



**Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill:**

Many residents have expressed concern about the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The city is preparing for the spill, in the event it threatens local beaches. The impact on our tourism-based economy could be catastrophic if the slick makes its way to the east coast. The city and the county have contractors on standby to conduct any necessary cleanup. At the state level, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has been designated as the lead Florida agency for responding to the disaster. For the latest news, resources, and contacts, please visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon>.

**Budget:**

The Commission has received many good suggestions to address reduction of expenses and our revenue shortfall. Public input has been received on the budget at a special meeting held May 11<sup>th</sup>. Continuing the dialogue, the Budget Advisory Board will hear presentations from the Public Works Department as listed below:

- June 16<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor – Presentation – Public Works
- June 30<sup>th</sup> – 6:00 p.m., City Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor – Review of Public Works info

**A More Business-friendly City:**

City officials are working to address issues raised in a recent survey of 870 businesses. This research was sponsored by the city and its partner, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce. In response to suggestions, the city will be addressing ways of enhancing the economic development office and streamlining the permitting process. Centralizing business information online should help communicate rules and procedures to investors, and a concierge-style service to improve businesses-government relations was recommended. Other ideas included the development of strategies to reduce east-west commuting times and the overall cost of doing business. The availability of qualified technical and engineering workers, noise and parking ordinances, and city signage were also of concern. More on this later.

**Utility Undergrounding:**

During our May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Commission decided that 70 percent of a neighborhood’s residents must agree before the city could proceed with a project to bury power lines and charge those residents for the work. An earlier proposal called for agreement by 66 percent of residents. We supported an ordinance that would give neighborhoods, which want to agree to assess themselves, the right to bury lines, but have held off on a final decision, while the ordinance is being amended to include the recent proposal to increase the threshold of approval before moving forward.

**Red Light Cameras:**

Also during the May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, we put a temporary hold on moving forward to install cameras at six intersections to ticket drivers running red lights on city roads. There is uncertainty about whether our plans would be compatible with pending state legislation (House Bill 325), recently sent to Governor Charlie Crist authorizing use of such cameras. The Governor must take action by May 15<sup>th</sup>, and if he doesn’t sign or veto, the bill would automatically become law. Under the act, the city would receive less money than originally anticipated; i.e., local governments would get \$75 of the proposed \$158 fine and the state the remainder. Local governments could get \$10 million in the first year and nearly \$66 million in 2013–14. However, neither the city ordinance nor the state legislation would result in any points to violators on their driving record.

**Pedestrian Safety:**

The city is taking steps to ensure enhanced pedestrian safety on Las Olas by improving education, mainly through signage, and by instituting a greater enforcement presence, especially at “hot spots” where repeated violations are known to occur. We need to focus on this until we find the right combination of public awareness and traffic control.

**Local Crime Report:**

Residents are reminded to keep valuables in your vehicles out of sight, as there has been a slight increase in thefts at Hardy and Snyder parks. Undercover presence has been stepped up in these areas.

## *Vice Mayor Romney Rogers, Commissioner, District IV*

### **Prehistoric Site on New River:**

Tequesta Indian artifacts have been discovered along the New River in a newly acquired waterfront park, which has been designated as a site of local significance. According to the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy in Davie, the artifacts include animal bones, marine shell fragments, and pottery shards. Situated in the city's Tarpon River neighborhood, the park was recently renamed Lewis Landing Park in recognition of the Lewis family, believed to be the first permanent residents of the New River area.

### **New River Master Plan:**

Speaking of the New River, I participated in the public workshop on the Riverwalk Public Realm Plan on April 13<sup>th</sup> at the New River Trading Post. After a presentation on the project by the consultant team, city staff solicited input from attendees on the different aspects of the design proposal. The next phase in the master planning process is to convene an advisory board of key stakeholders, such as retailers, developers, cultural partners, and educators. I look forward to working on this exciting effort to animate, operate, and sustain our Riverwalk.

### **Pay By Phone Parking:**

You may have read recently about the city's new service of paying for parking by cell phone. In areas where this system has been installed, you no longer need cash for parking. Just park your car, make a quick phone call, and then head for your destination. You can even get a text message reminder before time expires. There's an option of calling back and extending your parking session from anywhere, subject to meter time limits. Pay By Phone parking is safe, easy, and convenient. For details on this service and how to sign up for a free account, go to [http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/parking/pay\\_by\\_phone.htm](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/parking/pay_by_phone.htm).

### **Events:**

- ❖ 2010 Starlight Musicals start Friday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at Holiday Park, 1300 E. Sunrise Blvd. This 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bank of America Concert Series is free, outdoors, and takes place every Friday through August 6<sup>th</sup> from 7 – 10 p.m. Call the 24-hour hotline at 954-828-5363 or visit [www.fortlauderdale.gov/life](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/life) for more information.
- ❖ Citizens Volunteer Project, South Middle River, Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 a.m. at NW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. & Sunrise Blvd. (north side).
- ❖ Keep Up To Date on Visioning Committee Progress. To review meeting minutes or check the date of the next meeting, visit [www.fortlauderdale.gov/documents/visioning/index.htm](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/documents/visioning/index.htm). To suggest a name to brand this initiative, please send an email to [visioning@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:visioning@fortlauderdale.gov) or contact the Committee staff liaison, Shannon Vezina, at 954-828-4743 or [svezina@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:svezina@fortlauderdale.gov).
- ❖ Parks and Recreation Announces Its Recreational Lineup: Browse the city's recreational programs page at <http://fortlauderdale.gov/life/guides.htm>.

### **Staff News:**

My new assistant, MJ Matthews, JD, is on board and may be reached at 954-828-5028 or [mmatthews@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:mmatthews@fortlauderdale.gov). For 20 years, MJ worked at the Downtown Fort Lauderdale office of FAU's Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions. Back in 1995, MJ wrote the background research paper for Fort Lauderdale's citywide visioning workshop, serving as scribe for former Commissioner Tim Smith's small-group session. Most recently affiliated with the South Florida Regional Planning Council, MJ is thrilled to be working Downtown again and I am thrilled to have her on board!

Last but not least, my sincere thanks are extended to Ms. Maxine Singh of the Commission office for holding the fort until MJ arrived on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

As always, I can be reached at my office at 954-828-5004, on my cell at 954-270-0696, or via email at [RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:RRogers@fortlauderdale.gov).