

New Smyrna Beach City Commission Meeting – Nov. 9, 2021

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City Commissioners voted unanimously in favor of raising the cost of docking boats at the City Marina for the next year, after learning its rates hadn't been changed since 2018 and are lower than other marinas nearby. Officials will revisit the rates in 12 months to determine if they need to be adjusted again.

Staff members compared dockage fees charged at the City Marina with other municipal and private marinas throughout Florida. As a result, Marina Manager Jim Egan recommended increasing rates 15-17%. Also recommended was charging different fees for NSB residents and non-residents.

Annual leases for boats at the city's aluminum floating docks currently cost \$11.33 per foot/month. In 2022, the price for a city resident's boat will be \$13, and non-residents will pay \$14. At the fixed timber docks, the cost is now \$10.30 per foot/month. For 2022, rates will be \$12 for city residents and \$13 for non-residents.

Transient boats seeking any of the seven marina slips will see daily rates go up from \$1.70 per foot to \$2 per foot. Weekly docking rates for transient boats will increase from \$10.20 per foot to \$12 per foot.

Implementing the new rate schedule will increase annual revenue for the marina by an estimated \$52,500. "We are one of the cheaper marinas around." Said Egan. The city is planning maintenance and improvements such as enlarging one dock and upgrading restrooms. Egan also plans to modify the current wait-list policy.

Mayor Russ Owen stated the plans had his full support. Commissioner Michael Kolody suggested those who aren't city residents should pay 50 percent more than residents, and there should be a Consumer Price Index increase built into the rates. "I think we should realize we've got a really good asset here and if people want to use it they should pay for that," he added.

Vice Mayor Jason McGuirk echoed that sentiment, saying, "I'm perfectly willing to go up significantly. The question is, how do we define resident?" He suggested checking whether the boat owner has homesteaded property in New Smyrna Beach. Commissioner Randy Hartman expressed concern with how the city would define "residents" for the purpose of rate increases. "We have a lot of residents who live in Orlando who own property here and they are taxpayers here," he noted. "If you raise your rates too much, you're going to force people out. They're just going to go out to anchor in the open water."

The City Commission voted 4-1, with Commissioner Jake Sachs dissenting, to temporarily remove glass from the list of items that it pays a private contractor to recycle.

Commissioners took that action after Solid Waste Compliance Officer Ami Blakely told them there is no market for recycled glass in the quantity that the city generates, and all

the glass containers that are picked up in residents' recycling bins are being separated out and trucked to the landfill.

What is happening now, Blakely said, is the contractor, Waste Pro, picks up residential recycling items and takes the material to its facility in Ormond Beach. From there, it is driven to an Ocala plant that separates paper, plastic, metal and glass. The glass gets trucked back to Ormond and sent to a landfill. The result is the city is charged double what it would pay if glass was simply put in the trash and picked up during regular garbage collection.

Sometimes, glass picked up in recycling bins is crushed and used as a landfill cover, Blakely said, adding that glass is not recycled into something else (like plastic, metal and paper are). "Rather than pay \$77.50 a ton, we should just be paying \$34 a ton to dispose of it because it's literally going to the same place." It's estimated the city would save \$28,031 per year by removing glass from its recycling program.

Owen recalled when the Commission considered this issue in 2019, its members agreed to continue including glass containers in city recycling pickups in hopes that a market for recycled glass would emerge. However, that didn't happen.

In Volusia County, the city of Deltona has suspended its entire recycling program and the cities of Ormond Beach and Port Orange have removed glass from their respective recycling pickups.

Commissioner Sachs acknowledged New Smyrna Beach would save money by doing the same, but commented, "I don't know that I can support it. I would like to hear from the taxpayers about how they feel about discontinuing the recycling of glass." "None of the five of us up here wants to stop recycling glass. But at this point, it doesn't fiscally make any sense," Mayor Owen stressed. Speaking to city staff members, he added, "We've got to do a solid job of educating on this, not just (say) we're stopping it."

City Commissioners unanimously agreed it would be best to ask the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to schedule a public meeting for residents to learn about the agency's plan to close all but one access to the Corbin Park-Hidden Pines neighborhood before installing a traffic light at the intersection of Corbin Park Road and SR-44.

City Manager Khalid Resheidat said FDOT emailed city staff in October about a draft study done to determine if a traffic light was warranted at the intersection. The study recommended against installing a traffic signal as long as several access roads to the Corbin Park-Hidden Pines area remain open. However, Resheidat said FDOT advised if median crossings on SR-44 are closed as the agency proposes to do from South Walker Drive to Hidden Pines Boulevard, the resulting increase in right-hand turns from Corbin Park Road would create the need for a traffic signal there.

Commissioners said they want to hear what citizens who live in that area think about such a plan.

Even if a traffic light was approved by FDOT and supported by those residents, the city manager said it would take three-to-five years for the new traffic light to be installed. Its funding would come from FDOT (75%) and 25% from the Tractor Supply store located at the intersection. The signal's estimated cost is \$190,000. No city funding is needed at this point.

Commissioner Kolody recalled the city did a study a few years ago on how to provide another access out of the Corbin Park-Hidden Pines neighborhood, and he said, "It didn't go anywhere. We never did anything. I'm kind of disappointed in that."

"My general feeling is, the residents out there have been asking for this relief for a very long time," said Vice Mayor McGuirk. "I have no problem moving this thing forward. We need the residents to tell us what they want."

Mayor Owen commented, "I live in that area. I do drive it every day. It's becoming more and more dangerous." "I say we hear from the public," "I can tell you, there will be people opposed to this. It may even pose a minor or maybe even a major inconvenience for a small number of people. It's not ideal, the whole cutting off of the egress from Hidden Pines. We've got some commerce, and some small retail shops in that area. Hopefully, we can push back on FDOT a little bit."

Still, the mayor said he would "hate to lose" funding for the potential traffic signal that would come from a private business and FDOT.

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