

Jabari White, Nightlife Liaison and Permit Technician, July 29, 2025

Narrator:

You 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 to *The Break Room*. I'm Melissa Wissel communications director for the city of Saint Augustine. Last time Jabari White was in studio with us we ran out of time. We talked all about the permit technician role that he plays and we missed the opportunity to talk about his job as the nightlife liaison, so Jabari welcome back.

Jabari White:

Thank you thank you for having me back.

Melissa Wissel:

We are going to pick up where we left off like I said lots of things to talk about with your permit technician role. We may come back to that and recap. For those who missed that interview but I do want to get into the nightlife liaison position that you have, it's very important. Can you give us a history of where that came from? I know that you came into it I mean you applied for the position it was really born out of the nightlife initiative and here you are sort of now carrying that torch shall we say, at night.

Jabari White:

Right, right. So, from my understanding yes it did come from that initiative of for nightlife to be, I guess more or less better-managed and through that I have gotten this job and really that's really the fun part about my job, is because I love talking and I love building relationships with people. So my job is really to build relationships with the well all businesses downtown, whoever needs you know just like a point of contact with the city that you know that's here past 5:00 o'clock on on the weekend right. But really like the the people who operate late into the night you know that would be our bars some restaurants you know still serve food and stuff you know like towards past I want to say like 8:00 o'clock right it's to really build relationships with them and just to kind of keep them in the loop of like what's coming and what's going on with the city.

Melissa Wissel:

I know that. Just to recap too for our listeners if they don't know. The city attempted to pass a nightlife ordinance and it did not pass but some of the components of what they wanted out of that nightlife ordinance was some type of a liaison, someone that at night, like you say is downtown the businesses even residents, visitors, people, you're just there to like you say have those relationships. What are some of the some of the things that you come into, excuse me, that you're responsible for in the nightlife? Like you said you're there, I think you said, 6:00 PM to 2:00 AM.

Jabari White:

Correct.

Melissa Wissel:

So you're the night owl and you've got your city apparel on so folks know that you're there with the city. What are some of the things that you encounter in your role as the nightlife liaison?

Jabari White:

So I just kind of speak, like recently so we just got our new noise ordinance passed and you know just being trained with that and working with assistant chief Cuthbert with that. Just kind of like answering questions because people were you know it's new. So they want to

know like how does this work? You know like it and just like how the process really works with something like that so really that's an example but if it kind of goes into other things as well. I guess I would need like a more of a deeper question kind of keep that going.

Melissa Wissel:

So you so you're really down there the eyes and ears of what's going on. So let's take noise for example. Is it complaint-driven, that you're reactive? Or are you more walking Saint George street, listening to that music checking in on that do you have to carry the meter or you're just audio you're listening?

Jabari White:

Well I mean plainly our plainly audible part of it it's like it's like way easier to do than just like you know carrying around the you know our case with the meter in it right.

Melissa Wissel:

I picture you carrying a box with like a microphone looking thing and a little in a little needle

Jabari White:

Right right. No no no I'm like it said somebody would be very confused as to what I was carrying, but no so as far as that goes I just really. At this point it's education. OK at this point it's just education if people have questions you know just kinda do my best to answer those questions if I don't have the answers to those questions I have it's my job to get those answers To those questions from the right people.

Melissa Wissel:

Are you watching for things like occupancy or are you watching for people to be. At the doorways. Of restaurants and bars to make sure that they have some type of security are you worrying about any of that?

Jabari White:

That falls not under my job. That is purely on the business you know that that's how they you know how they want to conduct their business. That's absolutely fine. My part of it is just literally to be a liaison for them to the city.

Melissa Wissel:

Are you also watching we talked in the last time you were in *The Break Room* we were talking about the permits and the vendors are you checking medallions and watching for you know enforcing those permit for the vendors as well?

Jabari White:

Correct.

Melissa Wissel:

And do you get phone calls?

Jabari White:

Yes yes I do get phone calls I get phone calls just like asking questions and normally it's people who are trying to come into town and they want to do something and they just want to like know the ins and outs or like what they can do. But those are the majority of the phone calls I get. Some phone calls I'll get from people who have been here. And been working with the city for years. And they just wanted like clarification on like how does this spot work and how and why and why not can I set up here.

Melissa Wissel:

Set up your vending. Give me an example if you can I'm going to put you on the spot here. What's been one of your hardest. I'm a I'm a use the word case but has there been something that stands out in your mind that you've been challenged with either in your in the nightlife position when you've been downtown at night that you've just have you had to call for backup has there been anything can you give us any examples of something that you've. You know encountered that you've been like. This is why I was meant to be here?

Jabari White:

Right. That that that's

Melissa Wissel:

I'm putting you on the spot, I'm putting you on the spot.

Jabari White:

That's OK that's OK. Nothing that's like too terribly tough. I got to give a lot of credit to my chain of command and especially Sergeant Garmin, Britney Garmin, she's done a wonderful job helping prepare me to go out and be able to do this job. And just knowing like I if I need help like I can always I have the perfect avenues to go out there to be able to reach help. Luckily thank thank the Lord there hasn't been a situation like that but yeah like so it but as far as like as my job goes I definitely started leaning on people who have been dealing with you know vendors and permits and you know that type of stuff a little bit more then I have. Yeah and so that's where like the majority of I guess that type of help has been coming from.

Melissa Wissel:

The vendors though we've talked last time you've had really good response compliance people are doing what they're supposed to be doing you mentioned the relationships do you when you're working at night time do you just go into places and kind of observe and introduce yourself. Or how does your how does the night in the life how does that how does a night in the life of the nightlife liaison look?

Jabari White:

Gotcha so I would say in the beginning there was a lot of like walking up to places walking into places and you know just introducing myself and you know like saying like hey this is who I am this is what I do this is my job with. The city to. Here's my personal goals and like here's you know the goals of the city has set forth for me. Kind of setting the standard for our relationship moving forward and I will say like it has been very well receptive.

Melissa Wissel:

I'm sure. I believe that.

Jabari White:

I also have to give a lot of credit to the downtown bike unit that I that I am attached to they've done a great job with introducing me to some you know because like they're down there right so they know these businesses you know they they've built their own relationships and they've done a great job. With like. Tagging me along into some of those relationships they gotta build the bridge for me.

Melissa Wissel:

That's wonderful. So when they see you coming they're excited to see you? They know who you are?

Jabari White:

Excited yeah because like you know I'm not a bearer Necessarily of bad news for them yeah.

Melissa Wissel:

No not at all I'm sure you're the I I would imagine though based on going through the whole nightlife ordinance and even though it did not pass, knowing that the city took that component seriously. Hired someone so that we now have someone that's down there that any business can call if there's a problem if there's a question or something and it doesn't necessarily have to be a negative like you said it could just be a question or educating and for them to know that they have somebody down there. But it doesn't necessarily come in in a uniform with a badge and a gun.

Jabari White:

correct

Melissa Wissel:

it's a much softer. Connection or I don't know what the word is but there's maybe a little bit more of it doesn't have such a presence of law enforcement.

Jabari White:

Yeah yeah I definitely like that aspect of it you know and I think that has been very well received but I do. Let every business know. Like do you not call me if you have a law enforcement issue if you have a law enforcement issue please call the proper authorities because if you call me and you tell me this is happening I'm going to tell. You to call them right.

Melissa Wissel:

So save yourself the step.

Jabari White:

You have like save. Yourself to step you. Know like I'll I'll come back and follow up with you because you didn't take the time out to let me know what was going on I have no problem coming in and checking in with you and seeing. How how you're making out but like the initial point,, if you need law enforcement, call law enforcement.

Melissa Wissel:

Well it's good to know that you're down there. I'm going to do a quick identification of folks are just now tuning in. You're tuning into *The Break Room* I'm Melissa Wissel communications director. Jabari white is joining me this week he is the night nightlife liaison and permit technician. We talked mostly about your nightlife liaison role. Real quick before we sign off I just want to recap. You're also in charge of the mobile vendor permits and the driver for hire medallions. Give me just a recap how things are going with that I know you've got special office hours you're the guy responsible for keeping everybody following the rules how's that going.

Jabari White:

Everything that's it's all going really well it's all going really well. I think this past 4th of July was a really good event especially for my job specifically because we didn't have a new ordinance that passed for 4th of July, Nights of Lights, it's and it was great that everyone adhere to it. So there was no real issue that I needed to go and like handle immediately on the spot. But uh so with so with all that I've I'm comfortable in saying that this position I believe is working really well for the city and I'm proud of this.

Melissa Wissel:

Mobile vendor mobile vendors are behaving the driver for hire drive for hire is petty cabs and taxis.

Jabari White:

Pedi cabs and taxis in also it's also my job that like for the Police Department specifically to keep track of these so just to let everyone know like it's not just the pedi cabs and people using cars for their taxis and whatnot. Our trains, our trolley trains also have medallions. You know and they do what that they're supposed to every year for renewal because all these all of them have to have renewal because there's a different sticker. The medallion sorry there's a different medallion every year so it's my job to make sure that like these people are staying on top of like what they're supposed to do. So I would say January first I see a 2025 sticker I'm like hey what's going on you're supposed to have this changed.

Melissa Wissel:

Good and you have office hours and you're downtown at night?

Jabari White:

Correct at night on Fridays and Saturdays from. 6:00 PM to 2 AM.

Melissa Wissel:

And during the week if I want to come in and do my vendor permit or have questions when's the. Best time for me to call?

Jabari White:

Best time for you to call is between the hours of 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Melissa Wissel:

9 to 3 and you're the Police Department

Jabari White:

correct

Melissa Wissel:

not at City Hall.

Jabari White:

Not at city Hall. I am at the Police Department.

Melissa Wissel:

While we're certainly glad to have you Jabari. I think that we're not only in addressing those concerns from the nightlife but the permits as well keeps everybody in line, protects those of us the the vendors that are here now that I have those business licenses and keeps everybody in line we're glad to have you.

Jabari White:

Thank you for having me.

Melissa Wissel:

If you missed any part of this episode and want to go back and listen from the beginning you can catch this episode and more at citystaugradio.com. We want to keep you informed about what's happening in and around the city and that you hear it here from the people doing the work to make it happen every day. Follow us on social, you'll find us on Facebook Instagram and X at [citystaug](#). You can also follow the Police Department at Facebook on Facebook Instagram and X at [staugPD](#). Thanks 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*.