

# Kathleen Beckman

## YOUR Clearwater Vice-Mayor

### Monthly Newsletter

September 2022



#### Exciting Opportunities as Clearwater Moves Forward

Student, parent, teacher, master craftsman, elected official, athlete: everyone has goals they're striving for, something they want to improve or achieve, no matter what stage of life they're at. So too, Clearwater has goals it is striving to achieve. Mark Twain said, "Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection." I'm excited that Clearwater is continuously striving to improve.

I'm excited to welcome aboard a new Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Director, hopefully at our October CRA meeting. I'm also excited about the November City Charter Amendment/Bluff Development Referendum that, if approved, can bring great vibrancy and economic vitality to our downtown. And I'm excited about the possibilities of significant improvements to our airpark as we negotiate a new operations contract (see below for more information).

Finally, I'm excited to see the proposals that will be brought forward as the city begins to allocate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. There is great energy, enthusiasm, and excitement here in Clearwater, and we have a million ways for you to get involved with something you care about. I'm humbled and proud to serve on your City Council and be part of all the excitement.

### Thank You to ALL Who Serve and Support Us During a Hurricane



Clearwater's **Division Chief of Emergency Management, Jevon Graham**, is a Rockstar! He works around the clock before and during

a hurricane event. With the arrival of Hurricane Ian, Jevon's been the conduit between national, state, and local experts and all information related to Clearwater's preparation, response, and recovery actions. He communicates with Clearwater leadership nearly hourly or as the situation requires. He is a calming presence, and we are lucky to have him as Chief of Emergency Management.

Many thanks too, to **Clearwater employees** who help ensure our communication is accurate and effective, those who field desperate phone calls, those who respond in person to emergency calls, those who work the phones to reschedule and coordinate the business of the city, and those who help clear roadways and sidewalks.

I offer sincere appreciation, too, to **Duke Energy workers** who literally work around the clock to restore power and help clear our roads. It takes effective leadership and coordination of multiple moving parts to weather the storm. Thank you to everyone who has given so much to keep us safe.

Assessing the effects of Hurricane Ian, it's clear things could have been much worse for us here at home. My heart goes out to everyone affected by the catastrophic events of Hurricane Ian. As I learn of them, I'll be sure to communicate opportunities for us to help our neighbors to the south.

## Clearwater Council Reduces Millage Rate by .07%



While my heading indicates the Council reduced the millage rate by .07%, as I write this, it is not yet official. Our September 29<sup>th</sup> Council meeting to have a second reading of and approval of the budget was cancelled due to Hurricane Ian. This millage reduction will most likely be approved on a second reading at our next Council

meeting. However, because property values have increased, residents will still pay more on their tax bills than last year, but they will pay \$7 less per \$100,000 than they would have under the originally unchanged rate.

Council directed staff to cut \$1 million from the budget to allow for this rollback. City services/staff affected include cutting the recommended additional librarian, assistant librarian and extend hours at the North Greenwood Library, custodial staff to open public restrooms at six city parks, a neighborhoods outreach liaison, and money for street and sidewalk repair.

## People You Should Know



## Shihan Walter Evans

This month I'm happy to introduce you to **Mr. Walter Evans**. Walter is the founder of **Shihan School of Survival**, where he is the master teacher. Mr. Evans holds a **5<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt** and is an inductee in the **Black Belt Hall of Fame**. He is also a Clearwater resident who is dedicated to teaching self-defense training, awareness, and healthy exercise habits through the martial arts for both adults and children. Recently, I had the pleasure of interviewing Mr. Evans. You can read that interview here: **Mr. Walter Evans: Empowering Others Through Martial Arts.**

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Paint Your Heart Out Set for Oct. 22



**Paint Your Heart Out Clearwater** (PYHOC) is a not-for-profit, community partnership comprised of local businesses, community groups, and concerned citizens committed to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged homeowners and a focus on revitalization through an annual one-day event whereby selected

homes in targeted residential neighborhoods are cleaned-up and painted.

Each year nearly 200 volunteers don their grubby clothes and paint 10-12 homes in Clearwater. We start at 8 a.m. and are usually finished by noon-ish. This year, "post Covid," we'll have a large group celebration after the painting is complete. I've been a board member of PYHOC since I was elected in 2020 and I'm super excited to participate in my 3<sup>rd</sup> home painting on **Oct. 22**. PYHOC is still looking for donations and community support. If you'd like to learn more or donate, reach out to me, or check out the organization here: **PYHOC**

## Greater Clearwater Celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month



**National Hispanic Heritage Month** is annually celebrated from **September 15 to October 15** in the United States for recognizing the contributions and influence of Hispanic Americans to the history, culture, and achievements for the United States. This is super exciting for Clearwater, this year especially, because the Council recently approved a new Sister City designation with **Ixmiquilpan, Mexico**.

Clearwater is excited about the return of the **Clearwater Hispanic Farmers Market** on **Oct. 15 at 610 S. Ft. Harrison from 9-3**. There are also a number of Hispanic heritage cultural and informational events planned for our region. You can learn more about some of these Hispanic-centered events here: **National Hispanic Heritage Month**.

## Get Ready to Swing and Sway! Clearwater Jazz Holiday is here October 14-16

Slip on your dancing shoes as the **43<sup>rd</sup> Clearwater Jazz Holiday** roars into Clearwater's **BayCare Park October 14-16**. Trombone Shorty is a favorite of mine, and he's one of the headliners. The Clearwater Jazz Holiday Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that organizes and promotes this amazing music festival, as well as working tirelessly year round to expose residents – especially our youth – to the joy of music and jazz! Let's support the arts. You can check out the lineup and order tickets online here: **Clearwater Jazz Holiday**.



## Airpark Presentations Lead to Community Engagement



The Sept. 15 Council meeting was a lively one. On the agenda was a vote

to approve staff's recommendation to being negotiations with [FlyUSA](#) and [Paradise Ventures](#) on potentially becoming the new fixed-base operator of the [Clearwater Airpark](#). After 14 public comments from pilots, residents, flight school students, attorneys, developers, and the Airpark Advisory Board Chair, along with a number of emails sent directly to Council, we voted unanimously to allow staff to being shaping an operation agreement with FLYUSA and Paradise Ventures.

Clearwater Airpark is 80 years old and in need of long deferred maintenance. Flight take-offs and landings have increased exponentially within the last 10 years, including a marked uptick in helicopter traffic that has impacted the quality of life for nearby residents. Additionally, there is interest in creating a more "family friendly" or community atmosphere at the airpark. There are a number of competing interests, and it will be important to seek a balance in use that will be beneficial to the city, the users of the airpark, and our residents. You can view the presentations here: [Clearwater Airpark Advisory Board](#). You can also read the proposal and supporting documents here - Go to agenda item 11.4: [Clearwater Airpark](#).

## The General Election Is November 8... Take Action Now to be an Informed Voter



We have a [general election](#) coming up on [Nov. 8](#) and it's imperative that voters get informed and vote! You can register to vote and/or check your voter registration at our [Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections](#). [The last day to register to vote for this November's election is Oct. 11](#). Voters will be voting for state and local officials, US Senator and Representative, judges, three

Florida Constitution amendments, and a Clearwater Charter amendment for our Bluff development referendum.

Elected officials decide what government does and how it serves the people. They decide the standards, protections, and services, and who benefits and who pays. Services could include education, clean water and air, health care, decent housing, unemployment benefits, public safety and the courts.

To learn more about candidates and issues you can visit a candidate's website or check out the League of Women Voters of North Pinellas County. You can also visit [VOTE411.org](#). Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund in 2006, this website is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information, both general and state specific. It is super easy to navigate and is an exceptional repository of up-to-date information.

## City Charter Amendment Bluff Referendum on November Ballot

The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections will mail out vote by mail

69
<p>City of Clearwater Charter Amendment</p> <p>Ciudad de Clearwater Enmienda a los Estatutos</p>
<p>Redevelopment of Two Government-Owned Properties Located West of Osceola Avenue in the Downtown Core</p> <p>Shall the Clearwater City Charter be amended to allow the City, instead of selling the vacant City Hall and a portion of the former Harborview sites to the highest bidder at a public auction, to sell the properties to Gotham Property Acquisitions and The DeNunzio Group; who will create approximately 600 apartments and 158-key hotel, retail, entertainment, restaurants and cultural uses available to all Clearwater residents, as further described and limited by City Ordinance 9597-22?</p> <p>Reurbanización de Dos Propiedades del Gobierno Ubicadas al Oeste de Osceola Avenue en el Centro de la Ciudad</p> <p>¿Se deben modificar los Estatutos de la Ciudad de Clearwater para permitir que la Ciudad, en lugar de vender el Ayuntamiento desocupado y una parte de las antiguas instalaciones de Harborview al mejor licitador en una subasta pública, venda las propiedades a Gotham Property Acquisitions y a The DeNunzio Group, los cuales crearán aproximadamente 600 departamentos y un hotel de 158 llaves, y usos de minoristas, entretenimiento, restaurantes y culturales a disposición de los residentes de Clearwater, tal y como se describe y limita en la Ordenanza 9597-22 de la Ciudad?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes / Si</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No / No</p>

ballots on **Oct. 6** for our **Nov. 8 election**. The last question on the ballot for Clearwater voters is the following question:

**“Shall the Clearwater City Charter be amended to allow the City, instead of selling the vacant City Hall and a portion of the former Harborview sites to the highest bidder at a public auction, to sell the properties to Gotham Property Acquisitions and The DeNunzio Group; who will create approximately 600 apartments and 158-key hotel, retail, entertainment, restaurants and cultural uses available to all Clearwater residents, as further described and limited by City Ordinance 9597-22?”**

**I support this referendum.** You can reach out to me if you have questions or would like to understand my support. Our city website also has a webpage dedicated to information about the referendum, supporting documents, and links to voter registration: **[Clearwater Nov. 8 Referendum](#)**.

## Interested in Learning More about Solar? Check out the Pinellas 2022 Solar Co-op



**Join the Pinellas 2022 Solar Co-op!**

Save money & stress by going solar in a group.

[BIT.LY/pinellasUN](https://bit.ly/pinellasun)




Are you interested in going solar? Want to learn more about cost, installation, and savings? According to **[Greenprint 2.0](#)**, Clearwater’s Sustainability Action Plan, electricity is the biggest contributor to our community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, with most of that electricity being used for lighting, cooling, and heating of buildings. Transitioning to solar can reduce the use of fossil fuels, reduce carbon emissions that contribute to climate change, save money, and create jobs.

Non-profit [Solar United Neighbors](#) is hosting the Pinellas 2022 Solar Co-op, and Clearwater residents are invited to join. The co-op is free to join. Members will learn about solar energy and leverage their membership numbers to obtain competitive pricing and high-quality solar panel systems. Monthly information sessions are scheduled through December. You can learn more here: [SolarUnitedNeighbors](#).

## Thank You for Your Interest and Support

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.

### Important Links

[My Clearwater Magazine](#)

[Upcoming City Meetings](#)

[City of Clearwater Volunteer Opportunities](#)

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