marina to harden up so that we don't occur at these damages during those storms so one of them that we have discussed is our main marinas facilities building that has our laundry room and our lounge we have specific showers and restrooms. Just for our boating customers then we also have public restrooms at the. Yeah so we're looking at expanding the building out adding additional public restroom space and then also expanding our boater showers and restrooms to some individual shower restroom space to increase that capacity the building itself hasn't really been updated since it was built in the 90s, few little renovations here and there but size still about the same. And yet we've increased with the mooring field and the breakwater dock slip so our customer base has increased so now we've got to increase those amenities absolutely those are the best things.

Melissa Wissel:

Just don't lose those curtains that I put in there 8 years ago nicely I think Sam called it the woman 's touch.

Eric Mauldin:

It was yeah. And thank you for doing that.

Melissa Wissel:

You're very welcome I'm glad I'm just always happy to see it when I'm there that it's it's still in there.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah absolutely and then there's kind of another project too that we're looking at doing and as our central dock and our fuel dock those 2 kind of tie into each other. Those concrete floats are getting to be about 35 years old we've done a bunch of repairs and stuff outside of the concrete floats but it's time to kind of overhaul that dock itself it's kind of it's always been protected by the breakwater dock in the South dock so it never really occurred a whole lot of damage but just enough to keep leaking it over time and just overall age. It's outdone its lifespan and what's expected to last so we're looking at replacing that entire dock in our fuel dock that will also increase our slip space our fuel dispensers capacity tying in the 2 docks so it'll it'll be a. Much needed improvement and we're also going to strengthen it as well at the same time so it's going to be a large materials that we know that are proven to work during storms.

Melissa Wissel:

Very sophisticated yeah. This is where we're a year. Off or no it's couple of so.

Eric Mauldin:

It's probably a few years yeah this is in the early designs and thoughts.

Melissa Wissel:

But it's fun to talk about.

Eric Mauldin:

Absolutely yeah Yep.

Melissa Wissel:

It's like it's like renovating your house and we we you know changing something in your house you're going to talk about it and get some designs and we're going to save some money so you can put some money into it very exciting. Any update on white dwarf I know we've it's looking good?

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah it's getting it's getting close I there's no date that I'm aware of at the time but they are actively working on it and I think it's it's fairly close so I hope to see something fairly soon with that.

Melissa Wissel:

Well and so I'm going to put you on the spot a little bit I know when they first proposed it there was a lot of opposition concern about their floating dock in a nutshell you feeling pretty good about it.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah so right now they don't have necessarily a floating dock part in but the pilings are there so it kind of gives us a kind of accurate what the layout and the footprint looks like. There so all the voters have still been able to make safe approaches to and from the dock so I believe it will be a nice little amenity there.

Melissa Wissel:

I think it will be a nice amenity for them right now people are gonna naturally want to go over there good.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah yeah. Yeah one more spot to come into town Yep Yep and then the thing with the Marina and all these repair projects too is that the Marina is an enterprise fund so all these repair projects that we do This is money revenue taken in from the Marina and not from the city itself so we are self-funded in. That way excellent.

Melissa Wissel:

Lots of good stuff yeah we're out of time that's it.

Eric Mauldin:

Yeah, absolutely fun times that's good that's great yeah you're welcome thanks for having me.

Melissa Wissel:

We're done thanks for coming down. OK. If you missed any part of this broadcast and want to go back and start from the beginning, you can find it at citysanogradio.com you can also find us on your favorite podcasting apps look for us on Spotify apple podcasts and more that list is also available at citystaugradio.com we want to keep you informed about what's happening in and around the city? Follow the Marina on our social platforms you'll find the Marina on Facebook and Instagram at CityStAugMarina and of. Course as we. Said visit them at their website CityStAugMarina.com until next time thanks for tuning in.

Narrator:

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