



From the desk of the Vice Mayor
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Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

JUNE 2016

Crescent House youth shelter to close

Broward County contributes financial aid to help build dog play area in Holiday Park

Summer is at hand, and I hope everyone is looking forward to a great season whether your plans include travel with family and friends or some time at Fort Lauderdale’s amazing beach on weekends. Work continues at City Hall on many fronts, and we have good news to report on a couple key issues for District 2.

First, I’m pleased to announce that the Crescent House youth group home in South Middle River will close at the end of the month. This is the direct result of the legal fight that the city launched on behalf of the neighborhood.

This state-controlled facility on Northwest 7th Avenue was the source of significant problems for surrounding residents for many years. Our Police Department attributed an unbelievable amount of criminal activity to youth housed there. In addition to drug use, vandalism and home break-ins, residents were frequently harassed by teens placed there.

Crescent House was intended as a shelter for adolescent boys who had been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect. You really must question the level of care these children received while in state care. Reforms were repeatedly promised, but

never took hold.

Residents were rightly indignant. So last year, we brought together the city manager, city attorney, Police Department and Code Enforcement and asked them to find a way to shut down Crescent House.

They filed a series of civil citations charging that the home represented a public nuisance that endangered community safety and that its operation as a major social service facility violated the neighborhood’s residential zoning. A special magistrate agreed with the city in November and later began imposing fines against Crescent House.

The state appealed the ruling, but also began looking for a solution. Our attorneys were recently told the state has decided to move out all dependent and delinquent children and not renew Chrysalis Health’s lease when it expires June 30. Chrysalis is the private contractor that has long run the shelter for the state.

Once Chrysalis is gone, the state will explore more suitable uses for the property. Let’s hope a troubled chapter for South Middle River has now come to an end.



The \$50,000 comes from the small amount of funds remaining in a \$400 million bond issue that voters approved in 2000 to preserve environmentally sensitive land and expand parks.

The county and city considered proposals over the past several years to expand two other parks north of downtown. Since both of those options fell through, the dog park represented a third way for the county to help city parks.

The county’s \$50,000 will be combined with \$50,000 that we earmarked from a District 2 parks improvement account and \$36,000 raised from donors in the Victoria Park neighborhood.

As you may remember, the dog park will be located near War Memorial Auditorium and will consist of separate areas for large and small dogs. It will be fenced and will include walking paths, water fountains, benches and waste stations.

Our staff hopes to put the project out for bid before the City Commission adjourns for the summer and then hire a contractor when we return in late August. If that can occur, then the park should open by the end of the year.

Please thank Commissioner Ryan and the rest of the County Commission for their help in making the dog park a reality.

Sincerely,

Holiday Park dog park

The second piece of good news is that the proposed dog play area for Holiday Park recently received a significant boost.

We hoped construction would be underway this summer, but funding remained in flux longer than we expected. We reached out to County Commissioner Tim Ryan about the possibility of county assistance as he represents Fort Lauderdale’s urban core as well. He secured the last \$50,000 that we needed.



Reminder: Prepare for hurricane season

Remember that hurricane season began at the start of June and runs through November.

Please don't be complacent just because we have not been hit by a storm since 2005. Three storms have already come and gone in the Atlantic and Gulf this year even though none posed a threat to our part of Florida.

As the season starts, everyone should review their family emergency plan and assemble a hurricane supply kit.

The city of Fort Lauderdale offers detailed information about hurricane preparedness on its web site. Please visit www.fortlauderdale.gov/hurricane.

Everyone should have emergency supplies for at least three days. Those supplies should include at least one gallon of water per person per day, non-perishable food that is ready to eat, a battery-powered flashlight, a battery-powered radio, a first-aid kit and a reserve of prescription medicine.

As part of your family action plan, you should determine if you live in an evacuation zone and where you would go if ordered to evacuate. It's also prudent to inventory your possessions, assess your home for vulnerable spots, trim trees and check the condition of shutters and back-up generators.



Vice Mayor Trantalis presents a gift to Yona Yahav, the mayor of Haifa, during a recent trip he made to Fort Lauderdale's sister city in Israel.



Vice Mayor Trantalis poses in front a sign honoring Haifa's sister city relationships, including the long-standing one with Fort Lauderdale, during his trip to Israel.



Vice Mayor Trantalis joins other officials for a panel discussion during the recent Mayors Breakfast sponsored by the Greater Fort Lauderdale Realtors Association.



Vice Mayor Trantalis poses with U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and Jason King of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation during a White House event where President Obama proclaimed June as LGBT Pride month.