

Kathleen Beckman
YOUR
Clearwater City Councilmember



ELECTIONS MATTER!
Make an Informed
Decision

We're in the homestretch of Clearwater's municipal election for two seats on the Clearwater City Council. And

while people in the campaign and public policy world say "All politics is local," I believe the decisions we make at the local level truly DO impact our daily lives.

This election is your opportunity to cast a vote for a council member who will best represent YOU and YOUR values.

Consider the Important Work of
Councilmembers

Councilmembers make decisions about many different topics:

- Land use
- Budget priorities
- Environmental policy
- Housing
- Streets and sidewalks
- City parks and recreation centers
- Strategic planning
- Public utilities
- Appointments to advisory boards and more...

Plus, in addition to representing you on the city council, members have the chance to sit on one or more regional boards. For example, I represent Clearwater on the Suncoast League of Cities, the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, Pinellas County Continuum of Care and the Clearwater Arts Alliance.

Learn about the Candidates

Please do your research on the six candidates who are vying for the two open seats on our council:

- Check out their websites;
- Read the candidate profiles by Tracy McManus in the *Tampa Bay Times*, and
- View the candidate forums that are linked on our city website and are available on YouTube.

You can even call each candidate to talk about the issues that matter to you. Think of it as interviewing them for the job of representing you. Then make your decision and VOTE!

CLEARWATER SIGNS
CONTRACT WITH CENERGISTICS
will Save \$5 Million
Over 5 Years

On Feb. 17th the Council unanimously approved a five-year contract with energy management firm, Cenergistic. I am thrilled to report that with this partnership, Clearwater will net a savings of over \$5 million.

We are moving forward with intention to meet Greenprint 2.0 goals. Next up is looking at our solar feasibility study to determine what buildings will be first to install solar. I'm also working to develop the plan to reach Greenprint's goal of installing solar on the homes of 1000 low and moderate income residents by 2030. You can view Greenprint's goals/timeline here: [Greenprint Timeline](#).

BEACH ACCESS FOR EVERYONE



The city of Clearwater showed a "little love" on Valentine's Day when it

deployed two motorized beach wheelchairs that are available for public use on Clearwater Beach.

New Motorized Beach Wheelchairs

The new motorized wheelchairs are located at Beach Lifeguard Tower #0, located at 180 S. Gulfview Blvd. and join two beach wheelchairs that have been available for visitors with special needs.

Powered by an electric motor, the new chairs have user-friendly features, such as adjustable armrests and seats. They also have safety features, such as an anti-tip balance, safety belts and all-terrain tires.

The motorized chairs support up to 300

Request a Mail Ballot until March 5, or Vote in Person

You can request a mail ballot through March 5. Visit the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections (SOE): votepinellas.com or call to request a mail ballot: 727- 464-8683. Then be sure to turn in your ballot. Or, you can vote in person on March 15. YOUR VOICE MATTERS! Here is the link to Pinellas County SOE frequently asked questions:

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES...



This month I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Ontario Montgomery, owner of Photo Fresh Fades and Beauty. This barber/beauty shop is located at 1682 N. Fort Harrison.

Ontario is a Pinellas County native. He graduated from Largo High School in 2010 and earned his cosmetology license from Sunstate Academy. He opened his shop just as Covid hit. In addition to cutting hair in his shop, Ontario also provides free haircuts to those in need at Clearwater Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center.

'Be Intentional about Supporting Local Businesses'

Photo Fresh Fades and Beauty employs two barbers and two stylists. Stop by; say hello. Let's be intentional about supporting our local businesses.

IMPORTANCE OF THE SANKOFA



February is Black History Month. There have been several events held in our community to recognize and honor the contributions of African Americans

in our collective history.

'Flying Forward while Looking Backward'

Clearwater residents who attended the Feb. 16 panel discussion at North Greenwood Library learned about the significance of the mythical bird Sankofa. Community leaders Muhammad Abdur-Rahim and Bilal F. Habeeb-ullah taught us how the Sankofa flies forward while looking backward with

pounds and are operated by a mounted joystick in both forward and reverse. They can run continuously for approximately six hours. [Click here](#) to learn more about how to check out the chairs.

Application for Accessibility Mats

The city has applied for state approval to install accessibility mats at three beach locations. These long, non-slip mats give people with mobility challenges or custom wheelchairs a way to bypass the soft, uneven sand. Because of sea-turtle protections, the mats cannot be closer than 175 feet of wet sand. We are hopeful the mats will be permitted and installed by fall.

WE HAVE AN ELECTION COMING UP!



REGISTER TO VOTE CHECK YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION SIGN UP TO VOTE BY MAIL VOTE!

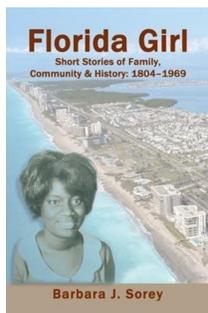
Our election on March 15 will have NO EARLY WALK-IN VOTING. That means, if you want to vote, you either request a mail ballot and vote by mail (all postage is pre-paid) – or you can drop your mail ballot off – in person – at any SOE office; Court St. is the closest office for us. Or... you vote in person on Tuesday, March 15 from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. at your polling location. Polling locations have been consolidated. You'll need to be informed about this. I would advise you NOT limit your option to only voting in person. What if your car breaks down, what if you're ill or a family member needs you? What if you simply forget? **Don't leave your vote to chance. Vote by mail.** Be sure your voice is heard. Here is the link to the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections website where you can register, check registration, and request a mail ballot.

SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

an egg (symbolizing the future) in its mouth.

It's all about the importance of retrieving things of value from one's knowledge of the past. To know history and your heritage is to know your current self, the world around you, and how to better both.

LOCAL AUTHOR BARBARA SOREY-LOVE... CAPTURING CLEARWATER'S AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY



Barbara Sorey-Love is not only a Clearwater native, she is an expert on Clearwater history. Her childhood residence was 1161 Gould St., in the neighborhood referred to as "Clearwater Heights."

She gave me a tour of the area last year, pointing out where her

home was; where a favorite teacher lived; where there were retail shops, churches, and two segregated schools – Williams Elementary and the original Pinellas High School.

'Personal and Historical Depictions of a Way of Life'

Barbara has written two memoirs about her family and her childhood. *Florida Girl* and *Know Where You Going? You Gotta Know Where You Been!* are personal and historical depictions of a way of life that was typical for many African American families whose existence in this country began with the shackles of slavery, continuing into the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. Both books are available on Amazon.

Clearwater's first African American librarian, Christine Wigfall Morris, is the subject of another book co-written by Barbara. Ms. Morris managed the North East Library, which no longer exists.

Cemeteries Memorial Committee

Currently, Barbara serves as Chairperson of the Clearwater African American Cemeteries Memorial Committee, which has recently uncovered two lost and forgotten cemeteries in our city. She also serves on the Clearwater African American Remembrance Committee, whose purpose is to honor, celebrate and promote Clearwater's African American culture and history. To learn more or connect with Barbara Sorey-Love, visit the Facebook page:

[Clearwater African Memorial Committee.](#)



In all my community outreach, both before and after my election, residents consistently express concern about the condition of their sidewalks.

Keeping 365 Miles of Sidewalk in Good Condition

The city has 365 miles of sidewalk and spends an estimated \$1.6 million a year on sidewalk repair, ADA ramp replacement and new installations. Our Parks & Recreation staff and a contractor hired through the Engineering Department are responsible for this work. Of the total amount, about \$870,000 is paid to the contractor.

Corey Martins, Traffic Signal System Supervisor from the City of Clearwater, reported the following at the Feb. 1 Lake Belleview Neighborhood Association meeting:

- 285 miles of sidewalk are classified in good condition;
- 51 miles are classified in fair condition; and
- 30 miles are in poor condition.

Fixing Sidewalks Is a 'Top Priority'

There are several challenges in sidewalk repair including tree removal, the need for improved drainage, ADA compliance and private property rights. However, crumbling, uneven or separating sidewalks are not only unsightly, they are a true safety hazard and a potential liability expense, as well. I am pleased that City Manager Jon Jennings has said fixing our sidewalks is a top priority, and repairs should be completed by mid-summer. To learn more, click here:

[Clearwater Sidewalk Repair](#)

And Finally... Thanks for Your Interest and Support

Please Share Your Ideas and Concerns

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

[Learn More about Our City and](#)



ARTICLE/PODCAST OF THE MONTH:

"City of the Future" by Sidewalk Labs is a great podcast; each episode explores one idea or innovation that will transform cities. Topics range from adaptive traffic lights, to delivery robots, to development and housing. Learn more here: [City of the Future](#).



The February 16th edition of the *Tampa Bay Times* included this article on the local effects of sea level rise. Here is a link to the Feb. 16th article "[U.S. Could see a century's worth of sea rise in 30 years](#)" by Seth Borenstein.

Local Journalism ... the 'Fourth Pillar of Democracy'

Local journalism is the fourth pillar of our Democracy- Sign up for a subscription here: [Tampa Bay Times Subscriptions](#).

Council Meetings

Here is a link to [My Clearwater Magazine](#). And click on the following link to access city meetings, agendas and attached documents: [UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS](#)

Consider Volunteer Opportunities

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

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