

VILLAGE COUNCIL UPDATE AUGUST 2016---from Jeff Hmara's Point of View



Rain Doesn't Stop Star Spangled Spectacular Another successful event with overflow crowds at Commons Park on July 4th...estimated 35K adults and kids enjoyed good music, plenty of food and great fireworks...exiting the park improves every year (it took us about 45 minutes to get from Great Lawn to Southern Blvd...north exit to Okeechobee Blvd seemed faster)...despite a major downpour at about 5pm, crowds showed up and filled all parking lots..."spectacular" fireworks show (full 30 minutes)...great job by Village Staff!



New Amphitheater Design Approved To keep sound at acceptable levels for everyone, an extensive sound study was performed as part of the design process (including several field measurements during live events) ...sound control recommendations were incorporated into design that will reduce undesirable noise levels in neighborhoods surrounding Commons Park...it was also pointed out that one key to controlling the sound is to do it at the source (at the "sound board" with realtime monitoring feedback to let the sound engineer know to turn it down)...the amphitheater is estimated to cost about \$1M, with \$300K provided by Florida state grant...expected to be completed by next summer...this will allow us to continue the very popular concerts and festivals, while minimizing the negative impact on Commons Park neighborhoods.



Quarterly Progress Report on Strategic Plan Actions Our Strategic Plan really does guide what the Village does during each Fiscal Year...we use an Action Plan to direct Council and Staff work during the year...throughout the year, we monitor our progress regularly... as someone once said: “plan the work and working the plan, if you want to be successful...the Village Manager presented the first

quarterly status report which will not only keep Council updated publically, but, if you watch or attend Council Meetings, you will know how we’re doing on SP implementation...this quarter’s report showed that we are a little ahead of where we planned to be at the end of our first quarter (roughly 28% complete at about 25% of the way through this year)...this report not only measures progress but also give us a chance to make adjustments, if necessary...next progress report will be in October...

Regulating Sober Homes For several years, sober homes in residential neighborhoods has become a growing concern and, although it has been discussed during several State Legislative sessions, not much has been accomplished...it wasn’t until last year that even voluntary registration was put in law...recently, this has come to Council’s attention, again, as residents of one neighborhood spoke at a meeting...

It’s important to recognize that the residents of sober homes are recovering alcoholics and addicts, who live together in these communal environments, in a normal neighborhood setting, as part of their rehabilitation and return to society...according to the law, they are entitled to live in a “congregate living” home, if they choose, to help them complete their rehabilitation...and, they are legally considered to be “disabled” ...because of their legal status, they are protected under both the American with

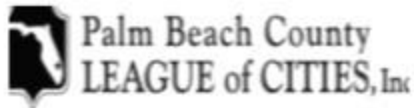


Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Fair Housing Act...most would agree that they deserve the opportunity to benefit from sober homes, performing as they are intended, while, at the same time, the neighborhoods in which they are located deserve to live in peace and safety... alcoholism and addiction rehabilitation is a Billion \$ industry and growing in PBC...and, with little regulation there can be problems both for the individual who is trying to recover, as well as for the neighborhoods in which these sober homes are located...for regulation to be effective, it appears that this issue needs to be addressed at the local, state and national levels...so, here's what's going on...

At the national level, Congresswoman Lois Frankel's Washington initiative has gained some traction and her letter (insert) says that she expects to get a reading from Dept. of Justice and HUD on what legal options communities have within the current laws to manage Sober Homes—DOJ and HUD are expected to answer questions about zoning, licensing and regulating these facilities, before the end of August...hopefully, this will give a legal basis for local governments to make sure these homes are “good neighbors” and not bad influences within our neighborhoods...

At State/County level, PBC State Attorney has been funded to set up a Task Force to explore the enforcement of existing laws and possible creation of new laws to address certain abuses in the rehabilitation industry (especially, Sober Homes)...the purpose of the TF is to identify and pursue “rogue players” in the industry and “dry up illegal funding” (urine testing kick backs from labs, insurance fraud and patient brokering)...there is a Toll Free Tip Line available to report directly to the TF: 1-844-324-5463.

We have heard about several sober homes in RPB that are of concern to neighbors, but this is not yet the size problem that it is in other parts of PBC...however, locally, we have been encouraging residents living near a sober home to be observant and report anything that “doesn't appear to be right”...code violations, nuisances, noise, parking violations, criminal activity, etc...the Village's Code Enforcement Office is aware, as is the Village's PBSO District Office and they are both responsive to calls from concerned residents on this issue, so don't hesitate to call.



**Chairman, LoC Education Committee and
Member, Advisory Boundary Committee**

These are good opportunities to work with our schools to continue improvements and to accommodate growth...I believe we all agree that education is a very important part of our “family-oriented” environment, here in RPB and there are many ways to influence decisions about our schools...having” a seat at the table” is important.

LoC Education Committee provides an opportunity to connect cities throughout PBC with the schools that serve them...one idea being considered is to inform students of careers in cities and other levels of government...the thought is that by attracting ‘best and brightest’ to these careers can improve the way government performs...

A seat on the PB School District’s ABC gives an opportunity for us to provide specific Western Communities input on schools resulting from our point of view...this is especially important with all the new developments approved and with new cities being formed (Westlake and possibly The Acreage)...not only will the roads carry a lot of new traffic, but our schools will probably be at or over design capacity, as a result...new schools may be built, but, in the meantime, school boundaries may need to be changed...it’s important to have a seat at the table...let me know if you have any specific concerns or suggestions about education and schools in our area.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON THESE TOPICS OR ANYTHING GOING ON IN RPB—jhmara@royalpalmbeach.com;(561)371-3581