


**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Mayor England  
Vice Mayor Kostka  
Commissioner George  
Commissioner Samora  
Commissioner Rumrell

**FROM:** Max Royle, City Manager 

**DATE:** December 4, 2019

**SUBJECT:** 2020 Florida Legislative Session: Deciding Whether the City Should have an Official Response to Proposed Bills

Each legislative session bills are proposed that affect cities, especially their ability to manage their own affairs in accordance with their residents' wishes. For example, last year, several bills were proposed that would have weakened or pre-empted/banned outright the existing ordinances many cities have to regulate vacation rentals. Also, you are familiar with bills that have pre-empted the cities' authority to regulate the use of plastic products. We can expect similar bills to be proposed in the 2020 session.

Each legislative session, the Florida League of Cities vigorously lobbies on cities' behalf to protect their home-rule authority. The League has been effective in notifying local governments of what bills to oppose (or support), and the reasons why. The League has encouraged city officials to contact their local Representative and Senator, and the chair of the appropriate committee to state their opposition or support.

Already for the 2020 legislative session, there's a Senate bill and a companion House bill to reduce the communications service tax on phone and cable/satellite TV services. If passed, the law will definitely reduce the amount of revenue Florida's cities, including our own, receive from the tax.

Because you usually have only one regular meeting a month, there often isn't time for you to discuss and vote on a recommendation to oppose or support a particular bill, and to have that recommendation forwarded to the League, the appropriate legislative committee chair, and the members of the St. Johns County legislative delegation.

For the 2018 and 2019 legislative sessions, we proposed to you a process for how our City can respond to proposed legislation. We suggested that you authorize the Mayor to follow the Florida League's recommendation concerning particular bills. For example, if the League opposes a bill that could affect our City, the Mayor could send a letter or email opposing the bill to the League, the chair of the appropriate committee, and to members of the County's legislative delegation. The same process would be used for bills that the League supports.

Attached are the minutes of that part of your February 4, 2019, meeting, when you discussed the process the City should use in response to proposed bills.

ACTION REQUESTED

It is that you discuss how you want the City to respond to bills for the 2020 legislative session.

FROM MINUTES OF THE CITY COMMISSION'S FEBRUARY 4, 2019, MEETING

XII. NEW BUSINESS

8. 2019 Florida Legislative Session: Whether City Should have an Official Response to Proposed Bills (Presenter: Mr. Max Royle, City Manager)

Mayor George introduced Item 8 and requested a staff report from City Manager Royle.

City Manager Royle advised that the Florida League of Cities would notify the City of issues that come before the legislation and sometimes there is not enough time to wait until the next Commission meeting. He asked if the Commission agrees to have Mayor George speak for the Commission if the issue needs a response immediately.

After discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to allow Mayor George to follow the same procedure as last year regarding immediate issues that need to be answered by legislation.

Mayor George opened the Public Comment section. The following addressed the Commission:

Ed Slavin, P.O. Box 3084, St. Augustine, FL, agreed with Commission on this matter and asked the Commission to take a strong position on Airbnbs and others who lobby legislation. He also asked that the City to use St. Johns County's document on legislation, which mentions the Florida False Claim Act that covers state contracts.

Mayor George closed the Public Comments section and moved on to Item XIII.