

## 2006-2007 State of the Village Mayor Gary C. Matzner

This past year marked another year of accomplishments and milestones for the Village of Pinecrest.

We made great progress in restoring our parks, especially Pinecrest Gardens, after the heavy damage sustained in 2005 as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. At the gardens, we had to put a new roof on the historic buildings and, unfortunately, there was significant damage to the park's signature Banyan tree. Despite the losses from these storms, our staff worked hard to restore all Village facilities as well as recover funding from FEMA to mitigate most of the expenses.

I am pleased we overcame a number of hurdles to commence construction of the Library and Community Center at Pinecrest Gardens, as the increased cost in construction materials exceeded the Library and Community Center budgets. We negotiated additional funding from the Miami-Dade County Library System and implemented cost cutting changes to the design. With great cooperation from County Manager George Burgess and Library System Director Raymond Santiago, we obtained the additional funding to allow the Village to put the project out to bid. Even with the increased budget there were only two bidders, and the successful bidder refused to execute a contract. We went back and trimmed more costs and re-bid the project and finally executed a contract with NAC Construction. Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Alvarez joined us for a delightful groundbreaking ceremony highlighted by the Palmetto Elementary School "Palmetto Singers". We look forward to the dedication ceremony in the spring of 2008.

Last March we celebrated our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at Greer Park. The community event entitled "Pinecrest Celebrates a Decade of Excellence" included a concert by KC and the Sunshine Band. Thousands of our residents joined in the celebration, which also included our first Village fireworks show.

We passed ordinances regulating Emergency Generators and Filming in the Village and approved the acquisition of a new software system for our Finance Department to enhance the efficiency of that department. We started an AM radio station to keep residents informed in the aftermath of hurricanes or other emergencies and we look forward to seeing what other uses of the station would benefit the community.

Rather than commence construction on the two acre Flagler Grove Park at SW 104 Street and 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we purchased an additional adjacent acre, which will allow us to construct two soccer fields along with a tot lot with universal access. We expect construction to begin later this year. This will allow the Village to have its first two dedicated soccer fields.

The most important step we took this past year was to commence the design and engineering of a potable water system for the nearly 40% of the Village that currently has well water. We have set a goal of making County water available to all residents within five years. This will provide for fire hydrants in those neighborhoods. It is inconceivable to me, that in 2007, we have a number of neighborhoods in Pinecrest without fire hydrants. The monies for the design and engineering and for much of the main water lines will come from the County and we are pursuing additional monies from the state legislature this year. Upon completion of the design of the project, I look forward to the Council developing a process of working with the residents in

those neighborhoods as to how to implement the project and share fairly in the costs of installing water mains on the side streets.

Once we address the Water issue, I envision that we will move on to other utilities; power, telephone and cable. We made some headway this year with the report from the Utility Committee and working with FPL to cut back foliage and begin hardening the electrical system in the Village. We are awaiting delivery of a special report from FPL as to all of their accomplishments in the Village in 2006.

With the second Pinecrest Visioning Workshop complete and the appointment of the Botanical Committee and the Arts in the Park Committee, I expect great things at Pinecrest Gardens over the next several years. Through the efforts of the Pinecrest Foundation and the leadership of Gary Shear, an application was made for a \$500,000 grant to improve and upgrade the Imagination Station. We are in the processes of restoring the historic original entrance building and, adjacent to the new Library and Community Center, we will soon commence construction of an un-lighted regulation size soccer field, vita course and a passive green space for all to enjoy. I am also looking forward to the opening of a restaurant and catered meeting hall by the end of the year, where the original Parrot Jungle restaurant stood. It will be wonderful to have those Sunday family brunches in the gardens again.

I welcome the support of the Village Council to bring an Executive Director on board for the Pinecrest Foundation this year, to accelerate the Foundation's fund raising efforts.

I appreciate the efforts of the Pinecrest Residents Association to remind us as to the importance of maintaining the integrity of the residential neighborhoods. I look forward to addressing the parking issues at Greer Park by constructing a right of way behind the US-1 properties from the park to Village Hall parking lot.

Looking at results for last year, strictly by the numbers, the Village had revenues of \$17.4 Million and expenditures of about \$16.22 Million. Village personnel currently stand at 120 full-time and 40 part-time staff, about the same as the prior year.

The Police Department reported crime for 2006 was down from 2005 - a trend evident almost every year since the Village's incorporation. Major crimes for the year were down from 724 last year to 655 this year. For the year there was one homicide, one sex offense, 12 robberies, 17 aggravated assaults, 75 burglaries, 519 larcenies, one arson, and 29 auto thefts.

I am looking forward to another great and productive year for the Village.

February 13, 2007