

## PINECREST WATER VOTE

The People Have Spoken

Over the past two decades, Pinecrest has been most successful because we have worked together to solve community problems and accomplish great things – ultimately improving quality of life for our residents. This was the impetus for the Village's incorporation.

But one lingering deficiency that exists in the Village is the lack of County drinking water and fire hydrant infrastructure in some areas of Pinecrest, which today affects approximately 740 homes. This is an issue that is older than Pinecrest. The issue is complex, stemming from the convoluted and illogical policies the County has used to fund or not fund new infrastructure. It's a service that the County is in absolute control of in its role as the water utility. The Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department refuses to provide financially feasible solutions – leaving the affected residents with very few options.

Resident input received through the Inspire Pinecrest citizen engagement initiative conducted by the Village this past fall, informed the Village Council's decision to facilitate the recent referendum. In essence, the referendum asked the broader question – whether the entire community was willing to pay to complete the water system. The Village did not take an advocacy role in this election, but instead focused on providing the historical facts and ensuring as high a voter turnout as possible. Both goals were accomplished.

The facts enabled people to study the issue and make the best objective decision for themselves and their families. The voter turnout was high at 42%, approximating previous mail-in elections conducted by the Village. According to the County's Elections Department, this well exceeded the typical election turnout in the 15-20% range when compared to recent mail-in elections in other communities.

Ultimately, the proposed ballot question on issuing a bond failed 62% to 38%. Together, the community worked on the problem and engaged in reasonable debate and collegial dialogue. It was a question that needed to be asked. I am proud of the way Pinecrest handled the situation. We ran toward a problem and not away from it. The people have spoken.

Possible next steps include a citizen-driven initiative to form a Special Taxing District of some 740 affected homes and/or direct attention to the County's leadership to provide a financially feasible solution. The Village's role will continue to be one of support and advocacy in the best interest of the affected residents. This spirit of cooperation is what makes Pinecrest one of the best places to live in Florida.

