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NEWSLETTER & MEETING NOTICE

Happy Thanksgiving!



▼ MEETING NOTICE ▼

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2007 11:00 A.M. FLORIDA MEDICAL CENTER

WHAT NOW, PROPERTY TAXES???

BROWARD COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER

LORI PARRISH

WESTON MAYOR ERIC HERSH

RSVP - 1-866-884-3627 BEFORE NOVEMBER 7

WESTON MAYOR ERIC HERSH

Mayor Hersh has served **Weston** as an elected official since 1993. He was Vice Chairman - Indian Trace Community Development District **from** 1993-1996, and after the incorporation of **Weston**, was elected as a Commissioner of the City of **Weston**, holding that position from 1996-2001.

He was elected Mayor in 2001, and currently he is in his second term, having been re-elected in 2005.

He is on the Board of Directors of the Broward County Resource Recovery Board, as the Broward County League of Cities appointee.

Professionally, Mayor Hersh is a Financial Advisor & Wealth Management Specialist, Vice-President-Investments, and the **Weston** Branch Manager of Raymond James & Associates, **Inc.** He has served as a member of the Executive Council of Raymond James and on the Board of Governors of the Florida Securities Dealers Association. Raymond James is a New York Stock Exchange member, full service securities and investment **firm.**

A competitive ice hockey player and youth hockey coach, the Mayor lives in **Weston** with his wife Laurie, and his two children, Stephanie and Matthew.

Originally from Montreal, Canada, Mayor Hersh moved to South Florida in 1977 and has resided in **Weston** since 1991.

JURY DUTY SCAM: Thanks to Bill Kling for this heads-up

This has been verified by the FBI (their link is also included below). Please **pass** this on to everyone in your **email** address book. It is spreading fast so be prepared should you get this call. Most of us take summons for jury duty seriously, but enough people skip out on their civic duty, that a new and ominous kind of scam has surfaced

The caller claims to be a jury coordinator. If you protest that you never received a summons for jury duty, the **scammer** asks you for your Social Security number and date of birth so he or she can verify the information and cancel the arrest warrant Give out any of this information and bingo; your identity **just** got stolen.

The scam has been reported so far in 11 states, including Oklahoma, Illinois, and Colorado. This (scam) is particularly insidious because they use intimidation over the phone to **try** to bully people into giving information by pretending they're **with** the court system. The FBI and the federal court system have issued nationwide alerts on their web sites, **warning** consumers about the fraud.

For Confirmation. Check it out on the link below :

http://www.fbi.gov/page2/june06/jury_scams060206.htm

From Miami Herald's **Action** Line: **Transit/Carpooling** not an option

L.C. writes that in order to use **mass** transit, it would mean walking or driving the mile to the park and ride lot, taking a bus to the **Dadeland** Mall, taking the **train** to downtown Miami, taking the **MetroMover** and then walking still two more blocks...in this heat?

That would mean a shower **and** change of clothes, not too convenient. Also not convenient is carpooling, **which** means hooking up with strangers, having to wordinate a flexible schedule with someone else's. Right now it only costs L.C. \$6 a day for the trip, totally worth the convenience.

Ed.note: This is what we said was the case for most people when they tried to get us to vote for the tax for mass transit. Poor M-Dade'ers, they fell for it twice and now they're really paying the price.

"Ask Lori...Parrish on Appraisal"

Broward County Property Appraiser Lori Parrish Answers Your Questions...

"Disappointed in Property Tax Cuts?"

Dear Lori,

With the housing market in a tailspin with weak sales and stalled prices, we now have the Florida Legislature fumbling over tax reform. My question is simple: "Why haven't my taxes dropped like a rock?"

S.G, Pompano Beach, FL

Taxpayers are disappointed they aren't seeing bigger savings **from** the much-touted property **tax** cuts. Florida law sets January 1 as the **assessment** date each year for determining both value and exemption eligibility. While **January 1, 2007** is the date used in setting your market value, the value is based upon the sales of similar properties in the same or comparable subdivisions, neighborhoods or condominiums **from** January 1, 2007 back through January 2, 2006. If market values continue to drop in 2007, resulting in lower sales prices, these changes will be reflected on your 2008 proposed **tax** notice **and** subsequent tax bill. Likewise, in a year when values increase, those increases in value will not be reflected until the following tax year.

Property values increased **an** average of 10 % in Broward last year, increasing the taxable value of all property in the county from \$157.4 billion to \$176.4 billion. Although the volume of sales slowed last year, sales prices in most of the county did not begin to **fall until** the 2007 **calendar** year. Once again, 2007 assessments are based on 2006 **sales** prices.

The good news is Homestead Exemption and Save Our Homes prevents the taxable value of a property **from** increasing more than 3 % per year, for 2007 the SOH increase is 2.5 %. However, a home's market value can decline and its taxable value still increase due to a quirk in this popular law. Save Our Homes **still** requires an increase in the taxable value of a home each year until it adjusts to market value, regardless of market conditions.

We also have lots of uncertainty with the Florida Legislature's efforts at **tax** reform. Until the legal maneuvering in Tallahassee ends, it will be hard to know what proposals are likely to be submitted to the voters. Stay informed by visiting our **website** at www.bcpa.net and click the "Legislation" menu option for **future** updates.

Sincerely,

Lori Parrish, CFA

If you have a question for **Lori**, please call her office at 954-357-6904, or write to her at the Broward County Property Appraiser's Office, 115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 111, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301.

A Message from Broward County Vice-Mayor Lois Wexler

I would like to take this opportunity to let readers know about a series of **important** meetings concerning public transportation that have begun to take place in Broward County. Public transportation may not be the most exciting of topics but it is one which will have huge impacts, both economically and environmentally, on our daily lives. We are now **at** a critical junction and something must be done soon. Broward County's **current** population of 1.8 million people is expected to increase by **1** million by 2030. These additional residents **will** need to get around on Broward County's already congested roads. The Texas Transportation Institute recently conducted a study and found that the **cost** of congestion in South Florida, based on wasted time and fuel, was approximately \$2.7 billion. This is about \$900 per driver; **money** that I am sure Broward County residents would be happy to have in their pockets.

On October 16, 2007, Broward County held a Transit Summit at the Broward County Convention Center. This event brought transportation entities **from** the federal, state and local levels together to discuss and outline what is currently on the drawing board and what needs to be done in order to create a **community-**based public transportation plan for Broward County. Transportation experts explained the complexities involved with public transportation, and began the process of collecting community input with regard to what the future of public transportation in Broward County should be. The overall goal is to put together a public transportation plan created by the public, a plan that will take people where they tell us they want to go!

This is where the new effort of transportation planning differs **from** those previously undertaken. In the past, well-intentioned groups created plans for public **transportation** and then presented those plans to the people. The public did not always buy into the creation of the plan; they were less willing to accept it, especially considering the costs that would have to be assumed in order to pay for the new transportation projects and improvements. The work of these groups was a noble effort and very well-intentioned, but it was not always a grassroots effort which is one of the reasons former plans failed.

The Transit Summit kicks off a series of public meetings that will be hosted by Broward County Transit. I hope that you will make the time to attend one of them and tell **us** what you would **like** to **see** in a transportation plan. Public hearings are being scheduled throughout Broward County. If your Homeowners Association or community group would be interested in hosting a meeting please call Broward County Transit at (954) 357-8300. Currently, there are plans to hold additional public meetings throughout the County during the next 18-to-24 months. These meetings will be posted on our **webpage** at **www.broward.org/bct**.

As always, I welcome your thoughts and comments. Please feel free to contact me by phone **at** (954) 357-7005 or by e-mail me at lwexler@broward.org.

Best Regards,

Lois Wexler
Broward County **Vice-Mayor**
Commissioner District #5

South Florida Sun-Sentinel.com October 14, 2007

South Florida: State **asks** drivers **for** emergency information

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is encouraging Florida motorists to voluntarily provide emergency contact information online that can be used by law enforcement officers in the event of an accident.

Anyone with a valid Florida driver license or identification card can log on to the department's Web site at www.hsmv.state.fl.us and enter their emergency contacts. The information is only used by law enforcement officials to notify the designated contacts if a motorist is seriously injured or killed in a crash, according to officials. About **743,000** of Florida's **18** million licensed drivers or ID card holders already have registered.

For more information, visit the Web site or call **850-617-2000**.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT PETITION FORM

104 185 - A person who knowingly signs a petition or petitions for a candidate in nor political party or an issue more than one time commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.002 or s. 775.003.

I am a registered voter of Florida and hereby petition the Secretary of State to place the following amendment to the Florida Constitution on the ballot in the next general election.

I AM REGISTERED TO VOTE IN _____ COUNTY.

NAME _____ STREET ADDRESS _____
Please PRINT Name as it appears on Voter I.D. Card PRINT Current Physical Address (NO PO BOXES)

CITY _____, FL ZIP _____ U.S.A. COUNTY _____
(County of residence)

IS THIS A CHANGE OF ADDRESS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION IN SAME COUNTY? Yes ___ No ___

VOTER REGISTRATION NUMBER _____ -OR- DATE OF BIRTH ____/____/____
Month Day Year

X _____ DATE _____
SIGNATURE AS IT APPEARS ON VOTER I.D. CARD DATE SIGNED

BALLOT TITLE: REFERENDA REQUIRED FOR ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLANS.

BALLOT SUMMARY: Establishes that before a local government may adopt a new comprehensive land use plan, or amend a comprehensive land use plan, the proposed plan or amendment shall be subject to vote of the electors of the local government by referendum, following preparation by the local planning agency, consideration by the governing body and notice. Provides definitions.

FULL TEXT OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA THAT:

Article II, Section 7. Natural resources and scenic beauty of the Florida Constitution is amended to add the following subsection:

Public participation in local government comprehensive land use planning benefits the conservation and protection of Florida's natural resources and scenic beauty, and the long-term quality of life of Floridians. Therefore, before a local government may adopt a new comprehensive land use plan, or amend a comprehensive land use plan, such proposed plan or plan amendment shall be subject to vote of the electors of the local government by referendum, following preparation by the local planning agency, consideration by the governing body as provided by general law, and notice thereof in a local newspaper of general circulation. Notice and referendum will be as provided by general law. This amendment shall become effective immediately upon approval by the electors of Florida.

For purposes of this subsection:

1. "Local government" means a county or municipality.
2. "Local government comprehensive land use plan" means a plan to guide and control future land development in an area under the jurisdiction of a local government.
3. "Local planning agency" means the agency of a local government that is responsible for the preparation of a comprehensive land use plan and plan amendments after public notice and hearings and for making recommendations to the governing body of the local government regarding the adoption or amendment of a comprehensive land use plan.
4. "Governing body" means the board of county commissioners of a county, the commission or council of a municipality, or the chief elected governing body of a county or municipality, however designated.

Serial Number 05-18

Date Approved June 21, 2005

Return to:
Florida Hometown Democracy, inc.,
P.O. Box 636
New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170-0636

www.FloridaHometownDemocracy.com

phone: (866) 779-5513

email: info@floridahometowndemocracy.com

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October 11, 2007

To the Florida Taxation & Budget Reform Commission

Chair, Vice-Chair, Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to express our opinions. The Broward Coalition, Inc. represents almost 200 condos, homeowners associations and community organizations comprised of over 200,000 residents. We have seen many attempts at reformation over the years, and our suggestions are based on our observations of those attempts.

The overwhelming need in Florida is for control of government spending, population growth and sprawl that are the major contributors to tax and budget problems. Our members, like the majority of taxpayers, need real, not **illusory**, insurance and **tax** reform. They want to see less, not more taxes, whether on property or purchases.

Reviewing sales **tax** exemptions led to the early end of political careers, as well as media protesting being taxed, even though media were clamoring for removing exemptions. I believe that **history** would be repeated, especially in light of the present economic **difficulties** of **many** of our members. The sales tax is the most regressive, hitting the poor and those on fixed incomes hardest.

Upon examination of one of the largest budget items, social services, it is apparent that an **audit** is needed to see how the millions of dollars are being spent statewide. For example, Broward County publishes a listing all of the agencies, which number in the hundreds. Certainly thousands receive grants statewide, all employing executive directors and staff.

When the Legislature surveyed agencies several years ago, they discovered that in far too many, more than 25% of the total revenue **was** spent on "administration." Duplication of services abounded. We advocate helping those in need, and intensive audits are required for both fiscal and program accountability.

(con.)

Charlotte Greenbarg, President
1054 N. Northlake Drive
Hollywood, FL 33019

On a state level, a recent audit revealed "questionable" high appraisals for environmental land purchases. **This** is an example of state **spending** that concerns taxpayers. Another example is the practice of outsourcing to save **tax** dollars. The firms that are **utilized** are for profit, and as such we suspect end up too often costing more than government administration would.

Internal audits of the school district have revealed millions of dollars that could be saved. When Broward Schools implemented the **audit** recommendations of the Workers' Compensation Program, \$1.5 million was saved in the first five months. Audits have revealed hundreds of thousands of dollars due from architects for errors and omissions, much of the potential savings are spent on attorneys' fees trying to recoup the money. School construction has spiraled so that the latest high school, "LLL" built for FISH capacity of 2,248 students, cost, **according** to the Deputy for Facilities, \$126 million, including the auditorium that will be added on. Although most of the school districts' capital funds are generated locally, there are **additional** state funds.

Broward County's audits have also shown that **millions** could be saved by instituting stricter accountability for tax dollars. Airport construction management **was** among them, revealing lax oversight for contractors' billing. A hearing officer ruled that the County could not award a contract for buses to a company that was \$16 million higher than the competitor's bid. That this had to go to a hearing indicates the extent of the problem, **which** we know is not limited to Broward County.

A Federal judge commented that Broward County is run by lobbyists. **Everything** that lobbyists get and everything that they give, whether campaign contributions or gifts, is rolled into what taxpayers pay for. Elected officials also function as lobbyists to other government entities. Spouses of elected officials are officers in companies that lobby their spouses. Incredibly, we're told the Florida **Ethics** Commission finds no conflict of interest in **this**. We need serious reform of lobbying statutes.

Before you consider eliminating sales **tax** exemptions, it is imperative to conduct audits and act on the findings. Then we can sit together and **discuss** fiscal needs.

Sincerely,



Charlotte Greenburg
President

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