

FROM VICE-MAYOR BRUCE G. ROBERTS JULY 2013



NEW CITY ATTORNEY HIRED: Since 2002, Harry Stewart has served the City of Fort Lauderdale as its City Attorney. After a brilliant legal career in both private and government practice, Harry has moved on. We wish him the best! In the meantime, the Commission selected Cynthia Everett to succeed Harry Stewart on July 11th. Commissioners agreed to have Mayor Jack Seiler negotiate a contract with Ms. Everett, currently in private practice and on contract with the Village of Pinecrest. Cynthia has also served as Opa-Locka's City Attorney, as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Miami and an Assistant State Attorney in Miami. Ms. Everett and Assistant City Attorney Bob Dunckel were among five finalists forwarded to Commissioners by a search committee.

INTERIM FIRE CHIEF: As you may already know, Fire Chief Jeff Justinak retired. Jeff dedicated 25 years to public safety in Fort Lauderdale. Under his leadership, our Fire-Rescue Department has become more professional. Effective July 13th, Robert Hoecherl, one of three Deputy Fire Chiefs, was appointed to the position of Interim Fire Chief for an indefinite period of time. This designation comes with all the responsibilities, authorities and emoluments of the Office of Fire Chief granted under the City's Charter and Code and State Law. Robert has been with City for 26 years.

BUDGET: At the July 9th Commission Meeting, the upcoming 2014 budget was discussed in the context of achieving the priorities established in the City's Vision 2035, the Five-Year Strategic Plan, the Neighborhood Survey, and the Commission Annual Action Plan. In addition to the community, input was received from our Budget Advisory Board, which recognized the need for additional revenues for the City to enhance services and to maintain and improve infrastructure. The Board recommended maximizing the Fire Assessment Fee and raising the operating millage rate to 4.5 from the current 4.11. They further recommended that 90% of the revenues derived from the increased millage rate be designated to rebuild infrastructure; they estimated that over ten years, this would generate \$195 million for this specific purpose. After our discussion, it was unanimously decided not to raise the millage rate, but leave open the option of maximizing the Fire Assessment Fee. The impact on residences would be a \$7.50 per month increase in the fee. Ten year projections indicate that this would stabilize our budget, slightly increase reserves and provide for capital and infrastructure improvements. The 2014 budget proposal from the City Manager also creates a fund balance of \$56.3 million or 20.5%, slightly increases General Fund operating expenditure from \$ 272,675,963 to \$274,441,421, and slightly decreases the all funds budget from \$476,150,126 to \$475,299,993. The next public hearings on the budget will be September 3rd and 12th.

FORT LAUDERDALE AMONG TOP 10 SMALL AMERICAN CITIES OF THE FUTURE: Fort Lauderdale has been ranked No. 7 for economic potential on a list of the Top 10 Small American Cities of the Future, according to fDi Magazine. The foreign direct investment magazine ranked cities by collecting data on economic potential, human resources, cost effectiveness, infrastructure, business friendliness and FDI strategy for 422 cities. The top 10 small cities of the future are: Sunnyvale, CA; Durham, N.C.; Irvine, CA; Chattanooga, TN; Stamford, CT; Guelph, ON; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Cary, N.C.; Ann Arbor, MI; Fremont, CA. As stated by Mayor Seiler, "This new ranking by fDi Magazine serves as an international recognition that the City of Fort Lauderdale is continuing to move forward on the right track. The City's sound fiscal management, progressive economic development initiatives and long-term infrastructure investment strategies have created a high level of optimism that is triggering billions of dollars in private and public investment."

LIEN AMNESTY PROGRAM: The City's Lien Amnesty Program has been extended through September 30th. Property owners are invited to take advantage of this special offer. Neighbors who bring their property into compliance can clear outstanding liens at a significantly reduce rate----**some up to 85%!** More information,

including an application and fact sheet, can be obtained at www.fortlauderdale.gov/lienamnesty, by sending an email to LienAmnesty@FortLauderdal.gov or by calling 954-828-5050.

NEXTDOOR MEDIA SOCIAL NETWORK UPDATE: In August of last year, the City became the first in Florida to launch Nextdoor, a free, private social networking website for neighborhoods. Since that date, Nextdoor has become an integral part of many of our neighborhoods' communication networks. Currently we have 47 of our neighborhoods on Nextdoor with 1,486 of our neighbors using the website in their neighborhoods. Additionally, those 1,486 neighbors have posted 3,426 messages to each other on the website! In order to protect our neighbors' privacy, we cannot see the content of these messages, but we are provided with general metrics from Nextdoor in order to track the effectiveness of the tool. Nextdoor creates private neighborhood sites off of our existing neighborhood boundaries and allows only those neighbors with addresses within the neighborhood to join. Neighbors are able to use the site to get to know their neighbors; share information about traffic, lost pets, crime and emergency preparedness; ask questions or get advice on babysitters, restaurants, carpet cleaners and more; sell, borrow and give away tools, furniture, bicycles and any other items; and receive and comment on important information from City officials. As a City we have been using Nextdoor to share information about upcoming events, new programs, traffic advisories and severe weather alerts. Nextdoor provides a platform to share exciting new developments citywide, as well as personalize neighborhood security concerns on a neighborhood level. District 1 participants include Bay Colony, Coral Ridge, Coral Ridge Country Club Estates, Coral Ridge Isles, Imperial Point, Lake Estates, Landings, Palm Aire Village East; South Twin Lakes (neighborhood in an unincorporated area); Sunrise Intracoastal and Twin Lakes North!

RUN. HIDE. FIGHT. Surviving an Active Shooter Event: I know we never want to think that this sort of thing could happen, but in the real world, and in light of all the shootings throughout the country, it is important. This instructional video demonstrates options on surviving an active shooter situation including escape routes, hiding spots, and fighting back as a last resort. It can be found on the City's Police Web Page at <http://www.flpd.org/>. One of our constituents requested we put this information in our newsletter – thank you for the suggestion!

TMA SUN TROLLEY AND B-CYCLE PERFORMANCE REPORT: The following is a mid-year ridership report for the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Transportation Management Association (TMA) Sun Trolley service and the B-Cycle Bike Share program for the 2012-13 fiscal year. Through May 2013, the Sun Trolley has carried a system-wide total of 336,190 passengers, which is a 47% increase over this point last year. This increase was in part a result of adding the former Housing Authority (HACFL) routes, the increase in the Beach Link service from four days a week to seven days and the introduction of the Airport Excursion route, all beginning in January of this year. Based on current ridership, the Sun Trolley is projected to carry approximately 490,000 passengers for the 2012-13 fiscal year; a 45% increase. The City's partnership with the B-Cycle Bike Share program has been a success since its start in mid-December 2011. For the nine months of FY12, there were 9,458 bike rentals, and for the first six months of FY12 there have been 6,164 bike rentals. There will be another report out after this service has been active for 2 years. These results show that the TMA Sun Trolley and the B-Cycle Bike Share program are a viable and necessary element to the Fort Lauderdale's transportation network, providing the connectivity for our residents, workforce and visitors to the City.

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In addition to hosting two pre-agenda meetings twice a month, I am also available to attend your HOA meetings to update your neighborhood on what is going on in the City as well as answer any questions/concerns you may have. Please contact Robbi to schedule.

NOTE: The Commission is on recess from July 2nd to August 20th. Office staff will be here to assist with any concerns or issues you may have. Scheduled meetings will resume August 12th.