



THE *VOTER*

Sept - Oct
2021

www.LWVVC.org

P.O. Box 9695, Daytona Beach, FL 32120

President's Remarks:

It is an honor to be welcomed as president of the League of Women Voters Volusia County. Our commitment to democracy for over 100 years continues to be called upon to support voters and fair elections. This year, in addition to new state election laws, the process to redraw election districts is beginning as census information becomes available. The League will provide a forum to educate its members and the public regarding both. I am happy to be joined by Nancy Nusbaum as the new leader for the Voter Services Team. Please offer her your support and energy in these challenges. In addition to Voter Services, the League has action teams for Education, Natural Resources and Social Justice. These teams reflect our priorities to support public education, the environment, and a community network that is fair, responsive and accessible. These initiatives touch the future. In addition, we have policy driven teams that may form, expand or contract to reflect local and state conditions. We will be sending out a member survey to gauge your interests, priorities, skills and availability for League activities. As a nonpartisan organization we will face the constant challenge of a hyper-partisan environment. Our language, forums, and positions may be challenged just as we challenge others. We are open to the debate of policies but not our guiding principles. Voting is a citizen's right. Fair elections are a citizen's right. Good government is a citizen's responsibility. Our commitment to all will be balanced and relentless. How we will function in the post-COVID-19 world is evolving. We will continue to use the zoom format in lieu of larger gatherings and for access to speakers not otherwise available to us. Our intent is to resume in-person events when we can but remain flexible. Plans for a gathering in conjunction with the Ladies Taking Liberty program in November and a holiday gathering are in motion. If you have not yet been vaccinated, please speak with a trusted medical advisor to address questions or concerns. Finally, my thanks to Nicki Junkins for her past leadership and continuing support. She has set a high bar and I will strive to meet the standards she's set. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and concerns as we move forward.

Mary Anne Connors, President



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Sandra Horikami, Voter Editor

Social Justice and Diversity Team

*The Social Justice and Diversity Team
shares quotes from two historical figures:*



“Striving for social justice is the most valuable thing to do in life.”
Albert Einstein

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We will advocate for social justice for all and strive to collaborate with diverse groups.

*Vickie J. Presley,
SJ & DT Chair*



Events in September & October

September General Meeting
 The Mary McLeod Bethune Statuary Project
 Saturday, September 18, 2021
 10:30 a.m.

This is a virtual meeting.
 Participants must preregister at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckceGqpkqGty1gmUGW5Kjy246QSbPMzh9>



Public welcome!

LWVVC Board Meetings:
 September 15, 2021
 @TPO offices

International Spdwy Blvd.
 October 20, 2021
 TPO or Virtual, TBD

Members welcome!
 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.



September Virtual Hot Topics Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 21, 2021, 5 p.m.

Tax Collection in Volusia County:
 Is it new and improved?

Featuring: Will Roberts
 Volusia County's first elected Tax Collector

This is a virtual meeting.
 Participants must preregister at
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcvcumtqz0iG9L05kBD3P6RyJn_o63bx6gh

Public welcome!

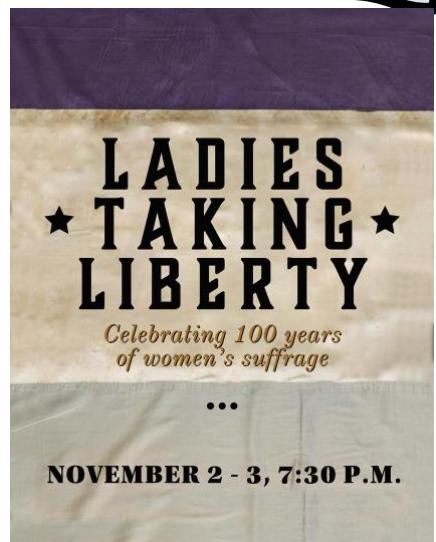
Ladies Taking Liberty

Nov 2, 7:30pm, Nov 3, 2pm & 7:30pm

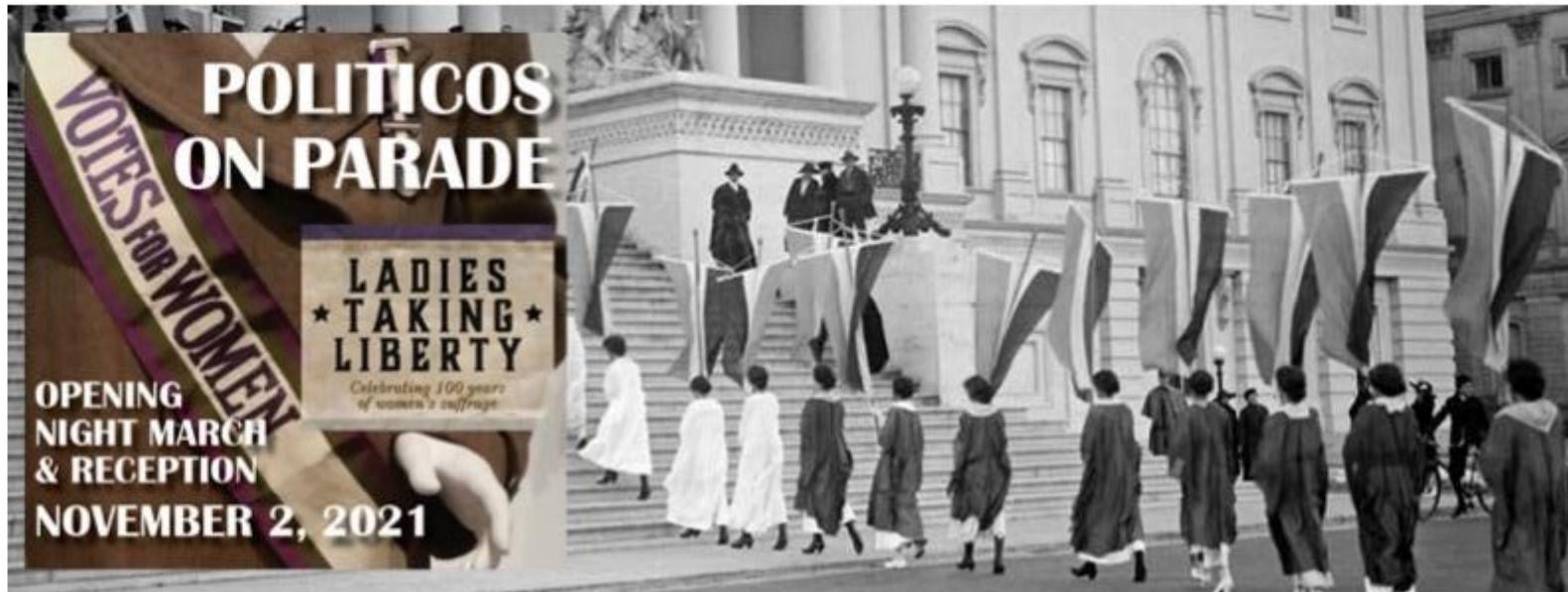
Athens Theatre
 124 N. Florida Ave., DeLand, FL

Our Post-Pandemic Politicos on Parade Fundraiser:
 Re-enactment March & Stage play
 Nov. 2, 2021, 5:30 – 9:30 pm
 for an extra-special “opening night”

Purchase tickets from Athens Theater



**Politicos on Parade – Reconfigured
Celebrate Our Heritage!**



In 2020 we observed our local league's 70th anniversary, the historic 100-year mark since the inception of the League of Women Voters, and passage of the 19th amendment. Then the pandemic changed everything before we could host our long-running biennial Politicos on Parade fundraising lunch and fashion show. We've now re-imagined that long-delayed event into a Suffragist March Re-enactment & Champagne Reception on the Opening Night of *Ladies Taking Liberty*, November 2, 2021, at the historic Athens Theater in DeLand, FL.

Produced by long-time LWWVC member Suze Peace, the original stage play by Deborah McShane explores the history of suffrage, from Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony to Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul, from Sojourner Truth to America's young poet-laureate, Amanda Gorman. It commemorates the work and achievements of women through theatrical vignettes, storytelling, song, and poetry. Historic images, documents, and the spoken word will shed light on the long road to equality. The show concludes with a glimpse from then to now, highlighting how voting rights must not be taken for granted.

Proceeds will benefit the League of Women Voters of Volusia County, and the two-day limited engagement will include three performances only, on November 2-3, 2021. Space is limited and tickets are available online at: <https://athensdeland.com/event/ladies-taking-liberty/2021-11-02/>

Invite your family and friends, and we'll see everyone at the Athens on November 2nd.

*Ann Smith,
Politicos chair*

Board Retreat Report--Planning for 2021-2022

The LWVVC Board of Directors held their yearly planning retreat on July 17. Under the leadership of our new president, Mary Anne Connors, the board approved the president's recommendation for 5 appointed board members who will serve a one year term. The newly appointed directors are Pat Drago (Education), Judy Gordon (Membership), Nancy Nusbaum (Voter Service), Vickie Presley (Social Justice), and Ann Smith (Parliamentarian). The agenda also included the setting of 2021-22 goals; planning the program calendar; and brainstorming ideas for fundraising and community outreach. Goals for the 2021-22 year are:

1. Educate, motivate, and empower citizens for the upcoming elections.
2. Listen to under-represented groups and educate ourselves and our community on historic and ongoing systemic racism.
3. Promote collaboration and build positive relationships with diverse groups.
4. Educate and advocate in the areas of election integrity, public education, social justice, natural resources, and strong representative government.



President, Mary Anne Connors (left) leads the meeting, as Susan Bayley looks on and Ann Smith contemplates.

Board members busy at work



Remember to Renew Your Membership!

Last year you were among the many who made a renewed commitment via membership to support LWVVC. Once again, the Membership Committee is asking you to renew your commitment. There is much to learn and do in these perilous times for democracy. LWVVC is a strong force in supporting our mission to inform and engage citizens in governance through the combined efforts of its members. For those who have re-committed, thank you. If you have not renewed, please take a few moments to do so now.

We are excited to be able to offer online renewal through our new LWVVC website. You can click on this [Membership link](#) which takes you to the Membership Form. Complete the Membership Form then, at the bottom of the page, click on the *Submit* button to pay your dues. You can now use a credit card or PayPal to renew. Your membership renewal is automatically registered.

Of course, anyone who would like to renew using a printed form may print a PDF of the Renewal form from the website or call or send an email to Judy Gordon (386-441-4586 jbgoordon@cfl.rr.com) requesting a form be sent.

Thank you for renewing your membership and for your continued involvement in our League's work.

*Judy Gordon & Monique Fischer
Membership Committee Co-chairs*

The following chart, the LWVVC 2020-2021 annual budget summary, is presented by the LWVVC treasurer, Deb Noah.

Income Expense Summary FY Ending June 20, 2021

Description	YTD	20/21 Budget	% Spent
INCOME:			
LWVVC-DUES	2,788.50	2,030.00	137.36%
LWVFL-DUES	3,217.50	2,355.00	136.62%
LWVUS-DUES	6,864.00	5,024.00	136.62%
Contributions/Donations	3,650.82	600.00	608.47%
Honoraria-Speakers Bureau	225.00	100.00	225.00%
Interest Income	604.99	300.00	201.66%
Meeting Income	-	-	0.00%
Politicos Income	210.00	-	0.00%
Politicos Reserve	-	2,000.00	0.00%
Social Fundraising Income	-	250.00	0.00%
Investment Funds-Leadership Development	-	2,500.00	0.00%
Investment Funds-Membership Scholarship	-	300.00	0.00%
Investment Funds-Student League Funds	-	200.00	0.00%
Dedicated Contributions	165.00	-	0.00%
TOTAL INCOME	17,725.81	15,659.00	113.20%

EXPENSES:			
Operating Expenses	1,165.27	1,690.00	68.95%
Annual Dues Notice Mailing	104.28	350.00	29.79%
Bank Fees	205.37	50.00	410.74%
Constant Contact	154.00	180.00	85.56%
CPA & Legal	-	-	#DIV/0!
D&O Insurance	-	-	#DIV/0!
Equipment	-	150.00	0.00%
FL Incorporation Fee	61.25	70.00	87.50%
PO Box	188.00	140.00	134.29%
Postage	13.00	75.00	17.33%
Printing	39.37	50.00	78.74%
Supplies	-	75.00	0.00%
Website Maintenance Expense	400.00	550.00	72.73%
Action Committee Expense	-	200.00	0.00%
Meeting Expense	449.90	220.00	204.50%
Programs-Handouts	149.90	70.00	214.14%
Speaker	300.00	150.00	200.00%
Membership Expense	-	400.00	0.00%
Orientation	-	200.00	0.00%
Member Outreach	-	200.00	0.00%
Per Member Payment	6,242.75	7,379.00	84.60%
LWVF PMP	1,218.75	2,355.00	51.75%
LWVUS PMP	5,024.00	5,024.00	100.00%
Politicos Expense	-	-	#DIV/0!
Promotion/Advertising Expense	-	350.00	0.00%
Student Award Expense	-	200.00	0.00%
Special Projects Expense	100.00	3,000.00	3.33%
Leadership Development Funds	100.00	2,500.00	4.00%
Membership Scholarship Funds		300.00	0.00%
Student League Funds	-	200.00	0.00%
The Voter Expense	-	120.00	0.00%
Printing	-	80.00	0.00%
Postage - 6/yr * 10	-	30.00	0.00%
Mailing Supplies	-	10.00	0.00%
Voter Services Expense	44.72	2,000.00	2.24%
Candidate Outreach	-	200.00	0.00%
Event Registration	-	450.00	0.00%
Supplies	(8.24)	1,000.00	-0.82%
Voter Advertising	52.96	250.00	21.18%
Voter Guide	-	100.00	0.00%
Workshop Expense	-	100.00	0.00%
TOTAL EXPENSES	8,002.64	15,659.00	51.11%
NET INCOME/LOSS	9,723.17	-	-

Voter Service Action Team Report

Voter Service will focus on registering/informing underserved communities, partnering with organizations to extend our reach and simplifying the registration process through online registration and vote-by-mail requests.

The impact of SB 90, often referred to as the “voter suppression bill”, was the focus of an information meeting (August 14) and a presentation (August 24) by Ion Sancho, former Supervisor of Elections Leon County. Some of the impacts are:

- Availability of voter drop boxes is reduced to early voting days/hours unless the drop box is at a Supervisor of Elections office.
- The requirement that boxes be staffed at all times may further reduce accessibility due to increased staffing costs.
- Vote by mail ballot requests are only good through the next regularly scheduled federal general election, unless submitted before May 6, 2021, in which case, the request is valid through the end of 2022. This change could create confusion.
- When requesting a vote by mail ballot, the voter must provide a Florida driver’s license or ID card number or the last 4 digits of the social security number. Potential obstacles are that the ID number submitted on the vote by mail ballot request must match the one provided on the voter registration form and voters may not remember which number they used. Also, people who do not have FL ID may be reluctant to provide the last four digits of their social security number.
- A new rule reduces confidence in the voting system. Third party voter registration organizations (3PVROs), like our League, are required to notify applicants that the organization might not deliver the form within 14 days or before registration closes for the next upcoming election. Our League has always delivered forms on time, without exception.

There are many other new rules that have potential to make voting more difficult, particularly for the elderly, minorities, students and working people.

The Florida League has a fact sheet on the website outlining the SB 90 impacts on voters, voter registration volunteers and election administration. Zoom meeting recordings are available on the website as well.

National Voter Registration Day takes place on September 28 this year. This is a nonpartisan effort to create awareness of registration opportunities. We will be educating and registering voters at Port Orange Family Days, on September 25-26.

*Nancy Nusbaum
Voter Service Chair*



Lake Helen Mayoral Candidates Forum Report

LWVVC, in partnership with Lake Helen Villas, held Lake Helen's Mayoral Candidates' Forum on July 29th. In keeping with the League's mission, the forum provided an opportunity for community members to learn about candidates' positions on the issues and to submit questions to the three candidates who had 1 minute to respond to each question.

League leader, Ann Smith, coordinated and moderated the event and was supported by League members, Mary Anne Connors, Saralee Morrissey, Nicki Junkins, Cathy Egley, Ann Harrell, Nancy Nusbaum (and her daughter) Lucy Christman. This is the second year that the League has partnered with Lake Helen Villas on a candidates forum and we look forward to continuing our outreach with this group.



Moderator Ann Smith with mayoral candidates (left to right) Vernon Burton, Cameron Lane and Lauren Olsen.



Mary Anne Connors, Nicki Junkins, and Saralee Morrissey review questions submitted by the community.

Welcome New Members

Tamara Boyd
Sally Jass
Melissa Lammers
Pamela Staley



Education Action Team Report

The Education Action Team held its first meeting of the school year August 16, virtually. The meeting was to decide what particular issues the team wanted to work on this year. After lively discussion four topics were selected for further research and review.

1. How are students receiving their education this year? Is it in person, in home school, charter school, vouchers in private schools or on the Florida Virtual School? The choices are endless and we need to understand current enrollments and participation. Are students missing from school entirely?
2. What are the staff vacancies, both classroom and support? Concern was strongest for those high poverty schools that need the most skilled educators and yet remain unable to attract and retain them.
3. Since learning gains were low as evidenced by the FSA assessments, what steps are being taken to remediate students during the school year?
4. How are the various COVID-19 supplemental funds being applied?

Our next meeting, Sept. 20, at 3:00 pm is also virtual. We will have Tina Skipper from the district offices explain student enrollment and distribution to answer the first question. Anyone who would like to join us, please email me at patddrago@aol.com and I will add you to our mailing and invite list. We are a lively and involved group. Some of our members are former educators and some are caring citizens, open to all. We are fortunate that school board chair Linda Cuthbert is a member and Elizabeth Albert, executive director for VUE is also a member. They bring a unique perspective and our discussions are cordial and solution oriented.

*Pat Drago
Education chair*



Observer Corps Report

The following are key issues reported by League Observers at local meetings. We need additional Observers for Volusia county city meetings not currently represented. Please contact Susan Bayley, susancbayley@gmail.com or Ann Harrell, aharrell595@aol.com or Nancy Nusbaum, nusbanh@gmail.com if you can help.

NOTE, MANY MEETINGS HAVE BEEN OBSERVED ONLINE OR HAVE NOT BEEN OBSERVED DUE TO PUBLIC HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Edgewater City

Linda Mojer, Observer

<http://www.cityofedgewater.org/bc/page/agendas-minutes>

August 2: Absent from dais (teleconferenced J.Powers). City named the Henry Family Sensory Park, acknowledging the property donation and contribution to the community. Consent agenda renewed contracts for planning, recycling, engineering. First reading entered for land annexation, use and zoning; resolutions applied for economic development, right-of-way issue, rates/fees and land acquisition; new school crossing signal mechanics discussed. In follow-up, a special meeting on 08/23 conducted extended discussion of drainage improvements, infrastructure, and grant funding.

July 12: All present with dividers removed between seats at the dais. Full presentation by architects designing the Public Works Facility; second readings approved charter amendments relative to City Code enforcement; board/committee appointments made, wastewater treatment needs funded. Heading into budget preparation, review and presentation, added budget workshops and meetings were scheduled on 07/19 & 07/26, specific to finances.

June 7: City observed Waste/Recycling Workers week; Riverside Conservancy. Consent approvals for contracts covering janitorial, grant administration, water treatment, park use. Second readings approved zoning and land use amendments; drinking water report, highway lighting and shoreline reconstruction addressed. Continued build of Environmental Advisory Board.

May 3: Absent from dais (teleconferenced O'Keefe). Habitat for Humanity presentation detailed area activity; proclamations supported clean drinking water, public works. Consent items approved for standing management services, contracts, funding, and conservation issues. First readings entered for PUD, zoning, and land use; resolved support to park use, public information, easements, trails, flooding and surplus property. Additional actions regarding COVID-19 recovery funds, economic development joint meetings with neighboring cities, fuel taxes and boat slip access. Mid-year budget adopted.

April 12: Absent from dais (teleconferenced O'Keefe). A special meeting was called to review and consider modifications to the 2010 Deering Park/Farmton development plans, as detailed by Glenn Storch. Situated at the NW quadrant of I-95 & SR442, the project remains substantial, the original plans were dated 2010, and market demands have changed. Overall, demographic shifts support smaller residential homes, lower commercial elevations, closer retail access off the major artery, and consistent, lower-density properties. Williamson Blvd. connection is proposed for N-S traffic flow, along with blue way and sustainability elements. All plan changes are downloadable from the dated meeting portal; first reading entered.

April 5: Absent from dais (teleconferenced C.Power). Annual audit presented to certify FY end 09/30/20, with no substantive deficiencies in the City's bookkeeping. CARES Act funding was noted as instrumental to City's financial condition through COVID-19 impacts. Edgewater continues to support Water Conservation Month (April), and Florida Food Waste Prevention Week by proclamation, and made initial appointments to its Environmental Advisory Board. Consent agenda approved standard contract negotiations and management; City Attorney reported status of Marina Project lawsuit and Council approved settlement. City adopted a resolution to oppose the FL Legislature's preemption of Municipal Home Rule powers, without discussion or public input.

City Council continued to conduct regular business in chambers in the second quarter. Protective barriers remained in place between members on the dais until the July 12 meeting; Council have been unmasked, and attendees were not required to wear face coverings within City Hall. Audience seating was returned to shoulder-to-shoulder rows (no longer modified to maintain social distance or reduce indoor density), but low attendance remains the norm, so the protocol may be moot.

Daytona Beach

Susan Pate, Observer

www.codb.us/577/Agendas-Minutes

May 5

The Commissioners adopted a revised Riverfront Esplanade Master Plan which allows for the park to be closed at night. Mr. Hayward Brown spoke at the meeting saying that one of his primary concerns is safety. He and his wife have donated an additional \$1.5 million to construct a fence that will encircle all of the park ground. The Master Plan revision also calls for the portion of the Sweetheart Trail that runs through the park be overseen by the Brown Riverfront Esplanade Foundation. There was some concern that certain activities such as kite-flying and use of non-motorized vehicles were prohibited. Mr. Brown assured the commission that he plans to have family oriented activities every weekend. He stated that he was new to park management and out of concern for safety he wants to proceed slowly before determining all the activities that may be allowed.

The commission is also involved in bringing more affordable housing to the city. A resolution was passed approving an affordable housing development between the City, HUD and Homes Bring Hope. They also committed to exploring other avenues for affordable housing.

May 19

The first hour of the meeting was a tribute to the retiring city manager, Mr. Jim Chisholm. A resolution was passed proclaiming May 20th Florida's Emancipation Day. June 19th or Juneteenth is the day the whole country had ended slavery and will still be celebrated in Florida. However, May 20th is recognized as the day Florida abolished slavery.

Money for The Beach Street Phase II Project was removed from the consent agenda after there was a lot of public dissent. The main complaint was the expenditure of city funds when there are many other city roads in need of paving. The commission was asked to wait a few months when funds may be available through the CRA. The commission agreed to pull the project from the agenda until the next meeting.

Mr. Hardy Smith, Government Relations Administrator, reported on the latest State Legislative Session. Several bills went from bad to not so bad. At the time of his presentation most bills had either not been voted on or not been signed yet. He presented the bills that related to the council's 5 main concerns.

1. Concerned with continued effort to limit home rule. Most bills limiting home rule were passed. These included local occupational licenses (no more city control), code enforcement, emergency management, local impact fees and regulation of home businesses. Not passed - was limiting local involvement in class action suits.

2. Support funding for affordable housing. Bill was modified. Money was still taken away but only for one year. Will be revisited again next year.
3. Oppose unfunded mandates. Unfunded mandates were passed by the senate which causes enormous financial problems for the city. One mandate passed was that city utilities departments must develop a plan for wastewater management by November to be completed by 2032 with no funds from the state.
4. Support for local governments for short term rentals. Bill died
5. Water recharge – no funds from state government (see #3)

Good news was that funding opportunities for grants for sea level rise did pass and the bill discontinuing new member sign up for FRS died.

July 7

The meeting began with a presentation from Kidds are First Inc, an organization run entirely with volunteers, and is dependent on donations. The organization has been around for 12 years and helps foster, orphaned and other disadvantaged children in Volusia County. More information is found at Kiddsarefirst.org.

Public comments were mostly directed at demolition costs that many felt were not equal in fines levied at certain people. Some get a free pass while others do not.

A resolution was passed that allowed the Maley and Windsor affordable housing to continue to operate in conjunction with the housing authority's project. The housing authority owns the property and is in the process of renovating the apartments which were built in 1973.

During comments from the commission Commissioner Mays expressed concern for clean waterways. She was concerned with the number of derelict and illegally moored boats. The police said they were working on the situation.

Commissioners also were interested in beautifying WISB area and discussed an artwork competition with different themes for each blighted area. There was also concern for the morale of our frontline workers and a need to keep funds in the budget for negotiations along with a concern about future big truck meets.

July 21

Meeting opened with a tribute to Len Thompson a homegrown Daytona Beach success who recently retired as the VP/Athletic Director of Bethune Cookman University.

The first public hearing for the millage rates for FY2021/22 will be on September 8, 2021.

Mayor Henry stressed that the public wants good roads, so he wants to be sure that a road and sidewalk plan is worked into the budget.

Resolutions were approved for master plans for both private and public property during Biketoberfest 2021

Mayor Henry concluded the meeting with an impressive power point presentation on street lighting and art districts in a beautification plan for Daytona Beach. His short-term goal is to put together an Art Alliance Board to coordinate all the unique districts and oversee the three stages of implementation. Stage 1 to start 12/30/21 with murals and other art projects. Stage 2 would involve sculptures and Stage 3 would encourage small businesses, art studios and breweries.

Daytona Beach Shores

<https://www.dbshores.org/289/Agenda-and-Minutes>

Pat Gadbaw, Observer

June 8, 27 Ordinances 2021-03 passed on first reading for a voluntary annexation of county property at 2924 South Peninsula Avenue and 2021-07 permitting Counseling Services as an accessory use to churches in the P-Public /Quasi Public Zoning District.

The meeting minutes summarized a long list of house and senate bills passed in the latest meetings of the Legislature. My recommendation is that readers pay attention to meetings called to explain the

meaning of these bills by the League of Women Voters and the Daytona News Journal. They will have substantial effect and how we are governed.

Ordinance 2021-08 passed establishing code of conduct for city parks and recreation areas. Basically, they are not to be used by the homeless as rest areas. Currently there is a major problem with illegal harvesting of berries from palms. Along with this issue of motorized bikes, scooters, etc. using the beach and the sidewalks. Many sidewalks already are too narrow for walker

There also was a discussion regarding the closing of the Dunlawton bridge for public safety. Residents were urged to get their passes if they have not already and keep them in the glove compartment. Since I had thrown away the last one, I personally had, I went to the Port Orange Police Department to replace it and was told “they don’t issue passes”. You just need your driver’s license or a utility bill.

July 13 This meeting was canceled.

Holly Hill

Susan Pate, Observer

www.Hollyhillfl.org/bc/page/agendas-mintues-meeting-recordings

April 13 The commission approved a first reading of an ordinance adopting large scale comprehensive plan amendments in accordance with Florida Statutes Section 163.31. This amends the coastal management element to add objectives and policies for flood risk planning.

The community development department can add best practices to their plan and eliminate unsafe development and redevelopment in high-risk flood and coastal areas.

The commission authorized the city manager to accept the COVID-19 recovery money. At this point there are no details on how the money can be spent. Several members of the public asked that they have input on how the money is spent.

One person spoke against the widening of LPGA in Holly Hill which is something the commission has been seriously studying.

April 27th and May 11th meetings were cancelled

May 25 The meeting began with the Mayor and the Commissioners acknowledging the artists of the Save the Arts Movement. The commissioners envision a Holly Hill that can be a showpiece for community art. The artists have painted the city’s first mural on the Daytona Avenue Bridge and received positive feedback from the commissioners and their constituents. The plan is to continue the movement with more art and hope to find funds through the CRA.

The major concern expressed that night was the Senate Bill on home-based businesses. Most of the city’s authority to regulate these businesses is gone and now the fear is that the city will have no say in the regulation. The commission is supporting the League of Cities in opposition of the governor’s stance on home rule.

June 22 Commissioner Penny Curry was appointed as the voting delegate representing the city of Holly Hill at the Florida League of Cities 95th Annual Conference.

July 13 The utility poles in Holly Hill are being buried underground which will help beautify the area. One owner refuses to sign the document for the easement needed despite the city spending years to accommodate and pay the individual. The city has been reluctant to resort to eminent domain but at this point there is no other choice. The reluctance stems from the fact that the owner will now be compensated at a lesser value. However, none of this will affect the owner’s property value. The City Manager motioned to waive the permit fee for a fundraiser for Officer Raynor which was approved.

Mayor Via announced that there are funds from the federal government recovery plan and plenty of time to decide which projects to implement. The mayor suggested that some could be used on infrastructure and some on premium pay for first responders. The city has until the end of 2024 to encumber the funds.

July 27 The commission approved a maximum millage rate of 6.25. The current rollback rate is 6.0. Public hearings will be on September 13th and September 28th.

A resolution was passed to use FEMA funds for restoration of the Sunrise Park North Bulkhead replacement.

There was concern about the amount of grass clippings in the streets that end up in the Halifax River and increase nitrates which in turn kill the sea grass leading to manatee deaths. An ordinance was discussed that would prohibit lawn clippings being blown into the streets.

It was announced that the City of Holly Hill will take part in the Task Force organized by the City of Daytona Beach to discuss the recent Truck Event with the surrounding cities.

August 10 The commission approved a second reading of a rezoning of a property on Nova Road from commercial to business professional. This property will be the site of a new indoor sports facility and recreational storage. The facility will have room for youth baseball to practice inside along with other youth sports opportunities.

The commission will write letters of support for Holly Hill Affordable Housing entities to the County Council.

Mayor Via also announced that Solar Fit is donating solar panels to the YMCA and installing them for free.

New Smyrna Beach

www.cityofnsb.com/315/Agendas-and-Minutes

Nancy Nusbaum, Observer

June 22 This meeting was focused on several requests by developers for site plan approvals including the Ocean Gate Commerce Center Planned Unit Development (PUD) on 181 acres on the SW intersection of SR-44 and I95, associated Holiday Inn Hotel; Old Mission Cove, 25 single homes and 12 townhome lots; expansion of a mini warehouse; \$2,225,000 improvements to Washington Street covered partially (\$1,200,145) with an FDOT grant; purchase of property on Flagler Avenue to develop a right turn lane from Peninsula to improve traffic flow. Discussion about these projects focused on landscaping, historic trees, and impact on overall character of the areas and on residents.

August 20 The Commission celebrated the city's new home for Developmental Services and Commission chambers in the restored, historic First Baptist Church on Sams Avenue. This opening marked completion of a two-year, \$4.7 million renovation with funding contribution by a \$400,000 ECHO grant. Senator Tom Wright presented the city with \$1.5 million to continue historic preservation projects, one to repair the coquina rock wall in the Old Fort Park, built 1933, and another to pay for renovation of the Women's Club, built in 1924.

The During public participation there were several residents of the Freemont Street neighborhood who complained about impact of industrial land activities including dust, exhaust, noise, pollution with particulates, etc. The residents wanted and the Commission approved an environmental survey.

The Commission approved removal of 1 of 5 historic oak trees on the site slated for development of Greenlawn Manor senior housing project. The approval came with an arborists report that said the tree had significant decay.

Ormond Beach City
www.ormondbeach.iqm2.com/citizens
 Susan Bayley, Observer

May 18 Pleas from residents dominated this meeting. First, six residents implored commissioners to reconsider their decision to tear down the church at 56 North Beach Street. Another six were adamantly opposed to replacing Tomoka Oaks Golf Course with a new residential development. Concerns about traffic along with loss of wildlife and green space were raised. There were about 35 residents supporting these 12 presenters. A spokesperson for Civil Discourse urged commissioners to hold a public meeting to consider different approaches to dealing with these two concerns. Commissioners did not comment on either of these issues.

June 1 Concerned residents again implored commissioners to re-consider their decision to demolish the church on North Beach Street for a parking lot. One resident suggested that only one other commissioner could make such happen, i.e. by having a third vote for reconsideration. Such did not happen. However, at the end of the meeting commissioners discussed the contract with the firm to demolish the church. It appeared that commissioners haven't yet decided to put a parking lot on this lot.

An addition to the runway at the Ormond Beach airport was pulled from the consent agenda. After much discussion, including public comments from seven people, (three for it, four not), commissioners unanimously approved this extension.

July 13 Mayor Partington called a special meeting so that residents could voice their concerns about the decision to abolish the church at 56 North Beach Street. About 100 people, including 24 who each talked for three minutes, attended. The plea was simple: wait six months to consider what to do with this valuable site overlooking the river. (The purpose when purchasing this site for \$729,000 in 2018 was to convert the church into a community center.) Only Selby and Partington originally voted to wait, while Persis, Kent and Littleton still don't seem willing to change their votes. However, residents seem to plan on continuing with its opposition.

A contractor has already been hired to demolish the church, but Hayes, the city's legal counsel, reported that there could be a change in the contract.

July 20 Not surprisingly, even after last week's special meeting on the demolition of the church on North Beach Street, there were 12 residents pleading with Kent, Persis and Littleton to change their votes for demolition of the church on North Beach Street. Two letters from the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation were read to the commissioners, one for making the case for the historic value of the church, the other granting its 2021 award for noteworthy preservation. One resident showed a check for \$50,000 to pay towards purchase of the church and lot from the city. Legal counsel said that the city could not accept the check because an RFPL must go out first. Nearby Salty Church wants to purchase the church, while the city would own the lot. Two other residents approved of the decision to demolish the church for commercial interests. Kent and Persis are willing to sell the lot and church, while all commissioners don't want a permanent parking lot on this site. Most unusual for these meetings, the mayor had to stop the leader of Civil Discourse when she shouted at Kent when he was speaking.

August 11 Shelby and Persis attended by zoom, with Persis having contracted COVID-19. Commissioners pulled an item from the consent agenda, the Capital Improvement Plan. At issue was the funds for water quality, noting that reused water now goes into the Halifax River. At the beginning of the discussion, Selby wanted to postpone this decision, while Kent felt the water bill for residents is too high. Eventually, Persis, Kent and Partington voted down the plan. It will be interesting what is to be done regarding capital improvements for the city.

Pierson
www.townofpierson.org
Susan Bayley, Observer

June 8 For the first time in 25 years, when the town took over its water management, the council approved a water increase for residential and commercial properties. Mayor Bennett reported two qualified residents interested in filling the remaining term for council member Robert Bennett.

June 22 Councilman Peterson died in May so, according to the Pierson charter, when there is a vacancy on the council, the mayor may, along with the consent of a majority of the council, appoint someone to fill the unexpired term. Accordingly, the council approved the appointment of Gary Leonhard who had to resign as chair of the town's planning committee.

July 27 Noise continues to be an issue, with an attempt to accept anonymous complaints as part of a new resolution that will next be reviewed by the planning commission. At this point, however, Governor DeSantis overrode this provision. (Twenty people, including the council, attended this meeting. No masks were worn, although the CDC just advised even vaccinated to wear them inside gatherings.)

August 10 The meeting was cancelled for lack of a quorum. The mayor (and his wife) was hospitalized for COVID-19, while Leonard had COVID-19 and Cardenas' child had COVID-19.

August 24 Again, Leonard and Cardenas could not attend because of COVID-19. The mayor thanked everyone for their concern yet never mentioned COVID-19. Of the 26 people in attendance, only three people wore masks, with Larrivee before the meeting giving all who attended an N95 mask and an article by Sheriff Chitwood encouraging everyone to be vaccinated. The town received a state grant of \$625,000 for its water treatment, also a \$695,000 grant for design of its waste management system. The town will next apply for a loan for this project. Although there is an ordinance on noise, it continues to be a problem, with the council reminding everyone that complaints cannot be anonymous.

Ponce Inlet Town Council
<http://www.ponce-inlet.org/315/Town-Council>
Pat Gadbaw, Observer

Ponce Inlet received high approval for their 2019-20 fiscal year audit from BMC CPA. Ordinances eliminating panhandling, sleeping on public property, urinating or defecating outside, and sleeping on public property, public nudity as well as hours of opening for public parks were all approved. They then needed to determine how to enforce. It was agreed that an additional employee position needs to be established with a detailed position description. This too was approved. Funding for the position will be included the 2021-22 budget.

Short term rentals were debated. It was decided that an employee would be needed to address this issue. Attorney Shepard lamented that the Legislature has taken away home rule which complicates the establishment of these two new positions.

The parking in Ponce Inlet was again addressed as a major problem. There are simply not enough public parking spaces in Ponce.

The good news is the Legislative Senate passed a bill establishing a \$100 million grant program to help local governments to address flooding and sea level rise. This is of major for Ponce Inlet; surrounded on three sides by rising waters.

School Board of Volusia County
www.vcsedu.org/school-board/agendas-minutes
Ann Harrell, Observer

August 10 The Volusia County School Board met in regular session, August 10, 2021. Chairman Linda Cuthbert called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. All Board members were present. Jamie Haynes, District 1; Anita Burnette, District 2; Linda Cuthbert, District 3; Carl Persis, District 4; Ruben Colon, District 5. QUIZ: *Who represents your District?*

The following observations from the school board meetings are captured to keep us informed as to what is happening in public education, especially Volusia County schools, as well as where some of our tax dollars are spent.

Request to Advertise Amendments to Policy 502, Emergency Operations. With the hurricane season upon us, this policy is of interest. This policy addresses a framework for the mandatory report of duty for administrators – those activated during the operation of school shelters. The proposed amendment would change how administrators and non-administrative, non-bargaining employees are compensated during emergency operations. Under the revised policy, administrators and staff members will be paid based on a daily/hourly rate of pay for all hours worked, with hours over 40 worked during a one-week period paid at time and one-half.

Public Participation:

15 citizens from the audience spoke *in support of a mandatory mask policy* in schools.

3 spoke *in support of an optional mask policy*.

2 spoke *in opposition of a mandatory mask policy*.

Willie Williams spoke concerning discrimination, hiring processes and challenges for high poverty schools.

Elizabeth Albert, President, Volusia United Educators, spoke concerning equity, COVID-19 safety and the option to work remotely when possible.

Dr. Jerry Picott spoke concerning educational inequalities in Volusia County Schools.

Florence Beebe spoke concerning tracking the number of absences due to quarantine and COVID-19 cases.

Next Regular School Board meeting is scheduled for August 24, 2021, 5:30 PM, Board Room, District Adm. Complex, Deland, FL.

August 24 Chairman Linda Cuthbert called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. All Board members were present.

Rose Roland, Asst. Supt. Student Services, presented a detailed report on COVID-19 cases in Volusia Schools, followed by a lengthy discussion on the loss of learning/loss of instruction this year due to COVID-19 cases and quarantines.

The School Board will begin their meetings with the County Council on Redistricting in October. Meetings are scheduled for: Oct. 11, 18, 20, and 28, at 5:30 p.m. in Volusia County City Hall, first floor, training room.

August 31 The School Board met to discuss a mask mandate for students as an added layer of protection. The meeting included two hours of public comments which began at 8:00. It was moved and seconded that mandatory face coverings, K-12, following CDC guidelines, be required in all Volusia schools, from September 7 to October 15, with a 3-day grace period to give parents an opportunity, if needed, to secure medical opt-out paperwork. The motion passed 3-2. YEA (Cuthbert, Colon, Persis); NAY (Burnette, Haynes). The meeting adjourned at 11:00 pm. WOW!

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS VOLUSIA COUNTY
OBSERVER CORPS

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You can join us as a single Observer or come with a partner and observe alternate meetings. Many meetings are live-streamed and recorded for viewing during COVID.

We would love to talk to you
Send us an email

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