

The Break Room Jaime D. Perkins, CRA Manager

Transcript

Narrator:

You're 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:

Welcome to The Break Room thanks for tuning in. I'm Melissa Wissel, communications director for the City of Saint Augustine. We have big announcements this week in the CRA, a new area has been established. There's an upcoming special event in Lincolnville to celebrate redevelopment 25 and the city's Neighborhood Services and CRA Manager Jamie D. Perkins has a new title and a new department to run. So without any further ado allow me to introduce Community Services Director Jamie D Perkins, drumroll.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Hi Melissa, thank you.

Melissa Wissel:

Welcome.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Thank you so much for having me again.

Melissa Wissel:

We have great conversations, you do great work, and I would basically just say and you've been rewarded for that great work, I feel like.

Jamie D. Perkins:

I appreciate you saying that.

Melissa Wissel:

congratulations

Jamie D Perkins:

Thank you so much. I'm so excited to take on this new position and opportunity. I think the addition of the community services department is a great way to kind of show the morale of the city and hopefully the residents can see that we are putting them first and that community services is there to continue the services that we provide through our services through the city of St Augustine.

Melissa Wissel:

Well your role as neighborhood services CRA manager really gave you that first line of contact. The new department that was created and I believe if I'm not mistaken our city manager David Bircham actually made reference to wanting to create this department when he was interviewing publicly back 2 years ago now

Jamie D. Perkins:

He did.

Melissa Wissel:

So he is just now starting his 3rd year and true to his commitment to that idea on this, has come to fruition. Tell us about what this streamlining means these functions, these

community service functions, let our listeners know those components that are now pulled in under this one department. It's really important.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Sure, so just a high-level overview most of the functions that the community services will have our divisions that are we're already established, obviously within the city, we kind of streamlined everything because we had divisions reporting to administration where the majority of our, the construction, I guess of our of our organization the makeup of it we we usually don't have the divisions reporting to administration.

Melissa Wissel:

The org chart.

Jamie D Perkins:

Yeah, the so so. So the divisions would report to a director and directors report to administration so that's kind of what David has done. He's done an excellent job so of course the CRA, we'll continue to be under community services, so, I'm excited about that and neighborhood services will remain with me as well. But I am bringing in some really great elements of our city processes and so we have special events that will come under community services, mobility, parking garage, the parking enforcement. I'll get to have my hands on the shuttles and the parking garage. Neighborhood grants will continue to be under my purview as well as the homeless drop in center and the operations of that. So I'm I'm just really excited. To be a part of these these changes which I think are really vital to the continued successes of what we do here at the city.

Melissa Wissel:

Yeah, well again congratulations. It's a it's going to be a heavy lift. I know there's a lot of great like you just mentioned those divisions special events, mobility, you've got great people already running those divisions.

Jamie D Perkins:

Exactly.

Melissa Wissel:

You've got Cori Niles you've got X Pelicier, Barry's working with homeless initiatives and so that will all come.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Right. And Barry, Barry will not be in our department however he will continue to be the face of the phase one of the homeless drop in center he's done an excellent job so that is still his project he and I are going to work very closely together to coordinate and we've already actually started our coordination. So it's a great thing about the people that I get to work with every day is that we're all so hands on we're all doing great things and we work so well together to make the city function.

Melissa Wissel:

And that's an exciting announcement too we're not we don't have dates yet but I think in the next couple of months before the end of the summer by the end of the summer we're looking at getting that day center opening so there's some exciting changes there happening we don't want to we don't want to count our eggs yet but we've been talking about that one for a long time.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Yes. right I think the I think everyone will be extremely happy so yeah we're moving in. A great direction with that.

Melissa Wissel:

If you're just now tuning in and listening to The Break Room. I'm Melissa Wissel communications director for the city of Saint Augustine. I have Jamie D Perkins in studio with exciting news. She's been recently promoted to community services director it's a new department that's being created. To consolidate and streamline special events, mobility, neighborhood grants, homeless initiatives, CRA neighborhood services, all kinds of great

stuff. However, Jamie let's circle back and talk about this recently established West City CRA. Give us the kind of that history. We have it it's been a long time coming, almost didn't make it on the legislative session so tell us about the West city CRA. Let's talk about it.

Jamie D. Perkins:

So what I am extremely excited this is has been my baby for the last few years, couple of years at least, and to see it come to fruition and the residents and stakeholders of that section of our city. Getting some, some well-deserved recognition and you live in the West side.

Melissa Wissel:

Yes, I'm very excited, very excited.

Jamie D. Perkins:

So I know that you're very excited about this and we have some really dedicated, hands-on residents over there that are just enthusiastic about what is to come with the revitalization of West City. So just the tip it I guess. So West City was established actually in May of 2024 we did a finding of necessity study which identified the blight and slum, those are legislative terms, that identify the the reasoning to establish a CRA. What we recently did was pass, the have the ordinance 2025 dash 07 was adopted.

Melissa Wissel:

If anybody 's keeping track.

Jamie D. Perkins:

If anybody would know, it was it was passed unanimously by our Commission at the last city Commission meeting and what that has done is allowed us to create a, a device basically, a toolbox of how do we revitalize West City. What can we do what are some of the the tactics that we can use, to kind of revitalize that area. So, we have a 6 point strategy plan myself and my staff will use that to work off of, to create programming do infrastructure projects and from concept to completion

Melissa Wissel:

Sidewalks.

Jamie D Perkins:

Yep, sidewalks, streetscape, projects parks, recreational spaces revitalizing that community helping businesses. Whether that be to help bring businesses into West City or help the businesses that are already there. We have a great plan that allows us to do that and what we've done with the plan because most people know that if it's not in the plan and CRA you cannot do it. So we have a very broad plan that allows us to do many, many things and it's kind of open-ended so we're not stuck in a box so.

Melissa Wissel:

And there was a committee. Or a board?

Jamie D. Perkins:

Steering committee.

Melissa Wissel:

Steering committee but it has been disbanded.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Yeah yeah. it's dissolved.

Melissa Wissel:

sunsetted Or dissolved. Those were some residents, they had to be residents of the neighborhood and they had some great input.

Jamie D. Perkins:

They did. We had 7, 7 individuals that our residents are stakeholders of the West city community they sat on the board for several months and they were a vital part of developing the plan. They work with staff, they work with the residents and stakeholders that they knew use their own platforms to gain information and garner support or maybe not support whatever you know we wanted to know the real information what people needed what they thought was the best way forward and I'm so I'm very grateful for those individuals if you're listening thank you all so much they were excellent in helping to get this plan adopted or completed and now adopted.

Melissa Wissel:

so and we had so let's parlay that so with that with that area we had a party or a celebration if you will back in March?

Jamie D. Perkins:

yeah March

Melissa Wissel:

and that was fun but that brings us to.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Redevelopment 25.

Melissa Wissel:

Our next conversation so West city is the newest area we have 2 other areas and another special event tell us about that.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Right, so redevelopment 25 the CRA is turning 25 years old this year and CRA is the agency in its entirety. and for 25 years the city of Saint Augustine has invested immense amount of resources into redeveloping the city of Saint Augustine and a special district, so we want to celebrate that. So what we've been doing is going on kind of a redevelopment tour going to each special district. And celebrating with those residents and stakeholders providing information of course because everything we do is about giving info and getting and resources and of course receiving feedback.

Melissa Wissel:

Educating yes educating the community.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Yeah and so we were in West city back in March and on July 18th we'll be in our second CRA Lincolnville. For a great time with music and fun so if our other departments and divisions will be there to provide information as well and we hope that the residents come out bring your lawn chairs and blankets and we'll be at Saint Benedict the Moor at their sound stage I think it's where they actually host the Blues fest for yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

Kind of behind.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Near Sanford street.

Melissa Wissel:

And when you mentioned bring your chairs and blankets this one 's going to be a little bit different because the one in West city in in the West city CRA was kind of out in the parking areas it wasn't that green space so this is going to be a totally different vibe, anyone is welcome.

Jamie D Perkins:

anyone is welcome.

Melissa Wissel:

You don't have to live in Lincolnville.

Jamie D Perkins:

Nope

Melissa Wissel:

to come and enjoy this we're going to have free food, Music

Jamie D Perkins:

Yep

Melissa Wissel:

Prizes

Jamie D Perkins:

there will be prizes yes we we thank you to our sponsors and donors let me say that too while we're while we're live here because we have some great organizations companies businesses that have donated to us so if you come out you get to Get a ticket if your ticket number is called you get to spin the wheel and whatever you land on you get. so last in West city we had many of the businesses along the West king corridor donated. Great, great prizes, coupons to their restaurants, free flowers all kinds of great things that people were able to take away from that celebration. And we'll be doing the same thing and I have several things in my possession now, but the most recent thing I can remember is the Lincolnville Museum just donated 2 tickets so people will get to possibly win a free tour of the Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center. And to go back to our sponsors, I want to

thank the Bailey Firm or the for their support of the West City redevelopment 25. And St John's Cultural Council is our music sponsor for the Lincolnville and the historic area redevelopment 25 so we want to make sure I shout those

Melissa Wissel:

and shout out.

Jamie D Perkins:

Yeah they're great thank you.

Melissa Wissel:

Who is your music? Can you tell us?

Jamie D Perkins:

Yah, at Lincolnville we are going to have the band Be Easy Trio so I'm really excited about that they're very well-known, popular band so if you guys want to hear the band Be Easy, come to Lincolnville.

Melissa Wissel:

And they start at 6 o'clock.

Jamie D. Perkins:

6:00 o'clock so 5:00 o'clock we'll have a DJ who is a actual Lincolnville native square one DJ's and so they'll be spinning some great music, family fun, family friendly music at 5:00 PM and then at 6:00 PM our music kicks off with our live band and then we'll stay out there till 8:00 o'clock just hanging out and eating free pizza and cupcakes and drinks and having a really good time.

Melissa Wissel:
photo booth?

Jamie D Perkins:
Yes

Melissa Wissel:
The photo booth that was in West City?

Jamie D Perkins:
that was in in West City

Melissa Wissel:
That you and I found.

Jamie D Perkins:
we have some really cute. yeah we did and we found them at another event yeah and we have we took some cute pictures together too so yeah come out and get pictures with us your pictures are printed right on site. Right so so you get to have those and share with your family and friends it's really going to be a good time and it's just a great way to learn more about what we do and for you to provide input to us so we want to engage with the public and that's what we do here so all of our jobs are so public facing.

Melissa Wissel:
yes well and that's going to be a really fun a really fun event. Remind us again the date and time.

Jamie D. Perkins:

July 18th 5:00 PM at Saint Benedict the Moore I believe it's 86 MLK but will be on the backside in their field near the the sound stage they have an outdoor stage. And again I think it is actually where they host their the porch fest, the Blues fest.

Melissa Wissel:

Is that right next to the center that the sisters redid?

Jamie D. Perkins:

It is, right behind Saint Joseph neighborhood center.

Melissa Wissel:

So come in so look for that beautiful. New renovated.

Jamie D. Perkins:

And we encourage you to walk or bike over limited parking so so you utilize the our beautiful sidewalks and tree canopies wherever you can and bring your your lawn chairs and your blankets and let's have a great time together.

Melissa Wissel:

Right. OK I'm going to ride my bike and strap my my chair on my back. They make chairs with backs with backpack straps

Jamie D. Perkins:

Oh yeah I heard that.

Melissa Wissel:

so you can do that actually and then before we sign off do you can you remember off the top of your head what's the next one because we're going to have a 3rd one I think we said it was October maybe.

Jamie D Perkins:

October 7th I think. I think don't quote me but.

Melissa Wissel:

no I won't, but I just want folks to realize we got one more coming. we I missed the last one but we'll be at this one and then the next one is the historic downtown or historic area CRA that will be in October do we have a location yet.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Yeah. It's in October. Location yet we are going to get the VIC will be a good visitors information Center and and that's also open to all of the public not just historic area residents but anyone that's welcome and I really hope to get to see all of your smiling faces.

Melissa Wissel:

well you're doing a lot of great work we ran out of time even to talk about the Cordova street so we'll have to have you come back.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Oh yeah. Talk about that check our CRA website lots of information there.

Melissa Wissel:

Yep. Save that hold that thought congratulations again on community service director promotion well deserved and we look forward to all the great things and I just love that we get to continue working together.

Jamie D. Perkins:

Thank you so much Melissa it's always a pleasure thank you.

Melissa Wissel:

If you missed part of this broadcast and want to go back and listen from the beginning you can find this and our past broadcast at citystaugradio.com look for us on Spotify, apple podcast, Spreaker and more on any of your favorite podcasting platforms we want to keep you informed about what's happening in and around the city and that you hear it here from the people who do the work to make it happen every day. Follow us on social or on Facebook, Instagram, and X at citystaug thanks again for tuning in until next time.

Narrator:

You've been listening. to The Break Room a weekly program addressing projects and programs offered by the city of Saint Augustine. Join us each week as the city 's communications director Melissa Wissel has in-depth conversations with the people who make our town work to meet the needs of our community. See you at this time next week for another edition of The Break Room.