

Kathleen Beckman
YOUR
Clearwater City Councilmember



Reflections
and Wishes
for a Happy
New Year

As 2021 comes to a close I hope you all have had an opportunity to slow

down a bit, spend time with family and special friends and take a moment or two to reflect. The holidays can be stressful, but I like to believe there is a shift away from "consumerism" and a movement towards just taking the time to let those you love and care about know how important they are to you. To spend time creating memories: playing cards, cooking together, watching a game, walking outside or reminiscing about a shared adventure or missed family member. We were fortunate to have our son and daughter-in-law from DC visit, our daughter and her fiancé from NC visit. Sadly, our son and daughter-in law from Chicago were stuck at home with Covid and the flu. Zoom helps fill the gaps. We hosted an outdoor Christmas breakfast with friends and family. We also fished, and with the help of everyone, (including Wards Fish Market) we had our first ever New England style crab boil dinner! Crab legs, muscles, shrimp, red potatoes, corn and sausage chunks. It was quite the undertaking and lots of fun. With this last newsletter of 2021 I wish you all the best in the New Year. Please be safe as we navigate further challenges with Covid. And finally, I want to extend a sincere thank you to all those people who work during our national holidays - to the grocery store workers, first responders, police officers, sanitation workers, plumbers and pharmacists. Thank you to CNA's and gas station attendants, thank you to doctors, nurses and firefighters, too. Working on a holiday is never fun - but please know you are appreciated.

CLEARWATER'S YEAR IN REVIEW



New Year's Eve offers an opportunity to reflect – to look back on the year and our accomplishments. Clearwater had a whole host of accomplishments during 2021. Here are just *a few* noteworthy ones – in no particular order.

Meeting with Legislators - Advocating for Clearwater



November 29- 31st I spent in Tallahassee meeting with State legislators and lobbyists. I serve as the 3rd Vice President for the Suncoast

League of Cities. With 25 member cities in three counties spanning from St. Leo in the North to Gulfport in the South, this organization works closely with and is supported by, the Florida League of Cities in representing the interests of West Central Florida's municipalities to the Florida Legislature, Governor's office, and state agencies. Former State Representative Jennifer Webb is contracted by the Suncoast League of Cities to help us lobby for issues that affect municipalities in our tri-county area. Jennifer introduced me to a number of electeds; I had a great time learning about their initiatives and talking about our priorities: advocating for home rule legislation, more resources and tools for affordable housing and policy that is crucial to protect our environment - because that's what our economy is dependent on - not to mention our health and the future of our planet. You can learn more about the [Suncoast League of Cities here: SLC](#). Also, I'm happy to report that Clearwater's Communication Department has constructed a "Legislative Priorities" page for our City website - you can access it here: [Clearwater Legislative Priorities](#). One disturbing exchange happened while I was at the State Capitol - a lobbyist (and I believe former State elected) was walking between the House and Senate, he said he spends about 90% of his time with Senators - only 10% with House Reps. because there is no "shaping of legislation" there - they simply fall in line with leadership. This is not how

- Greenprint 2.0, our updated sustainability plan, was passed and we have begun to take steps to realize some of the many measurable goals it outlines. Check it out here: [Greenprint 2.0](#).
- The Council approved two affordable housing developments in downtown Clearwater – [one at 1250 Cleveland St.](#) and one on [Franklin St.](#)
- Clearwater police officers were outfitted with body-worn-cameras.
- Imagine Clearwater officially “broke ground” and construction is well underway – even vertical construction has begun! [Check the 24 hr. webcam here.](#)
- The proposal of a North Greenwood CRA continues to move forward with findings of necessity and approval from both the City and the County.
- Improvements on Cleveland St. and the East Gateway are underway.
- Clearwater raised the Rainbow Flag for the very first time in June in honor of Gay Pride Month! I hope we can have a ceremony or recognition as we raise the flag in 2022.
- We celebrated the grand opening of the newly designed [Crest Lake Park](#).
- We finalized the indefinite/permanent closing of the 400 and 500 block of Cleveland St. for open air seating and entertainment.
- The Council listened to a presentation from Dr. Scott Paine, of the Florida League of Cities, on Ranked Choice Voting and considered placing it on a March ballot.
- The City solicited, reviewed and ultimately rejected proposals (from RFP’s) for the Bluff Properties.
- The City hosted a “Building Better Neighborhoods” series on home gardening and Florida friendly landscapes. Learn more here: [Building Better Neighborhoods](#).
- The City passed its first “Chicken Ordinance” which allows for up to four hens at a single family home. Learn more about specific requirements here: [Chicken Ordinance](#).
- The City signed onto the [Pinellas County Housing Compact](#) – I’m determined that this be a “front and center” document; it does not belong on a shelf.
- We mourned the sudden and heartbreaking death of our City Manager, William Horne.
- We also bid a fond farewell to our City Attorney, Pam Akin as she begins to enjoy her much earned retirement; relaxation and traveling are at the top of her list.
- The City received half of its Federal ARPA ([American Rescue Plan Act](#)) funds \$11.2 million. We have not spent this money yet and will receive the other half in 2022.
- The City decided to adopt the [Park Mobile App](#) for parking within the City and for deep discounts for Clearwater residents.
- The City installed underground trash receptacles on the beach that will reduce litter and will reduce the number of sanitation truck trips.
- The City hired a new City Manager, Mr. Jon Jennings, who began his tenure in November.
- We also hired a new City Attorney, Mr. David Margolis who began his tenure in October.
- The City began work on our [Strategic Plan](#) and our [Comprehensive Plan](#); this will continue in 2022.

democracy is supposed to work. We need to urge our State electeds to represent us and our unique needs here in Pinellas and to vote their heart and conscience - not simply to do as they are told.



Please note: I am thrilled that you have taken the time to read my newsletter, and one

of the reasons I compose it and send it out is to receive feedback from you. However, please be aware that any communication you do with me related to the newsletter is public record.

Here is a link to [My Clearwater Magazine](#).

[UPCOMING CITY MEETINGS](#)

Click on the link above to access City meetings, agendas and attached documents.

The City of Clearwater has many volunteer opportunities. Here is a link to our website. Find out how you can make a difference: [Volunteers Needed](#)

WE HAVE AN ELECTION COMING UP!

We have an election coming up! Voters will be voting on two City Council seats – this is Democracy in action. Be sure to check your voter registration; you’ll want to **SIGN UP TO VOTE BY MAIL. THERE WILL BE NO IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING** for Clearwater’s City Council elections on March 15, 2022. **You either vote by mail or vote on March 15.** Check your voter registration and request a mail ballot here: [Votepinellas.com](#).



- The Planning Department won the [Florida League of Cities Florida Citizenship Award](#) for its palcemaking programs including art and murals.
- Our CRA scored a big win with the [Clyde Butcher photography exhibit](#), displayed in our Main Library. Hooray! It is free to the public.



ARTICLE/PODCAST OF THE MONTH:

A major new United Nations scientific report has concluded that countries and corporations have delayed curbing fossil-fuel emissions for so long that we can no longer stop the impact of climate change from intensifying over the coming decades. *The New York Times* "The Daily" Podcast linked below discusses this. It is also available as a transcript only.

[The Daily: Code Red for Humanity](#)

This article "[Revealed: the Florida power company pushing legislation to slow rooftop solar](#)" by By Mary Ellen Klas for the *Miami Herald* and Mario Alejandro Ariza for *Floodlight* published Dec. 20, 2021 in *The Guardian* discusses some shady "behind the scenes" lobbying related to the harmful net-metering bill set to be heard during this year's legislative session. This is a bill I will be following very closely as its impact will make solar more expensive - negatively affecting our climate, jobs and cost of living.

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WE NEED YOU! POINT IN TIME COUNT

Homelessness is a part of every American community, and Clearwater is no exception. The Homeless Leadership Alliance of Pinellas, the city and its partners will conduct a comprehensive count and survey of Clearwater's homeless population on Thursday, Jan. 27. More than 300 volunteers are needed to count and survey homeless individuals in Pinellas County. **I'm volunteering! Will you join me?**

Volunteers will visit traditional service locations, such as meal and street sites, bus terminals and parks. The count is important because it helps determine how homeless individuals are assisted in our community. To volunteer, register here: [POINT IN TIME COUNT](#)

