

Happy New Year to You All



I am excited about the possibilities that 2010 brings! The city ushered the year in with a fun evening and it was great seeing so many of you enjoying yourselves with your families in Esplanade Park and on 2nd Street for the Downtown Countdown activities and Ball Drop. It was a balmy South Florida evening and a fun time was had by all. The Parks & Recreation staff and many others should be complimented for planning and staging the event.

I don't necessarily make resolutions but I do have the resolve to accomplish certain things this year. I would like to be sure our visioning process is kicked-off and is functioning well leading up to our centennial celebration in March 2011. The Visioning Committee members have recently been selected and will recommend the type of structure the process should follow. They will be reporting to the commission with their results. Once they are up and running, I encourage you to participate.

During these tough economic times we are keeping a watchful eye on both the revenue and expense side of the city's budget. I thoroughly review every expenditure request that comes before the commission (amounts over \$10,000) to ensure it fits the category of a "need" as opposed to a "want." We are still operating with a hiring freeze and spending restraint on any discretionary matters. Our Budget Advisory Board members (Keith Cobb, June Page, Bud Bentley, Mark Dickerman, Desorae Giles-Smith, Sam Monroe, Frederick Nesbitt, Alan Silva, Anthony Timiraos and Ray Williams) are doing a great job of investigating and making recommendations of tax saving measures. We cannot, however, ignore the social problems that increase during recessionary times such as job-loss and homelessness.

The Commission has formed a Homeless Task Force bringing together all the community stake holders who are working towards solutions to homeless issues and its accompanying challenges. One of my goals as commissioner is to try and fully understand homelessness in our city and to work towards viable solutions for individuals and the community as a whole. Our Homeless Task Force has been meeting regularly and I feel there is great potential for the city to help facilitate a partnership with our community partners to forge both long and short term solutions. The solutions will address the homeless issue as well as minimize any negative impact to communities. Homelessness has to be addressed from many perspectives and, consequently, the Task Force has received valuable input from many business and community representatives. The Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club, Fort Lauderdale Police Department, TaskForce for Ending Homelessness, Downtown Development Authority, Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Broward County, Christian Community Foundation of South Florida, Shepard's Way, the City Attorney's Office and many others are all determined to be part of the solution. The group is working cooperatively and I have high hopes for the results. Thanks to Cate McCaffrey and the Task Force members for the great job that they are doing on this issue.

Funding for not-for-profit organizations is always an issue but generous hearts usually find ways of contributing to those in need. The Management Team of WaterWorks 2011 is one of those giving hearts and they held a Holiday Luncheon on December 10th in Synder Park. I would like to thank them for raising \$12,000 for the Coalition to End Homelessness as a part of their annual staff appreciation luncheon. Thanks also go out to the Stranahan High School Band who provided the entertainment. Go Dragons! They were fantastic! The event was a great success with corporate contributions from CH2M Hill, Lanzo Lining Services, Inc., GlobeTec Construction, ManCon, Inc. LMK, Insituform, Dickey Consulting Services, Inc., Trio Development Corp., Keith and Schnars, P.A. Keith and Associates, Inc., Intercounty Engineering, Inc., Barney's Pumps and many individual participants.

Please continue to provide me with your input on how to improve our dynamic city and your quality of life. I am here to serve you.

As always, I can be reached at my office at 954-828-5004 or via email at RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov