



Town of Loxahatchee Groves Newsletter

Greetings from Mayor Dave Browning



Mayor Dave Browning

Town Council Members



Vice Mayor
Marge Herzog



Councilman
Dr. Bill Louda



Councilman
Dennis Lipp



Councilman
Dave Autrey

Greetings from your Mayor,

Can you believe we're already a month into 2009?! This year promises to be filled with challenges – nationally, locally, and personally.

We have new national leadership that promises to make a difference in our economy. In anticipation of possible Federal Stimulus Funding, we are considering projects that may qualify for this assistance. We are committed to doing all we can in providing services to our residents while keeping taxes as low as possible.

Locally, we will have change in the Town Council. Dave Autrey has announced he will not seek re-election, therefore, it is certain we will have one new member. I want to take this opportunity to thank Dave for his tireless efforts in the incorporation of our town and his two years of service on the Council. He will be missed.

The next issue after acceptance of our Comp Plan will be establishing future land use policies. This will be the "nuts and bolts" of how our community will look 20 years from now.

Did you get to the South Florida Fair? Hopefully, you visited our town's contribution of the Loxahatchee Groves Schoolhouse which was the very first building giving birth to Yesteryear Village. I want to give my appreciation to one of our longtime residents, Roxanne (Roxie) Coleman, who volunteers as a guide and "guardian" of the schoolhouse. Way to go, Roxie! I'm proud of you!

In closing, I want to remind everyone to come out and vote on March 10. Get involved in our meetings. This is our hometown and our future. As Commissioner Jess has said, "We will get the government we deserve".

Dave

Palm Beach County Water Utility Agreement

The Town Council entered into franchise agreement with Palm Beach County Water Utilities in January 2009. This agreement grants Palm Beach County the franchise rights to providing potable water, wastewater and reclaimed water for the Town of Loxahatchee Groves. **THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO CONNECT TO COUNTY WATER!** This provides the residents and landowners the ability to connect to the existing water lines that are located on North Road, Okeechobee Blvd, and Southern Blvd. The resident or landowner will pay a 10% franchise fee on their water utility bill if the service is provide by PBCWUD (the Town will receive the franchise fee on a monthly basis.)

Any resident or landowner that desires to connect to PBC Water, will start with the Town Clerk and fill out the application. Within two weeks, the application will placed on the Town Council consent agenda for approval. If the application is approved, then the approved application is sent to PBCWUD. The applicant must then adhere to all of the regulations and must pay all connection fees to the PBCWUD. Before the actual construction of the water lines to the property, a permit must be applied for and approved by the LGWCD.

Code Enforcement

Unfortunately there have been several mistruths and false accusations being spread that accuse Town Council of "shutting down businesses." This is completely false. For many years before incorporation, the lack of enforcement of the codes that the Town has inherited have led to confusion as to what type of uses are allowed. With the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and the development of the Town's own Land Development Regulations (which is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2009), the residents and landowners of the Town will now have a set of codes that is tailored for our unique lifestyle. Code Enforcement Services for the Town is on a COMPLAINT BASIS only. The Town does not have proactive code enforcement officers (patrolling) in the Town. Code complaints are only initiated when a resident files a formal complaint with the Town Clerk's office. In addition the Town Council has placed a prohibition on anonymous code complaints indefinitely (a person filing a complaint must give their name and contact information.)

Municipal Election



The Town of Loxahatchee Groves will be holding a municipal election on March 10, 2009. The terms for Town Council Seats 1 and 3 are expiring in March 2009. This election is being held to elect a Council member for Seats 1 and 3. Seat 1 is currently being held by Councilman David Autrey and Seat 3 is currently being held by Vice Mayor Marge Herzog

For our precinct, 6080, the voting location is the same is for the previous elections: Palms West Presbyterian Church at 13689 Okeechobee Blvd. The polls will be open from 7am to 7pm on the day of the election

If you are not currently registered to vote, please register by **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2009, at 5p.m.** Registration books close for the March 10, 2009 election (F.S. 97.055). Anyone who registers to vote after this time will be ineligible to vote in the March election.

Any qualified Palm Beach County voter is entitled to vote an absentee ballot. An absentee ballot may be requested in person at the Palm Beach Supervisor of Elections office in writing, over the telephone or by completing an on-line application.

For more information about candidates and the election process, contact Town Clerk Matthew Lippman or visit the Town's website for complete information.

Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulations

On November 23, 2008, the Town received the Objections, Recommendations and Comments Report from the Florida Department of Communities and Affairs relating to the transmitted Comprehensive Plan submitted by the Town of Loxahatchee Groves. Town Staff and the Planners from Calvin-Giordano reviewed the O.R.C. Report and are in the process of drafting a response. The Comprehensive Plan, with the response to the O.R.C. Report, will be presented to the Town Council for approval in February. Once it is approved, the final draft of the Comprehensive Plan will be submitted to the Florida Department of Communities and Affairs.



The Town, upon incorporation, inherited and then adopted Palm Beach Counties Code of Ordinances and the Unified Land Development Code. These ordinances and codes are primarily for urban communities. As we all know Loxahatchee Groves is not an urban community and its safe to say "most of us like it that way". You might ask why did we do that and not develop our own? Good question. Before we develop our own we need to complete the Comprehensive Plan, so that, when we develop our Land Development Regulations and Code of Ordinances they conform to our Comprehensive Plan. The Town Council has started the process of amending and adopting its own Land Development Regulations. The selection of a firm to write and amend the LDR's will be in March 2009. It is anticipated that the Land Development Regulations will be completed and ready for adoption by the end of 2009.

Contract Government & Government "Lite"

The Town of Loxahatchee Groves has a "Contract form of Government." So, what does that mean? Contract Town is a term that describes a Town which contracts with another government, not for profit organization, or a private company to deliver most local governmental services. A traditional full service Town, where services are delivered directly by Town employees, is the opposite of a contract Town. Municipalities (cities, towns and villages) may contract for services in several ways. They enter into contracts to provide services common to most local governments such as road maintenance and maintenance of facilities. They grant franchises to private companies to provide public services such as electricity or cable television. Municipalities contract with professionals, as individuals or firms, for legal counsel, planning, and engineering services. A contract Town goes beyond the ordinary to contract even for basic services such as police, fire, parks, and management.

It is rare to find a municipality that does not contract for some service. Even formerly traditional Towns have moved beyond commonly contracted services and have engaged private firms to act as finance directors, Town clerks, and even Town managers. As this trend continues, we will see a combination of full time Town employees delivering some municipal services while other services are contracted. *Some examples of Contract Government for the Town of Loxahatchee Groves include: Town Manager & Town Clerk (financials services as well), Town Attorney Legal Services, Audit Services, Solid Waste Services, Police Services (P.B.S.O.), Strategic Visioning, Comprehensive Planning, Code Enforcement Services, and Planning, Zoning & Building Services (Palm Beach County)*



Why does Contract Government work? First, It gives the residents and landowners control, not the employees of the municipality. Second, efficiency is much greater because you are multi-tasking with less employees. A contract for a municipal service is provided by a team of individuals that represent the company providing the service. Next, using contracted services in place of hiring an employee can save almost 45% by eliminating the additional expense of fringe benefits (health insurance, retirement, pension, workmen's comp, etc.). These benefits are carried by the company that is contracted for the municipal service. Last, there is a realized benefit from competition for each of the jobs and services that are being contracted for. In a Town our size, with our unique needs and desire to have "control", the Contract form of Government works well and has been very successful.

Government Lite is when you exert local control while attempting to keep that local control simple, thin and rather well-designed. As the need for new services grows or expands, the Town tries to find other private and public groups or agencies that can take on those responsibilities rather than the simple, spare local government structure. Government is pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities to deal effectively with community issues and problems. Meeting this goal on behalf of the residents is comparable to a private corporation's announcement of profits to its stockholders. Dollars that the government returns directly to the community, in the form of community services and capital projects, are the profits. Government must minimize overhead so that these government dollars are directly providing services. People want local control over local issues, yet they are reluctant to form a new city or town because of the fear of a bloating bureaucracy and the corresponding tax increases. Further, people express feelings of alienation from government, a discontent that decisions are being made about their lives without their being part of the decision-making process.

The first year of Government Lite has accomplished more than anyone has anticipated. First, the Town now has the ability to control and have a meaningful voice in determining the future use of the undeveloped properties within the historic boundaries. This was the key issue that drove the incorporation initiative. The efforts and strides the Town has taken to support the removal of the E Road/ 140th Thoroughfare is a shining example of what an incorporated Town can achieve; we accomplished, as a Town, what we have been unable to accomplish for many years as a neighborhood. Next, as an unincorporated community, there was no control over the revenues brought back into the community. With the financial crisis in our country and Palm Beach County cutting their budget and many jobs, the ability to get county money is diminished. The Town now has control over the revenues that are brought back into our community. A great example of this would be the gas tax revenues. The Town is now collecting over \$392,000 in local gas tax revenue which will spent in our own Town to benefit the residents and landowners. In addition to the gas tax revenues, the Town will be collecting over \$1.2 Million in revenues for the 2008-2009 fiscal year to provide municipal services.

In summary a "Contract Government" will allow the local government to avoid growing a traditional government bureaucracy and will seek public and private groups to help meet service demands. "Government Lite", involves a philosophy of governance that allows for cities or towns to incorporate, provide municipal services, but maintain a tailored government in staff and bureaucracy. This is accomplished by contracting out services, spinning out certain functions to other entities, but all the while focusing on those issues and services that are of utmost importance to the residents.

Town Meeting Schedule



The Town Council meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. The meetings start at 7:00 pm & are held at the LGWCD.

Stay involved and attend these meetings. If you are unable to attend, you can access the Council meeting minutes and recordings on

the Town website at www.loxahatcheegroves.org or call the office at 561-793-2418 to request a copy.

This is the meeting schedule for 2009 (times and dates subject to change):

Jan: 1/6 & 1/20	July: 7/7 & 7/21
Feb: 2/3 & 2/17	Aug: 8/4 & 8/18
Mar: 3/3 & 3/17	Sept: 9/1 & 9/15
Apr: 4/7 & 4/21	Oct: 10/6 & 10/20
May: 5/5 & 5/19	Nov: 11/3 & 11/17
Jun: 6/2 & 6/16	Dec: 12/1 & 12/15

Intergovernmental Coordination Meetings



The Town and the Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District began Intergovernmental Coordination Meetings to work out the delivery of combined municipal services to the community in an efficient and cost-effective manner. The two entities met in December and January and will continue to meet at least once a month for the rest of 2009. For a copy of the minutes and recordings of these meetings, you can visit the meeting page on the Town's website or request a hard copy from Lynnette Ballard at the Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District.

Master Road, Equestrian and Greenway Trail Plan (MREG)



The Town of Loxahatchee Groves has started the process of comprehensively planning the future of all the public roads in our Town. The Town Council has retained the services of a certified traffic engineer, Jeff Maxwell from Calvin-Giordano to complete the study. The process began with a public participation workshop on 9/27/08. We welcome all public input, feedback and great ideas throughout this process. During this process the

Town will also plan the equestrian & greenway trails within our Town. There is a PROCESS that exists today that residents & landowners can participate in to request a road to be paved through the LGWCD. This process of paving these petitioned roads is a process that does not provide for comprehensive future planning of the entire community roadway system. The M.R.E.G. Plan will consider traffic impacts, traffic flow & the overall impact on the roadway system in our Town. The LGWCD process can work when it's incorporated within the Town's Comprehensive Plan & Master Road, Equestrian & Greenway Trail Plan. During the planning process, the Town is ready to work with the LGWCD to address any immediate safety issues relating to the public roads within the Town. The final public workshop before the MREG Plan is published is being held to provide the public with all of the information that has been gathered up to this point and get public feedback. The workshop will be scheduled:

Saturday, February 14, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. (at the Loxahatchee Groves Elementary School Cafeteria)

Loxahatchee Groves



What if Hurricane Katrina had made landfall in Palm Beach County? What if Tropical Storm Fay had dumped 30" of rain on Loxahatchee instead of Melbourne? What if the Christmas tornadoes in north Florida ripped through our area? Groves residents breathed a collective sigh of relief when these disasters passed us by...BUT IT COULD HAPPEN!! Your Loxahatchee Groves Community Emergency Team (non-political, non-profit and all volunteer) is trained to respond in the face of such disasters when professional first responders are overwhelmed with damage & injuries elsewhere in the county.

We now have almost 50 members who have contributed many hours in training and spent their own money to enhance their personal supplies including safety equipment. If communications are disrupted, we have 12 ham operators who have spent approximately \$2500 of their own money to purchase radios, antennas, and other necessary items for effective communication in an emergency.

If you are interested in becoming a member of this dynamic team and/or a ham radio operator, contact Pat and Ken Johnson, 793-0188 or pjh0188@aol.com. We have many additional supplies to purchase so if you can contribute, please send checks to Loxahatchee Groves CERT, Inc. at 15409 Collecting Canal Rd., Loxahatchee. Your donation is tax deductible. If you would like to donate any of the following supplies, let us know. (Large canopy (20' x 30'), Large tarps for ground cover (16' x 20'), Generator, Wood for cribbing material (4" x 4" and larger, lengths of 1.5 ft or greater), Enclosed trailer (minimum 6' x 10', no leaks).

Town of Loxahatchee Groves



14579 Southern Blvd
Suite 2
Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

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US POSTAGE

PAID

WEST PALM BCH FL

PERMIT NO 692

Important Phone Numbers

Town Management Office:

14579 Southern Blvd, Suite 2
Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470
Phone: 561-793-2418
Fax: 561-793-2420
clerk@loxahatcheegroves.org
www.loxahatcheegroves.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday
9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

All Emergencies:

(Police, Fire, & Rescue): 911

Poison Control Center:

800-282-3171

Non-Emergency Fire:

561-616-7000

Non-Emergency Sheriff:

561-688-3000

L.G. Water Control District:

561-793-0884

Waste Pro (Solid Waste):

561-688-8912

American Red Cross:

561-833-7711

Emergency Management:

561-712-6400

Florida Power & Light:

561-697-8000

Bell South (telephone):

561-780-2355

