

FROM THE DESK OF COMMISSIONER BRUCE G. ROBERTS



District 1 Newsletters: If you want to keep current on present and past newsletters from my office, please go to the webpage <http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/roberts> where you can view postings for the past year. Also, we would like to highlight events occurring in your neighborhood in each publication; please email my office and we will gladly share the news with all of our District 1 neighbors. Examples would be awards and recognition for area residents, businesses, community involvement, birthday celebrations of 99+, etc.

Neighborhood Initiatives: Our office received 313 requests for service from January through November 2011. Some of the primary concerns involved reducing traffic cutting through neighborhoods; the maintenance of foreclosed properties; and public safety. I will continue to work with you to resolve these issues. Communication with our neighbors in District 1 is a top priority. Other initiatives from our office have included conducting traffic studies and upgrading our roads and bridges within the neighborhoods; advocating for the Greenway Program Enhancements along A1A; opening new parks, revitalizing existing parks and installing lightning warning systems; landscaping along East Commercial and East Oakland Park Boulevards and NE 18th Avenue; strengthening enforcement and working towards solutions to address the growing homeless population impacting our City; implementing changes to our municipal codes designed to enhance opportunities for our small businesses; expanding trolley connectors from the Galt to the Galleria Mall, Coral Ridge Shopping Center and Holy Cross Hospital. Lastly, I urge you to review our previous newsletter of October 2011, which describes the progress on many major projects underway throughout the City.

Budget Information: As we move forward into a new year and our second century as a City, I feel I must re-emphasize the City Commission's approach towards exercising one of our most important responsibilities, i.e. reviewing and approving the City's Annual Budget. It is a transparent and inclusive process, which involves the participation of quarterly public workshops with our Budget Advisory Board, community meetings, Commission meetings and Public Hearings. It is a disciplined method built on sound fiscal policies, which promote neighborhood enhancements, economic development, public safety, green space, transportation and our infrastructure. As required by law, we have produced the third balanced budget. Just a few of the highlights include:

1. Of Florida's 25 largest cities, we have the 2nd lowest operating millage rate at 4.1193.
2. In addition to not raising the millage rate, the Fire Assessment Fee has not been raised since 2009.
3. We have a General Fund balance of 20%, which exceeds the recommended 16.7%.
4. While not sacrificing vital City services, we have reduced the size of government by reducing the number of departments from 15 to 9, consolidating divisions, and eliminating 158 positions.
5. In the past three years, we have reduced the General Fund Operating budget by \$18 million.
6. We will save \$6 million by reducing our unfunded pension liabilities through the issuance of pension obligation bonds.
7. We project generating \$11.2 million in revenue by initiating a Return on Investment (ROI) strategy for the Parking System, Water & Sewer Fund and Stormwater Fund. This strategy replaced Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT).
8. We continue to implement further reorganization, which will put into practice performance measures, which permit us to assess our effectiveness in efficiently addressing your priorities.
9. Our net assets over liabilities are \$1.04 billion.

Pain Clinic Update: I have mentioned these clinics in previous newsletters; however, we continue to receive calls for updates. Our City Commission has enacted an ordinance strengthening the State's laws regulating the operations of pain clinics. The City's ordinance highlights include no

queuing of customers outside on the premises; restricting location to at least 500 feet from schools, churches, parks, libraries or daycare facilities; no employees with felony or drug related conviction backgrounds; and required inspection of the premises with annual license renewal.

Broward County Consolidated Communications: As you probably know by now, after years of work by many people, a committee has been formed to address cooperative implementation strategies for consolidation of E-911 communications and dispatch. This committee was formed after resolutions and endorsements for the concept and feasibility of consolidated communications were passed by the Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County, Broward County Chiefs of Police Association, Public Safety Committee of the Broward League of Cities, Broward City County Management Association, Fire-Rescue Services Council, and the Board of Directors of the Broward League of Cities. The endorsements said, in essence, that cooperative consolidation of communications is technically feasible, desirable and will improve service; will reduce delay in transfer of emergency calls; will result in faster emergency response times; will enhance interoperability and coordination amongst responding agencies; and will result in fewer errors due to standardized call handling and dispatch protocols. Each of the groups designated representatives. Additional members were chosen based upon a cross-section of the types of communication models currently operating. The Committee was unanimously confirmed by the Board of County Commissioners on Tuesday, November 1, 2011. I have been asked to be a member of this committee along with 21 other city/county officials. I have also been selected to chair the governance subcommittee. I will update you of our progress in the upcoming months. You can also go to <http://www.fcabc.com> for more information regarding this committee.

Fighting Crime in your Neighborhood: It is important to remember, especially this time of year, not to leave valuables in your car while it is unattended (i.e. wallets, purses, expensive sunglasses and or jewelry, GPS systems, keys, garage door openers, etc.). These items will only invite someone to break in and steal them. Please go <http://www.flpd.org/index.aspx?page=72> to view the Police Department's web page and get tips on how to safeguard not only yourself but your belongings.

Pre-Agenda Meetings: A reminder that our meetings are always on the Monday before a Commission Meeting (unless that Monday is a holiday). The agenda is discussed, as well as any other topics that may arise. The first Monday of the month is at the Beach Community Center, and the third Monday of the month is at Imperial Point Hospital (south entrance) – always at 6p.m. Please call the office if you have any questions or need more information.

Office Contact: Robbi Uptegrove – 954-828-5033; email: ruptegrove@fortlauderdale.gov. In addition to hosting the 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. If you would like to be on our email list to receive information, notifications or general information, please email us and you will be added.

Happy Holidays: I would like to personally wish you all a very happy and safe holiday season. Despite any challenges we may have faced this past year, we are reminded to be thankful for family and friends and the many advantages and opportunities we have. Everyone in District 1 should know that I am grateful for all the input you have provided on the many issues that come before the Commission and those that affect our quality of life. I truly appreciate the opportunity to work with and serve you, as we find solutions that will allow the City to remain one of the most beautiful and best cities in which to live, work, play and raise a family. Be safe and let us all welcome in the New Year with high spirits, a vision for the future and a pride in our home – Fort Lauderdale!