

## COUNCIL UPDATE: NOVEMBER 2016

...from Jeff Hmara's  
Point of View

### 1. MPO MEETING

SR 7 Extension Project update...August's administrative hearing has been continued by the judge to allow more testimony...now, expecting judge to deliver his ruling November 29-30 at South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)...as you remember, the WP- initiated suit challenged the SFWMD permit...project is still waiting for Army Corps of Engineers permit, which is in process...



MPO Exec. Director reported, as part of PBC team, on their trip to Copenhagen to learn about their highly developed multi-modal transportation systems...he talked about how these use painted and elevated bike lanes and sidewalks, median strips with pedestrian safe zones and a unique transportation 'rule of the road'—"yield to the most vulnerable"—i.e., cars & trucks yield to busses...all vehicles yield to cyclists...cyclists yield to pedestrians...this is a transportation culture very different from ours...

For this to happen in the US, it will take a major change in behavior—someone suggested the place to start is with our kids: educating them in our schools to adopt this kind of mind-set...and, to think about getting-around in something other than cars...a big change, but millennials might be open to it...interesting!

On another agenda item, the first annual Congestion Management Report Card was put together to measure progress on MPO goals and objectives including: more efficient vehicle transportation system (traffic signals operation); more efficient mass transit; safer and convenient network for cyclists and pedestrians, preservation of our environment, etc. ...these measures will allow MPO to determine trends, and to see what's working and what's not...to help decide what projects to fund in the future, based on measured results. One intersection of interest to RPB drivers is Southern Blvd. and SR 7; some improvements have been made.

If you'd like to read more about the Congestion Management Process & Report, go to: [www.PalmBeachMPO.org](http://www.PalmBeachMPO.org)

MPO Board discussion also addressed the current surge in traffic congestion due to the large amount of road construction underway... the Board was reminded that current information on status of road construction in PBC and related traffic congestion, can be accessed by calling 511 ...with all the road construction going on in PBC, it's probably worth checking before heading east.

## 2. OCTOBER'S EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Agenda focused on Crestwood Middle School...highlights were student chorus performance, update on STEM program and description of new Information Technology program coming next year...this is the second year of Crestwood Middle School STEM...it completes a STEM continuum for students...so, a student can begin a STEM Curriculum in Elementary School and continue it through High School, here in RPB...

PBC School District Treasurer gave a presentation explaining the reasons the schools need their half of the proposed 1 Cent Sales Tax increase, coming up for VOTE on the November 8 Ballot...to find out how much money each school in RPB will get, if the sales tax increase passes, and for what specific projects, go to: [www.palmbeachschools.org](http://www.palmbeachschools.org)

## 3. IB AUTHORIZATION TEAM AT RPBHS

RPBHS had its last visit by the IB Authorization Team on, October 10-11 ...as you know, this is the second year of the two year IB Candidate School Process at RPBHS...I was asked to participate in one of the team's sessions to show the community's support for the IB Program...the School District and High School should know the IB Organization's final decision in March or April



2017...when authorized, this will make RPBHS one of about 2000 schools in the world to have the IB Diploma Program....at that point, RPBHS will be referred to as an “IB World School”.



#### **4. SCHOOL ADVISORY BOUNDARY COMMITTEE PROCESS**

As a new member of PBC School District’s Advisory Boundary Committee (ABC), I’ve attended two meetings giving me some insight into the process for school boundary

changes...the purpose of both meetings was to make a recommendation on a boundary change for an overcapacity elementary school in West Boca area...at both meetings, there were about 200 parents in attendance: two opposing groups each supporting different alternatives...proposal for Sales Tax Increase may provide additional options, like expansion of overcapacity schools, if feasible rather than boundary changes...

Next meeting will be Nov. 10...ABC will select one alternative for this overcapacity case...that alternative will then be sent to a Community Input Meeting, held in the area close to affected schools...then it will come back to ABC for final recommendation to Superintendent...then to the School Board for final decision...a very thorough process with many opportunities for community/parent input.

Currently, the only schools in our Western Communities that may be considered for boundary changes in School Year 2017-2018 are Golden Groves Elementary and Osceola Creek Elementary...this boundary change is being considered because of anticipated overcapacity due to city of West Lake development...no schools in RPB are currently “on the ABC radar” ...but, it’s important to stay involved and aware...

#### **5. REGULATION OF RECOVERY RESIDENCES (aka SOBER HOMES)**

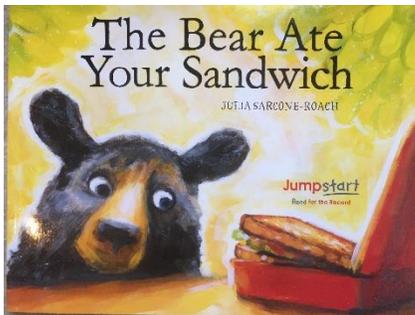
As you may have read recently in the papers, there is a State Attorney’s Task Force investigating fraud and abuse within the County’s recovery industry...several arrests have been made and more

actions are expected...regulation of Sober Homes are of particular importance to residents of RPB, because it is believed that we have several located in our residential neighborhoods...certainly, the number is far fewer than in other PBC municipalities...but, it is important that we do what we can do to make sure those that those that we have are, at the very least, being “good, law-abiding neighbors”...this is tricky because of the protection afforded by the Fair Housing Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act...everyone involved deserves protection and we must act legally...HUD has given it’s reading on this matter and we are now waiting for Dept. of Justice guidance on the latitude and authority that cities have regarding Zoning of these facilities.

Meanwhile, the Florida State Legislature has been slow to act ...they have made Sober Home registration only voluntary and have not funded the accompanying certification program...a well-funded certification program and a mandatory registration would go a long way to putting appropriate standards in place that could be enforced....a lot of work to be done in this area...let your State Representative know if this is important to you.

## **6. LOCAL OFFICIALS & VOLUNTEERS “READ FOR THE RECORD”**

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October 27<sup>th</sup>, Pre-schoolers throughout the nation were read the same book by thousands of volunteers, many of them city officials...the book selected for this year’s reading was: **“The Bear Ate Your Sandwich”**...about 100 Pre-schoolers were treated to about 10 slightly different versions of this story, as it was read by the 10 volunteers who

entertained the kids that morning...each municipality reports the number of readers and number of kids involved, to the Literacy Coalition of PBC for the final tally...each year, the Village of RPB has grown in its involvement in this event...hopefully, next year we’ll have even more volunteers and kids...it’s a great way to emphasize the importance of reading.