

## A YEAR IN REVIEW



It is hard to believe that one year has passed since I was elected to serve the residents of District IV. My thanks and gratitude go to the many of you who have taken the time to attend meetings, sit on boards, encourage me, provide me with input and contribute time and energy for the public good. It is my pleasure and my privilege to represent you and I trust I have earned your respect and that you feel well represented. With your continued help, I look forward to tackling the challenges ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to review some of the issues we have faced this past year:

- **Budget** – This has been a priority from the day I took office, and I have worked diligently to try to ensure our city operates with sound business practices. This Commission passed its first balanced budget (2009 – 2010) without raising the millage tax rate and without having to lay off any employees. One of the first orders of business was to impose a hiring freeze, apart from public safety, as well as freeze discretionary spending and hold back on funding some CIP projects. However, this next year’s budget will have to address an estimated decrease in revenues between \$30 Million - \$35 Million. Accordingly, the Budget Advisory Board is actively working, as are our Staff and the Commission, to try to address this gap in funding without having to raise taxes or fees.
- **Public Safety** – Public Safety is a priority and our crime statistics will evidence the fact that this Commission has emphasized sufficient “feet on the street” in terms of policing and a fully staffed and equipped Fire Department.
- **Visioning Task Force** – This Commission created a Visioning Task Force in December 2009. The Task Force mission is to produce a “Vision Plan” through the next century to guide the Commission in policy and decision- making. This process will be unveiled in the future and will be something all residents will want to participate in.
- **Quality of Life Issues** – Our parks have never looked better and recently, in District IV, Coontie Hatchee Landings and Ann Herman Park opened to the public with rave reviews from the neighbors and park visitors. Gore Betz Park, although not yet developed, opened to the public with a couple of picnic tables in place. This Commission also appointed a Citizens Sustainability Green Committee, and they are hard at work coming up with ways to make our city “greener”.
- **Support of Small Businesses** – I have tried to support our small businesses by providing some free parking on Las Olas and requesting that the commission assign to our Economic Development Board a review of our sign ordinances in an attempt to provide better visibility for our merchants. Further, I have supported the current business survey, which is a joint project between the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the City’s Economic Development Department in an effort to identify ways to attract, retain and expand businesses.
- **Historic Preservation** – This has been a recurring issue in District IV, which is home of the historically designated Sailboat Bend. I placed a high priority in the City becoming a Certified Local Government and this process was recently initiated by the Commission. This is a federal program administered by the state, which, among other things, provides funds and tax credits to help preserve historic resources. Further, I have been working hard to try to preserve those historic properties which have unfortunately been neglected. Both the neighborhood and historic community have worked hard to try and save structures which have been neglected by their owners.
- **Pain Clinics** – Recently, the Commission passed an ordinance establishing a moratorium against opening more pain clinics in our city. Further, we have encouraged staff to explore the formation of a task force to address the concerns of our citizens regarding the operation of those pain clinics currently operating.

In recognition of our centennial birthday, our Mayor has initiated the "Mayor's Volunteer Challenge" of 100,000 volunteer hours. All volunteer hours will be counted towards this goal, whether it is for your neighborhood, school, house of worship, the Citizens' Volunteer Corps, hospitals, community centers, or whatever organization in which you are involved. The barometer will be placed in City Hall explaining hours earned and information about the challenge will be up on the City's website by the time you read this article. The challenge runs from March 2010 to February 2011, so get out and volunteer!

Finally, my assistant, Sharon Brooks, decided to move back to New York City and pick up where she left off with her career. Sharon was a tremendous asset to District IV and she will be greatly missed by all of us, especially me! In the meantime, Maxine Singh, in the Commission Office, is assisting me until I appoint a new assistant. Maxine can be reached at 954-828-5005, or [msingh@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:msingh@fortlauderdale.gov)

Thank you once again for giving me the privilege to represent you and serve the city that I love.

As always, I can be reached at my office at 954-828-5004, on my cell at 954-270-0696, or via email at [RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov)