

2005-2006 State of the Village

Mayor Gary C. Matzner

In March, we will officially celebrate our 10th birthday as a municipality. We have certainly come a long way as a village in those ten years. Therefore it gives me great pleasure to present my second State of the Village report, as required by our Village Charter. What started out as a year to focus on completing the remaining projects of former Mayor Greer, changed dynamically in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. As the year began, our focus was on completing the capital projects at hand, the Library and Community Center at Pinecrest Gardens and other improvements at the Gardens. There did not seem be any sense of urgency to move in any direction, as we held a day long planning meeting to look at the long term needs of the Village.

All of that changed, with the arrival of the first potentially damaging hurricane, since our incorporation or since Hurricane Andrew in 1992. While Hurricane Katrina was on course to hit North Miami-Dade County and Broward County, a last minute turn brought the strongest part of the storm right through Pinecrest. Katrina was the first real test of our emergency response capabilities, and despite the damage and over ten inches of rain, we passed with flying colors. The Village team responded magnificently to the challenge. Yes, we had complaints; yes we had power outages, but in terms of managing the damage, police response and clean up, Manager Lombardi, Police Chief Hohensee and their staff got the job done. We grew up a little more with the arrival of Hurricane Wilma. No rain, but a heck of a lot of wind. Again, a lot of damage and a well organized response.

The issues raised in the wake of these two hurricanes, Katrina and Wilma, will propel the Village into its next era. In the first ten years, Mayor Greer and the initial Village Council built a government infrastructure starting with our manager, a police department and each of the of the other departments, building and zoning, public works, and parks and recreation. We bought property, built parks and began to deliver quality services. We paved the streets and through enforcement cleaned up the Village. We planted 10,000 trees to create a canopy over our beautiful village. This era included building our Village Hall and the planning of building out Pinecrest Gardens with a library and community center.

This next era will be marked by improvements to our utilities, particular power and water. But, as a by-product, it may improve our telephone and cable services. We will exam the possible addition of natural gas and county sewage treatment. It is too early to tell if we will be at the head of the line or the tale in the search for federal, state and utility company contributions. But, in the end if we are going to reach these goals of improving the quality of life and safety to our families, we need to be prepared to step to the plate and pay our fair share, but not more than our fair share. While the numbers sound daunting to bury our power lines, seventy-five to one hundred million dollars, the costs of not burying those lines continue to mount and may be more expensive in terms of lost revenues to the community and the costs to continue to make the same repairs over and over again to above ground utilities. Our goal needs to be county water available to all residents with wells within the next five years and a viable solution to the prolonged and repetitive power outages. As we move forward on this new agenda, we will begin by closing the book on the first ten years by building the library and community center at Pinecrest Gardens. I also look forward to announcing some time in the next few months a blue print for an exciting new park project as an alternative to the 4.5 acre track on 72nd Street. In addition, I am committed to build out Flagler Grove Park as soon as possible.

Looking at results for last year, strictly by the numbers, the Village had revenues of \$15.5 Million and expenditures of about \$14.850 Million. Village personnel currently stands at 121 full-time and 38 part-time staff, up modestly from 121 and 36 respectively for the prior year.

Crime for 2005 was down from 2004. Major crimes for the year were down from 753 last year to 724 this year. For the year there were no homicides, 2 sex offenses, 14 robberies, 49 aggravated assaults, 112 burglaries, 5003 larcenies, no arson and 44 auto thefts.

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