

## **2016-2017 State of the Village Address**

### **Mayor Joseph M. Corradino**



2016 marked the 20th year since Pinecrest incorporated. In 1996, Miami-Dade County was struggling to provide communities the quality of service that citizens expected and demanded. A group of visionary leaders led by Evelyn Greer and Gary Matzner began our incorporation efforts. Their goal was to sustain order in an otherwise sprawling and increasingly disorderly environment. We immediately gained control of our land use and zoning, began to provide individualized police protection to the neighborhoods and implemented a great parks system; all in a fiscally responsible manner. There were many detractors at the time, who believed this experiment would surely fail. Two decades later, the experiment has proven incredibly successful. Today we continually strive to perfect our policies and services.

I am proud to report that the State of our Village is as strong as it has ever been.

Pinecrest continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in Miami-Dade County. Our current millage rate of 2.3 mils is, in fact, lower than it was a decade ago - despite the addition of new services over the years including the Pinecrest Community Center and staffing at Pinecrest Gardens. We maintain a solid AA+ bond rating. The funds in our reserves exceed the amount prescribed by our financial policy and provide an important funding source in the case of an emergency. Our budget is lean and focuses on maximizing dollars by providing high quality services with a small but dedicated staff. In 2018, the Village will be reducing its debt by retiring a bond that financed the acquisition and construction of venues including Greer Park and the Pinecrest Municipal Center. We were once again recognized with the Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

The Village is one of the safest communities in the State of Florida and, fortunately, crimes continue trending downward. Our professional Police Department is second to none. It is recognized as a Gold Standard agency by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) and is also accredited by the Commission for Florida Accreditation; one of the few agencies in Miami-Dade County with the dual accreditation. We have worked hard to understand the crime that may impact our Village, develop creative strategies to prevent it and catch and incarcerate the criminals that commit it. We focus on community policing, having our officers on the streets interacting with our citizens. Should you need them, the Police Department distinguishes itself for the prompt response time. As always, we remain committed to providing the police with the tools and resources they need to continue combating crime in the Village.

We are blessed with wonderful parks and recreation facilities; which other communities emulate. We have worked diligently to ensure that they are appropriately programed and continue adding to the cultural wealth of the community. We continue to coordinate with and enhance our top rated schools, by engaging with them through a rigorous educational compact and by continuing our school grants program.

In our changing environment, the Public Works staff is constantly working to make sure that the physical character of our streets and rights of way remain unique to Pinecrest. You know you are someplace special when you enter our Village.

High quality services are critical. Our departments receive high customer satisfaction rates and 97% of residents are satisfied with the Village as a place to live. We strive to provide our citizens with the individual attention they need and deserve on each and every issue, something that is rarely seen with other municipalities.

Civic engagement is a top priority. We provide extensive content through a myriad of platforms including the web, social media and traditional media. We will now be publishing our newsletter, the Pinecrest Sun, four times a year. We have launched a hashtag campaign for 2017 - #Pinecresting. This social media tool will highlight the incredible institutions, activities, opportunities, and people in Pinecrest. And, of course, we invite citizens to participate in the Council's monthly business meetings. As your mayor, I will ensure that the Council Chamber is a safe place for the respectful exchange of ideas.

Another indicator of our success is that we continue to draw new people to the Village. Pinecrest is in high demand. Building permits continue to increase and are near the highest levels ever. Our attractiveness is largely because we have maintained the integrity of our zoning code and assured the development in the Village is of the highest quality.

Finally, the true test of all of the hard work we have done over the years is seen in the fact that our property values continue to grow. For many of us, our homes are one of the most important investments we ever make. Investing in Pinecrest, as we have all done, has given us a higher than normal rate of return.

None of this could have been achieved by any individual effort. It could only be accomplished by a group of people who work together. Thanks go to all of you - the people who had the vision and foresight to undertake and support our founding; the neighbors who get involved with the issues most important to them and provide constant input on our processes; and our Manager, Clerk, Attorney, department heads and staff - all dedicated professionals many of whom have invested large portions of their careers into making Pinecrest what it is today; and to our Council members who are a hard working group of people who give a significant amount of their time to overseeing all aspects of the Village and setting policy for the future.

Going forward we will continue, as always, protecting and preserving our neighborhoods so that we may enhance our character and quality of life and remain the best place to live and raise a family.