

## FROM COMMISSIONER BRUCE G. ROBERTS NOVEMBER 2012



**BUDGET UPDATE:** We approved a balanced budget and tax rate on September 18th. The City's property tax rate for operating expenses did not change; however, residents will see a 1.1 percent overall rate increase because of debt service on voter-approved bonds. The new rate is \$4.33 for each \$1,000 of assessed value. For example, if you own a \$150,000 home with a \$50,000 homestead exemption, City taxes would be \$433, about \$7 more than last year. The City of Fort Lauderdale has the second lowest operating millage rate among Florida's 25 largest cities.

**UPDATE ON PAIN CLINICS:** Most of you may be aware that the doctor who owns and operates the Pain Center of Broward located at 5459 N. Federal Highway, was served an Emergency Suspension Order for suspension of his license. The Department of Health, along with the help of the Drug Enforcement Agency, served the suspension order to Dr. Leonard Haimes. Roughly 20 patients were turned away the day the doctor was served. This clinic has been on the radar for some time. Dr. Haimes is appealing the license suspension, and, in the meantime, he has apparently hired another doctor to reopen the clinic. Please know that our task force's efforts to close these clinics continue.

**FLPD POLICE EXPLORER PROGRAM:** The Fort Lauderdale Police Department is proud to announce the return of the police explorer program. This is a program for young men and women between the ages of 14 and 21 who are interested in Law Enforcement as a career. It is a nonprofit organization that evolved from the Police Youth Auxiliary, which was founded in June of 1967. When this program began, it was led by full-time police officers of the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. Applicants interested in this program should be aware of the following requirements: must be 14-21 years old; must have a 2.0 GPA; must have a valid identification card; must be a current resident of the City; must be able to attend weekly meetings; must pass a background check and an oral interview; must be able to work special assignments, details and events that are usually held at night and on the weekends; must have 3 references; and must have permission from legal guardian if under 18 years of age. Applicants accepted into this program will receive a variety of training and invaluable experiences through ride-a-longs, which will assist them in making a career choice within the law enforcement. Many of our current officers were members of our explorer program. Anyone interested in joining should contact Sergeant Darren Ogden via email at [dogden@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:dogden@fortlauderdale.gov).

**PHONE NUMBERS TO REMEMBER:** Below you will find the contact numbers for quick reference for questions/issues/concerns you may have especially after hours.

Police Non-Emergency	954-828-5700
Fire Non-Emergency	954-828-5320
Animal Care & Regulation	954-359-1313
Beach Patrol	954-468-1595
Broward County Mass Transit	954-357-8400
Buildings	954-828-5207
(Abandoned, damaged/derelict structure, work w/out a permit)	
Code Enforcement	954-828-5207
Damaged Street Signs	954-484-9600
Damaged trees/landscaping in median/right of way	954-828-5784
Dead Animal	954-765-5124
Drug Sales/Usage	954-828-5661
Parking Passes, Fines and Info	954-828-3700
Special Events Hotline	954-828-5363
Traffic Signal Out	954-484-9600
Trash	954-771-0880
(Recycling, bulk trash, trash carts, etc.)	
Utilities Services	954-828-8000

(Streetlights, damaged sidewalks, signs, fences, potholes, vandalism, broken sprinkler, hydrant, water main, sewer line, water billing, trash and debris)  
Vehicles (abandoned, parked in right of way) 954-828-5207

**UTILITY MARKINGS:** I am sure you are all aware of the utility markings that seem to be everywhere throughout the City. These markings are usually bright in color, and sprayed along the street and/or lawn/sidewalks to mark any underground line that is directly in the way of construction, or even near it. State statutes require the markings for safety and liability issues and regulate the marking process. Reasons for the markings include neighbors planning remodeling work; a utility operator planning maintenance or repair; construction and redevelopment projects; or the City/County planning excavation work. Red denotes electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables; orange telecommunication, alarm or signal lines, cables, or conduit; yellow natural gas, oil, steam, petroleum or other gaseous or flammable material; green sewers and drain lines; blue potable (drinkable) water; purple reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines; and white proposed excavation limits or route. Regulations dictate that these markings be in place within a 30 day time frame prior to initiating work and that they last no more than 30 days. Unfortunately, they seem to be of more permanent nature. City staff, utilities representatives, 811 Sunshine and code/police have been working with the Galt Ocean Mile Association to develop a better oversight process which adheres to statutes, regulations and ordinances. These markings can definitely take away from the appearance of your neighborhood, but with all of us working together, hopefully this problem will become part of the past. Thanks goes to the Galt Ocean Mile Association and all involved for pursuing this issue.

**IMPORTANT DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR:**

**-November 16<sup>th</sup>:** 5th Annual Light Up Lauderdale, Esplanade Park, 400 SE 2nd Street, 5:00 – 9:00 PM.

**-November 21<sup>st</sup>:** Light Up the Beach! The City's Holiday Lighting Ceremony will be held at 6:30 PM at A1A and E Las Olas followed by a Holiday Concert at 7:00 PM at DC Alexander Park, 501 Seabreeze Boulevard.

**-November 27<sup>th</sup>:** Golden Anniversary of Christmas on Las Olas – E Las Olas from SE 6th to SE 11th avenues.

**-December 2<sup>nd</sup>:** Winterfest Family Fun Day will be on the Riverside Hotel Lawn, 620 E Las Olas, from Noon to 4:00 PM. The Boat Parade is set for Saturday, December 15<sup>th</sup>.

**-December 7<sup>th</sup>:** Light Up Sistrunk starts at 5:30p.m. at corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Sistrunk.

**-December 31<sup>st</sup>:** New Year's Eve Downtown Countdown: This event takes place on SW 2<sup>nd</sup> St. between SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. and SW 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. At the stroke of midnight, a lighted ball drops from the sky!

**-Upcoming Commission Dates:** 11/20; 12/4 & 18; 1/3 (could be changed) & 15

**-Upcoming Pre-agenda Dates:** 12/3 & 17; 1/14

**ANNUAL STREET RESURFACING PROGRAM:** The City is responsible for approximately 600 miles of paved surfaces, which include streets and alleyways. Annually, the City budgets a portion of the revenues it receives from the State Gas Tax Funds to fund this program. The current process to resurface streets is based on a two-fold approach: 1) when the street was previously resurfaced – the current standard is to resurface at a frequency of 14-16 years; 2) visual observations made by staff, safety issues, need to resurface due to an ongoing project (e.g. utility trenching), or due to recurring complaints from the neighborhood, etc., regarding the condition of the paving surface and rideability. In an effort to be able to obtain an objective view of the streets resurfacing needs, and in turn, to better identify the need, prioritization, budget and implementation of the street resurfacing program, the City is in the process of implementing the use of the MicroPAVER Pavement Management System (PMS). It was developed by the US Army Corps of Engineers for road and airfield pavement maintenance and management on military bases. It will allow for a standardized way of rating streets within the City. If you would like to have more information, please let me know and I will have my assistant send you the entire memorandum and backup information from our City Manager, Lee Feldman.

**UPDATE ON ABANDONDED HOMES:** At the 10/2/12 Commission Meeting, the Commission adopted an ordinance amending the City Code to include a Registration Program for Abandoned Residential Property to “promote, protect and improve the health, safety and general welfare of our residents and visitors.” This will require institutions holding mortgages in default on properties that have become

abandoned, to register these properties with the City. Properties that have been abandoned and are allowed to become overgrown, and those structures that are left open and unsecured, not only have a negative impact on community value, but also create conditions that invite criminal activity and foster an environment that is unsafe and unhealthy for our community. It is for these reasons that abandoned properties must be maintained so as not to create these nuisance conditions. This Registration Program will insure communication between the lender and the City in regards to any potential or existing code enforcement violations and give the City contact information for the property management company retained by the lender to abate such violations. Ordinance highlights include:

- The ordinance would apply to Mortgagees of abandoned residential real property holding a mortgage that is in default.
- The Mortgagee would be required to provide the City with, among other things, the name and contact telephone number of the local property management company responsible for the maintenance of the property.
- The Mortgagee would be responsible for posting a sign on the property, clearly visible from the street, containing the same contact information.
- The Mortgagee would pay a registration fee of \$200 per property to offset the administrative and inspection costs related to this program.
- The Program would require the Mortgagee, or designee, to inspect the abandoned property on a bi-weekly basis and to correct certain code violations, which may exist. The Program details a list of Specific Maintenance Requirements for which that the Mortgagee would be responsible.
- The Program would be a start date 90-days following adoption of the ordinance to allow for completion of the RFP process, proper community outreach, and staff preparation for successful implementation.

At \$200 per registration fee, with \$100 going to the vendor, this would net approximately \$300,000 in annual revenue to the City, which could be used to augment the proactive efforts of the City's Code Enforcement Division in dealing with vacant and neglected properties.

**OFFICE CONTACT: Robbi Uptegrove – 954-828-5033; email: [ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov).**