

Week Ending: February 15, 2019

Witte Thoughts for the Commission

Great City Commission Meeting on Thursday! I was glad to have so many guest speakers on Valentine's Day – Chris Fagerstrom from ECT (our City Engineer), The Committee to Save Lake Helen Lakes, George Taylor and the TNR program, as well as Austin Casura – our new Public Works employee (starting on the 27th).

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best." ~H. Jackson Brown

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Meetings

~~CANCELLED:~~ Tuesday, February 26th
City Commission Workshop

Tuesday, February 26th at 8am
Historic Preservation Board

No PLDRC in February

Thursday, March 14th at 6:30pm
Public Input Meeting for FY 19/20 CDBG
(Community Development Block Grant)

Thursday, March 14th at 7:00pm
City Commission Meeting

Events

Saturday, February 23rd at 4pm
Zerbini Family Circus at the EQ Center

Historic Preservation Board Vacancy:

Please spread the word – Historic Preservation Board is looking for a new member. Please contact Katie at 386-228-2531 or kholmes@lakehelen.com for more information.

House Bill 2189: Lake Helen Sediment Removal & Restoration Project

On Wednesday (February 13th) House Bill 2189 for Lake Helen Sediment Removal & Restoration Project was added to Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations! It is set on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee Agenda for 2/20/19, 4:00 pm, Morris Hall. A BIG Thank You to Mayor Raisler for getting that to David Santiago who pushed this appropriations bill!

Thank you from the Disabled American Veterans, Chapter 84

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) met their goal of acquiring a new van; Lake Helen's contribution was part of their success story. Thank you to all our citizens for making that possible. The DAV provide free transportation to VA medical facilities for injured and ill veterans. Only 7 of the 17 (16 cities and the County) donated money – Thanks to Mayor Raisler for bringing this up in July of 2018.

Community Development Block Grant Public Input Meeting:

March 14th at 6:30pm. This is a requirement for the CDBG application for FY 19/20. We will be requesting input on the FY 19/20 CDBG project list.

Storm drain on W Main Street

I contact the county and the pipe and weir system at Main St will be cleaned with their vac truck toward the end of next week. They will also make sure that the outfall pipe and headwall is secure and functioning properly.

Blake Park Playground Committee:

We selected the Playground Committee last night. I began reaching out to members this morning to set a meeting time and date. Commissioner Basso has selected Chenin Basso for his selection. We look forward to the committee researching and developing a great plan for Blake Park Playground.

Recycling Education

Mayor Raisler made a new webpage on Recycling. We are also planning to ask Ivy Hawn Leadership League to assist with a Recycling Educational Campaign!

At the February 11th Elected Officials Roundtable Jacqueline Kerr, Financial Controller for GEL Corp gave a brief report on the 'State of Recycling'. The message was... recycling is not going away. Recycling has always been a service that allowed our waste partners to share in the financial profits with its city partners. China's pressure only has affected price. What remains unchanged is the cost to provide the service, run the trucks and sort the product. This current situation is an opportunity for the United States to step up and lead the way in innovative solutions for an obvious situation that is not going away... garbage.

The motto's: Recycle, ReUse, Reduce

There is no Planet B

½ Cent Sales Tax – Update:

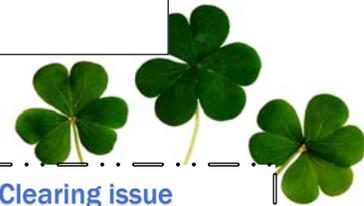
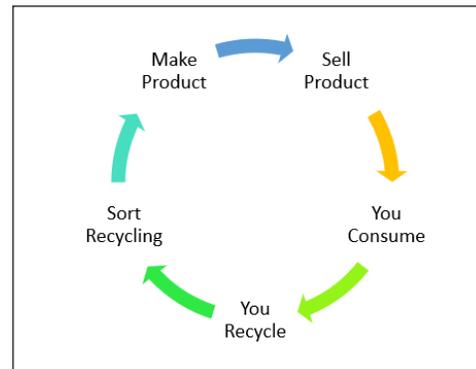
At the Meeting on February 11th (roundtable meeting) County Chair Ed Kelley recapped points on the ½ cent sales tax which was approved for placement on the upcoming May mail-ballot. Two key points:

1. Conversations regarding infrastructure needs have been ongoing since 2015 which has culminated in a plan that will now be presented to the citizens for a vote.
2. This coming together of the County with its 16 cities to put a plan before the people to vote is one of the best examples of "Home Rule" - we live local and can make our decisions locally not waiting for some mandate to come from the state.

The ballot will be sent to voters on May 1st and due to the Supervisor of Elections on May 21st. There will be educational meetings (I offered Hopkins Hall for one of the educational presentations to Ken Sharples and County Manager George Recktenwald).

Hole on Sidewalk over I-4

I called Rick Snow at DOT. He will check into the hole by the sidewalk on the I-4 overpass.



284 W. Washington – Clearing issue

Arborist Ray Jarret was in town this morning. On 284 W. Washington a new home cleared a bit more than was approved.

I have contacted the builder (by phone, email and letter) to let him know that a large (24") Laurel Oak Tree was removed without prior approval.

Our arborist recommends requiring four (4) six-inch (6") live oak trees be added to the site (in addition to normal landscaping requirements). A new landscape plan is required prior to additional inspections.

SJRWMD – Skip a Week Campaign

Abby Johnson from SJWMD wants to remind us of water conservation and encourages participation in "Skip a Week" campaign; If homeowners who irrigate skip every other week of irrigation this winter, northeast and east-central Florida could save about 1 billion gallons of water. Get more information at this link: <https://youtu.be/fYmRGgjSTSY>

Follow-up from last night's meeting:

- Spoke with Zach Chalifour after the meeting. He will be sending a draft contract to us soon. Tentative review March 14th
- Emailed Foster and Foster this morning to cancel the OPEB Actuarial Report. We are all set! No OPEB this year!
- Letter sent to Bart Gawlikowski (Lake Helen Garden Club) this morning asking for their input and attendance on March 14, 2019 (next regular City Commission Meeting) to discuss utilities at Asa Gray Park.
- Staff is looking into the TNR (trap and release) Program presented by George Taylor. We will keep you updated!
- We are advertising for the part-time bookkeeper.
- Austin Casura is excited to begin work for Lake Helen on February 27th.