

THE GALT MILE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES
JOSE "CHEPO" VEGA
FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO THE LANDSCAPING AND
BEAUTIFICATION OF THE GALT OCEAN MILE
JUNE 2017

GALT MILE

NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GMCA
JANUARY 2018



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THE GALT MILE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION RECOGNIZES
JOSE "CHEPO" VEGA
FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO THE LANDSCAPING AND
BEAUTIFICATION OF THE GALT OCEAN MILE
JUNE 2017

DELIVERING DISNEY KEEPING THE PROMISE

By Eric Berkowitz

When Galt Ocean Drive residents voluntarily self-assessed funding for the broad range of civic upgrades known as the Galt Mile Improvement Project in 1995 (pink aggregate sidewalks, new traffic signals and signage, interred utility lines, paved crosswalks, new landscaping, etc.), the City agreed to maintain the many improvements in "a Disney-like manner." Whenever the Parks Department dropped the ball, Galt Mile association officials would meet with the District 1 City Commissioner and Parks Department Director Phil Thornburg to elicit assurances that civic maintenance would improve. Such promises were short-lived, and turned to vapor when the bureaucrats' feet were no longer in the fire. By 2008, angry residents had watched their landscaping cycle through 12 years of avoidable brownouts.

The Chepo Years on a Grateful Galt

Throughout 2008, Commodore resident José "Chepo" Vega peppered Galt Mile Community Association (GMCA) officials with complaints about the "precarious" state of landscaping along Galt Ocean Drive. In early November, he followed it up with an email exclaiming "While I was walking in front of my building, I saw someone walk into a low hanging tree limb. It could have blinded him. Why doesn't the City pay attention to the landscaping on our block?" Chepo argued that if he knew who to contact about addressing this issue, he would gladly volunteer his time and horticultural acumen. Chepo's timing was propitious. Fed up with boilerplate City excuses for its benign neglect, angry neighborhood officials sought aggressive enforcement of the City's block maintenance commitment.

Chepo was invited to apprise the Galt Mile Advisory Board about his offer. At the December 18, 2008 meeting, GMCA President Pio Ieraci proposed that Chepo be officially vested with overseeing block maintenance on behalf of the Neighborhood Association. A quick vote affirmed Chepo's status. The neighborhood association seated its first block maintenance liaison with the City.

For the next eight years, Chepo worked with District 1 City Commissioner Christine Teel (and later with Bruce Roberts), Parks Department Superintendent Brian Hopper, Beach Foreman Mark Almy, and Parks crews stationed along the Galt. Whenever neighborhood landscaping or hardscape features suffered damage from weather events, spotty maintenance or outright neglect, Chepo turned up the heat on City officials to correct the problem.

During his tenure, Chepo addressed hundreds of sidewalk tripping hazards, trimmed scores of hedges that blocked the vision of motorists entering or departing association properties, helped control epidemic "Utility Graffiti", cut tree branches that threatened pedestrians – while enforcing a high aesthetic standard. Chepo's retirement in late 2016 was marked by a ceremony expressing gratitude for years of uncompromising oversight that helped keep our neighborhood safe and beautiful. A City-approved honorarium was affixed to a bench in front of Chepo's Commodore home.

John Jors Picks Up the Gauntlet

As neighborhood officials began exploring a replacement, Ed Hashek from the Galleon declared "I know a guy." At the next meeting, Hashek informed the Advisory Board that after speaking with a trustworthy Galleon neighbor about stepping into Chepo's shoes, John Jors had agreed to serve as the neighborhood association's next block maintenance liaison with the City. Once approved by the Board, Jors hit the ground running.

On Monday, April 10, 2017, Jors embarked on his first neighborhood walk-through to assess landscaping and lighting along the Galt Mile. Accompanied by Ieraci, Vice Mayor Bruce Roberts, Parks Department Operations Superintendent Mark Almy, and Supervisor William McDonough, Jors summarized his observations in a report to the neighborhood association.

Continued on page 6



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In his April 19 assessment, Jors noted insufficient irrigation of the swale, the need to replace missing trees, repair damaged supports, adjust tree grates, repair or replace more than 50 non-functional up lights along the east side of Galt Ocean Drive and enhance the south monument area with additional foliage.

Not a bad opening act. Jors' block maintenance feedback serves two purposes. While keeping the neighborhood association up to speed about local landscaping and hard-scape issues, the entries also function as work orders for the local Parks crew. On May 17, a week after the crew began restaking trees, Parks Operations Superintendent Mark Almy informed Jors about a terminal glitch in the system of up lights discovered by their electrician.

Almy said "The problem is that much of the wire is not in any conduit and severely damaged/weathered. Additionally, the manufacturer for the lights that we would like to replace is no longer in business. It looks like we would need to replace the entire system, however that may be initially cost prohibitive." Jors shot back that the City is financially liable for maintaining the lighting system.

Jors added "The street lighting on the Galt is minimal, and I believe the up lights are necessary for the safety and security of our neighborhood." To cushion City concerns about the budgetary impact, Jors additionally observed "Outdoor lighting technology has greatly improved since the present system was installed, and probably would be much more economical to operate."

In his June 19 report, Jors expressed surprise upon discovering that all the supposedly unsalvageable up lights and most of the block's street lamps were illuminated (except for a few street lamps at the north end of Galt Ocean Drive). Evidently, the city electrician flubbed his diagnosis of the lighting problem, which was cured within weeks, rendering moot any contention over who picks up the check.

Hurricane Irma Crops the Canopy

Jors contacted Mark Almy on September 22, as South Florida municipalities struggled to recover from Hurricane Irma. While acknowledging that debris removal was the City's top priority, Jors raised an issue that has been festering for nearly two decades.

Noting how Silver Buttonwoods planted on the east side of Galt Ocean Drive were severely bent toward the street, as broken and twisted branches blocked the sidewalk, Jors exclaimed "Even before Irma's visit, the buttonwoods were the number one complaint I received from Galt residents. Because they had not been properly maintained (staking, pruning) as they grew, many of them leaned over the sidewalk with low branches obstructing pedestrians. I would suggest replacing them with a more wind tolerant tree."

For Almy, this was old news. Jors was echoing the same complaint that initially prompted Chepo to confront Almy in 2008, a complaint that was never resolved. On September 24, Almy advised Jors that the City was knee-deep in post-storm repairs and cleanup, but promised to discuss replacements for the troublesome Silver Buttonwoods in the near future.

Jors had stumbled on the Pandora's Box of Galt Mile landscaping. Each year, scores of residents and visitors complain to the City and the neighborhood association about trees along Galt Ocean Drive that are "severely bent to-

wards the street," characterizing the eye-level low hanging branches as pedestrian threats. They also questioned why trees along the Galt appear strangely distorted, frail and congenitally puny - as if on life support. Here's the answer.

Parks Plan Implodes

The trees planted along Galt Ocean Drive have two strikes against them. When former Urban Forester - the late Gene Dempsey - addressed a 2005 Presidents Council meeting, he explained that a newly hired city horticulturist would supervise the planting of all new "environmentally compatible" flora along the block.

The plan first went awry in 2007 as the City prepared to replace sections of canopy shredded by the serial hurricanes of 2004 and 2005. On the Galt Mile, Parks personnel discovered that the Green Buttonwoods they had planted years earlier had grown massive root systems, irreversibly entangling utility lines, communication cables and drain lines. Were they simply torn out, residents in the adjacent buildings would taste life in the 15th century.

Having failed to pry out the roots, cut them away or selectively poison certain offshoots, former Parks Department Assistant Director Terry Rynard - who later returned to hometown Kansas City - finally conceded that the Department's plan was in trouble. Given the City's cash-strapped recessionary budget, Parks officials would try a questionable quick fix - rooting smaller trees in areas already occupied by enormous root balls. Unaware of either the problem or the ill-conceived attempted remedy, when many of the newly planted runt trees began to die off, perplexed Galt Mile officials demanded an explanation.

During a June 2007 landscaping walk through with Rynard and Parks Foreman Tim Southby, GMCA officials first learned why hurricane-damaged trees were deliberately replaced with undersized trees that rarely survived. "The silver buttonwoods that we planted on the walkway were chosen for their small size for many reasons," exclaimed Southby. "The openings in the sidewalk are only so big. Many of the old root systems are still in the ground from the old trees and from other trees along the sidewalk. Electrical and irrigation for these trees also run through these openings, causing us to use smaller and not as mature specimens as we would like to have used." Southby elaborated, "For this reason we have had to stake and strap the trees in ways we normally would avoid. We know that it isn't the most attractive method but it is working."

Continued on page 7



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Disney...Continued

Squeezing Two Feet into One Shoe?

When trees were planted and heavily staked in whatever space was available amid the overcrowded root remnants, as often as not, they died. Asserting how nurturing the newly planted replacements for several months would have improved their chances for survival, Tim Southby detailed a revised Parks Department plan to accomplish this objective, "We are currently topping off most of the buttonwoods to stop adding more stress to the lower trunk and the root system. This will allow the trunk to thicken up and give it the strength that we need to allow the strapping to come off and make the sidewalk area more appealing."

By initially keeping the trees small, Southby concluded that their growth resources would be directed towards bulking up their trunks, enhancing their prospects for survival. Southby theorized that this strategy, in conjunction with concentrated fertilization, would shorten the period that the trees would appear undersized. Southby was asked how long the small silver buttonwoods would have to remain staked and strapped. "We hope by June of 2008 the strapping will come off most of the trees except for the ones that we have had to replace in the last few weeks," predicted Southby. Unfortunately, his plan hit a wall.

Rynard agreed with Southby's assessment, exclaiming "You won't have to wait ten years to see substantial growth. We're making the best out of a bad situation. We plan to intensively fertilize the new trees. Once they are firmly rooted, we should see some rapid growth." Southby also blamed the old root balls for damage sustained by the aggregate sidewalks originally installed as part of the Galt Mile Improvement Project. He explained "The root systems spread under the entire area. We found them wrapped around the tree cover grates and they dislodged sidewalks."

Continued on page 8

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Although directed to meticulously micromanage the immature plantings through their initial growth period, Parks personnel repeatedly failed to do so. When most of the trees once again succumbed to the Department's inexplicable maintenance lapses, their replacements were also heavily staked. Of those that ultimately survived, when the stakes were removed, growth spurts sent their crowns lunging toward or away from the street. In danger of toppling, they were restaked. By the time these trees were stabilized, many had become egregiously contorted – strangely reminiscent of the twisted specimens that grace Halloween paraphernalia or preconstructed props from Grade C Horror movies.

Characterizing the plan as an abject failure, Galt Mile officials suggested a reasonable alternative - planting the replacement trees in nearby locations that weren't choked with root remnants. While excavating adjacent sidewalk panels and shifting the grates a few feet over would entail a modest one-time expense, it would finally yield a crop of full-sized healthy trees. Since growth would not be impaired by root balls, it would eliminate the need for costly intensive oversight and the expense of repeatedly replacing trees that don't survive.

Seemingly conflicted over whether the fault is attributable to an inherently flawed plan, or a failure to implement it properly, the City has thus far refused to abandon its recipe for tortuously twisted trees along the Galt. As if intrigued by the prospect of cramming two feet into one shoe, Parks officials are still planning to stuff small plantings in sites packed with dead plant roots.

The Devil in the Details

On November 15, Jors reported that 50 of the 150 Silver Buttonwoods along the Galt were sufficiently damaged by Hurricane Irma to warrant removal and replacement. Earlier, Jors

and Ed Hashek met with Parks Supervisor William McDonough and Urban Forester Mark Williams to discuss which species of tree might best serve as a viable substitute – given the chronic exposure to wind, salt and a cramped planting space.

They also agreed that candidate specimens should first be tested - preferably in locations where the Buttonwoods suffered the most damage. Williams proposed an initial 24 tree installation pilot and Jors suggested planting the test trees along the walkways adjacent to Ocean Sky, Ocean Club, Ocean Summit, Playa del Mar and Galt Ocean Club – where the Silver Buttonwoods were heavily damaged.

When Williams recommended replacing the shredded Silver Buttonwoods with Simpson's Stopper, Bulnesia and Spanish Stopper, Mark Almy voiced concern, explaining "Even though the SBW (Silver Buttonwoods) took a beating, there is not much that can fit in those spots that would have done much better in the wind. The entire Galt walkway used to be Stoppers, but the wind beat them to pieces. We removed them all in favor of the SBW." Given Almy's input, on December 4, Williams revised the list, swapping out the standard Simpson's Stopper for a multi-trunk variation, and substituting a salt and wind tolerant Japanese Blueberry for the Spanish Stopper.

To date, Jors has proven to be a knowledgeable, congenial and effective liaison. While earning the trust of neighborhood association officials, his suggestions seem to resonate with his Parks Department counterparts. If they can successfully resolve this dilemma by complementing the neighborhood's unique hardscape features with fully developed trees and otherwise robust landscaping, they will have scored a major win for both the City and local residents. More to come...•





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Flamingo Gardens
9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: www.flamingogardens.org

Cool Wheels 7th Annual Benefit
Car Show
Benefit Youth Automotive Training
Center (Quiet Waters Park)
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-428-0909

28

Dancing By The Sea
Anglin's Square Beach Pavilion
5 to 7 p.m.
Info.: 954-776-1000

4

Sunday Jazz Brunch
Riverwalk, Downtown FTL
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-396-3622

11

Dancing By The Sea
Anglin's Square Beach Pavilion
5 to 7 p.m.
Info.: 954-776-1000

Gala in the Garden
Flamingo Gardens
5 to 6 p.m.: VIP Reception
6 to 8 p.m.: Main Event
Tix.: <http://www.flamingogardens.org>

18

Casac Chinese New YearFest
Mizner Park Amphitheatre
3:30 to 9 p.m.
Info.: myboca.us

Fort Lauderdale A1A Marathon
& Half-Marathon
401 SW 2nd St. at NW 5th Ave.
Wheelchair: 5:45 a.m.; Marathon & Half
Marathon: 6 a.m.;
Kids Fun Run-11:45 a.m.
Info.: 561-241-3801

22

29

5

12

19

Vice Mayor Bruce Roberts:
Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center, 6 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-5033

23

BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Songer: 954-563-7268

30

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City Commission Meeting
City Hall, 6 p.m.

24

BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

31

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7

BINGO
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14

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Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
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21

BINGO
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7 p.m.
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Valentine's Day/Ash Wednesday

JANUARY 20: Delta 5K Walk/Run for Health, Osswald Park (2220 NW 21st Ave.), 6 to 11:30 a.m., Info.: 954-593-7111

JANUARY 20: 8th Annual JA World Uncorked!, A World Huizenga Center - Broward College (1130 Coconut Creek Blvd.), 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Info.: 954-979-7120

JANUARY 20: Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off Events, Mills Pond Park, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 954-828-8000

JANUARY 20: Citywide Yard Sales, Jaco Pastorius Park, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Info.: 954-630-4495

JANUARY 20-21: 28th Annual Nautical Flea Market 2018, Community Park (820 NE 18th Ave. in Pompano), Info.: 954-946-6419

JANUARY 20-21: 29th Annual Downtown Delray Beach Festival of the Arts, E Atlantic Ave. (Delray), 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 561-746-6615

JANUARY 27: 14th Annual KID Hero 5K, Vista View Park (Davie), Registration: 7 a.m., Start: 8 a.m., Info.: 786-510-3774

JANUARY 27-28: 38th Annual Deerfield Beach Festival of the Arts, Main Beach Parking Lot (149 SE 21st Ave. in Deerfield), 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 954-480-4429

JANUARY 27-28: Sailfish Smack Down, South side of Pompano Pier & 16th St., Info.: joe@extremekayakfishing.com

JANUARY 27-28: 8th Annual Coral Gables Festival of the Arts, 255 Alhambra (Coral Gables), 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Info.: 786-558-5234

FEBRUARY 3: Annual Gala in the Garden, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, 6:30 to 11:30 p.m., Info.: 305-667-1651

FEBRUARY 3-4: 44th Annual South Florida Depression Glass Show, Emma Lou Olsen Civic Center, Pompano, Info.: 305-884-0335

FEBRUARY 11: 9th Annual Jazz Picnic in the Park, Performer: Nightlife, Ilene Lieberman Botanical Garden (Lauderhill), 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Info.: 954-730-3000

FEBRUARY 24-25: 15th Annual Polynesian Cultural Festival, Jaco Pastorius Park, Noon to 7 p.m., Info.: 954-630-4507

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<p>1</p> <p>Miami Beach Jewelry & Watch Show (Through 2/4) One Herald Plaza (Miami) Info.: 561-822-5440</p>	<p>2</p> <p>First Friday Food Trucks Flamingo Gardens 5 to 9 p.m. Info.: www.flamingogardens.org</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Coral Springs Family Fun Day and Car Show Coral Springs Sportsplex 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-345-2119</p> <p>Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics Drop-off Events Coral Springs Public Works Westside Maintenance Complex 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-8000</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Seafood & Music Festival (Through 2/11) Mizner Park Amphitheatre, Boca 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info.: http://www.seafoodfestivals.com</p> <p>26th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival Through 2/11) Quiet Waters Park 10 a.m. to Sundown Info.: 954-776-1642</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Art Stroll Sea Turtle Plaza (LBTS) 5 to 8 p.m. Info.: 954-267-9202</p> <p>G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant, 11 a.m.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Fine Crafts Show 2018 Palm Beach County Convention Center Info.: 561-822-5440</p> <p>The Publix Health & Fitness Expo (Through 2/17) Broward County Convention Center Info.: 561-241-3801</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale A1A 5K Merrill Lynch building (450 E Las Olas Blvd) Info.: 561-241-3801</p> <p>26th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival Through 2/18) Quiet Waters Park 10 a.m. to Sundown Info.: 954-776-1642</p>
<p>22</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Fort Lauderdale Ruggerfest (Through 2/25) Mills Pond Park Info.: 954-444-6086</p> <p>6th Orange Blossom Kickoff Concert The corner of Orange Dr. and Davie Rd. 6 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-797-1181</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Orange Blossom Festival and Rodeo (Through 2/25) Davie Town Hall Info.: 954-797-1181</p> <p>Lake Worth Street Painting (Through 2/25) Downtown Lake Worth 10 a.m. Info.: http://www.streetpaintingfestivalinc.org</p>

FEBRUARY 27

Fort Lauderdale Career Fair
Marriott Fort Lauderdale North
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 702-614-9537

FEBRUARY 27

Swatch Beach Volleyball Major Series
Fort Lauderdale Beach Park
8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Info.: 954-900-6700

MARCH 1-4

2018 Dania Beach Marine Flea Market
Mardi Gras Casino, Hallendale
Info.: 954-761-7073

MARCH 3

Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Drop-off Event
4800 West Copans Road, Coconut Creek
9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-8000

MARCH 3

HSBC 28th Annual Walk for the Animals 2018
Huizenga Plaza
Registration: 8 a.m.; Start: 10 a.m.
Info.: 954-266-6817

MARCH 3-4

30th Annual Las Olas Art Fair Part II
600 East Las Olas Blvd.
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Info.: 561-746-6615

MARCH 3-4

26th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival
Quiet Waters Park
10 a.m. to Sundown
Info.: 954-776-1642

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First Saturday of Every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd. & the Beach LBTS (Meet at Pavilion), 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info.: 954-776-1000

First Saturday of Every Month: North Beach Art Walk, 3280 NE 32nd St, 7 to 11 p.m., Info.: 954-537-3370

Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Park, 1100 Seabreeze Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info.: 954-593-8501

Second Saturday of Every Month: Burlock Coast Farmer's Market, Burlock Coast at the The Ritz-Carlton, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info.: myfortlauderdalebeach.com

Second Tuesday of Every Month: Orchid Greenhouse Tours, Bonnet House, 11 a.m. to Noon, Info.: 954-703-2606

Mondays: Food Trucks at ArtsPark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood

Thursdays: BHIP Farmer's Market, Broward Health Imperial Point Medical Arts Pavilion (633 N Federal Hwy.), 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736

Sundays: Las Olas Sunday Market, 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 954-426-8436

Sundays (through May): Farmer's Market at El Prado Park, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 561-714-2745

Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info.: 954-384-0442

Saturdays: Music at Athena's By The Sea, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Info.: 754-333-3864

EDITOR'S COMMENTARY:

Chip LaMarca's DECEMBER 2017 Newsletter

By Eric Berkowitz

In his December 2017 LaMarca Letter, District 4 Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca cites the newly built Ravenswood Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility and the new Animal Care and Adoption Center for having respectively scored Gold and Silver certifications for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) from the U.S. Green Building Council; apprises travelers about using the recently released 2018 Port Everglades Cruise Guide to build an entire vacation around a cruise; reminds Broward boaters to heed the slower seasonal speed limits to avoid collisions with migrating Manatees; and applauds the Broward Water Partnership and the Conservation Pays Program for saving a record breaking 1.5 billion gallons of water as of October 2017 - primarily attributable to a rebate program that rewards participants for replacing old toilets with high-efficiency models that conserve water.

While LaMarca's Holiday Season missive extolls two recent County projects for meriting LEED Certification, few of his Broward constituents are conversant with the LEED Program, or why their elected officials celebrate LEED certified projects.

What is LEED?

A brainchild of the non-profit U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. The rigorous LEED platform uses a consensus based, continuous improvement process to blend assessment factors distilled from science, specialty fields and industry expertise. Since its inception in 2000, the LEED program has evolved from a single standard for new construction to an interrelated system of standards applicable to virtually all new and existing building, community and home project types in over 165 countries and territories.

LEED projects deploy a wide range of criteria to focus on achieving environmentally responsible, frugal and resource-efficient design and construction, cost-effective maintenance and post-con-

struction operational efficiency in commercial buildings and homes. To combat sprawl, the factors were reconfigured to yield safer, better-connected neighborhood-scale projects. In turn, the assessment criteria are sorted into 5 different overall categories specified by project type: Green Building Design & Construction (BD+C); Green Interior Design & Construction (ID+C); Green Building Operations & Maintenance (O+M); Green Neighborhood Development (ND); and Green Home Design and Construction (Homes).

Projects pursuing LEED certification accrue credits by meeting objectives selected by project planners across several categories (i.e. energy use, purchasing oversight, site density and diversity, construction materials, water use, air quality, etc.) Credits earn points. The number of points achieved by a project determines the level of certification it receives. There are four LEED rating levels: Certified (40-49 points), Silver (50-59 points), Gold (60-79 points) or Platinum (80+ points).

In his December Newsletter, after describing the LEED certified building's impact on "human and environmental health," LaMarca exclaims, "As a lifelong construction professional, this is very important to me." Most construction professionals are primarily concerned with a LEED building's impact on their bank account - a mindset shared by developers, lenders, investors as well as building owners and operators. Since LEED buildings attract tenants, cost less to operate and boost employee productivity and retention, the ecological premium accompanies a steroidal impact on profits.

Fattening the Bottom Line

Buildings are responsible for an enormous amount of global energy use, resource consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. As the demand for more sustainable building options increases, green construction is becoming increasingly profitable and desirable within the international construction market.

In the United States alone, buildings account for almost 40 percent of national CO2 emissions and out-consume both the industrial and transportation sectors. In contrast, LEED-certified buildings have 34 percent lower CO2 emissions, consume 25 percent less energy and 11 percent less water. They've also diverted more than 80 million tons of waste from landfills.

As a result, the black ink realized by LEED-certified buildings in the United States between 2015 and 2018 was derived from \$1.2 billion in lower energy costs, \$149.5 million in water savings, \$715.2 million in reduced maintenance overhead and \$54.2 million in waste savings. More importantly, the savings are sustainable.

LEED buildings report almost 20 percent lower maintenance costs than generic commercial buildings, and green building retrofit projects typically decrease operation costs by almost 10 percent in just one year. For investors, the reduced overhead enhances a property's value by an estimated 4 percent, while expediting its return on investment. By virtue of lowered maintenance and energy costs, green retrofit projects generally make investors whole within seven years.

The Market Turns Green

The market is responding to these cost savings and environmental benefits at a dramatic rate. According to a Dodge Data & Analytics World Green Building Trends 2016 SmartMarket Report, the global green building sector continues to double every three years, with survey respondents from 70 countries reporting 60 percent of their projects will be green by 2018.

Already outpacing overall construction growth in the United States, by 2018, green construction will account for more than 3.3 million U.S. jobs - more than one-third of the entire U.S. construction sector (9.6 million jobs in 2015) - and generate \$190.3 billion in labor income to working Americans. The industry's direct contribution to U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is also expected to reach \$303.5 billion from 2015-2018.

Although theoretically unburdened by a downside, exploring the program's performance-based data revealed that certain LEED projects failed to meet post-construction objectives. While tailoring a building's design features to its intended use will generally enhance efficiency and cut overhead, if the building is sold, and used for some other purpose, those same design features can actually impede efficiency to the extent that maintenance and operational costs can exceed those of an uncertified, conventional structure. Since additionally funding a LEED Certified retrofit would recapture the benefits, proponents argue



that the prospective downside is limited to a delayed return on investment – an expense appropriate to refitting any commercial plant.

Trouble on the Horizon

Recently, LEED has come under fire by competing systems such as the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes rating system. Citing LEED as too strict and exclusionary, a movement to adopt other rating systems or promote legislative bans against the use of LEED on government projects has taken root in states like Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia. At the heart of the conflict is politics and control.

The Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the American Tree Farm System claim that LEED harms the wood industry by only recognizing certification by the competing Forest Stewardship Council. As result, the lumber industry convinced North Carolina lawmakers to purge LEED from public projects. Since the most recent LEED version (LEED v4) drills down into the chemical makeup of building materials, and rates how each component impacts the environment, the Chemical Industry went berserk. ANSI (American National Standards Institute) complained that only USGBC members can vote on LEED criteria. Their assertion that LEED is therefore exclusionary is largely ignored by the industry since USGBC membership currently includes almost 200,000 LEED professionals and 13,000 member organizations. While other Green systems have established a foothold, LEED remains the 600-pound gorilla of environmental sustainability.

*The growing number of celebratory media snippets about LEED certified projects by elected officials aren't solely vehicles for harvesting political capital. More than 400 municipalities, 32 states and 14 federal agencies cite LEED as a best practice for achieving sustainability objectives, and either require or reward LEED certification. Meriting certification will often earmark projects for a regulatory goodie bag. Such benefits might include variances for ordinarily immutable population density or building height zoning restrictions and expedited or no-cost permitting. Financial incentives include tax credits, grants and low interest loans. Peruse the entire December 2017 LaMarca Letter, elsewhere in this edition. – [editor]**

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Chip LaMarca's

DECEMBER 2017 Newsletter

For information about manatee protection zones by County, including seasonal changes, visit the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission website and click on "Data and Maps." At the bottom of the page there is information on Manatee COLD-weather changes to speed zones.

Broward County now also offers a new innovative manatee reporting mobile app that can be used to report the location of manatees and their activities, view manatee protection zones and boating safety zones in County waterways. The 'I Spy a Manatee' mobile app can be used by Broward residents and visitors to report manatee sightings. Download the app from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

Broward Water Partnership and Conservation Pays Program

Residents, business and nonprofits in Broward County had record breaking water savings through the Broward Water Partnership and the Conservation Pays Program. The Community has saved 1.5 billion gallons of water combined as of October 2017. Much of the savings were achieved through the regional toilet rebate program that provides property owners with rebates when they upgrade older model toilets to high-efficiency water-saving models. The Broward Water Partnership provides rebates through ConservationPays.com, with just five steps including filling out an application and attaching required documentation. Applicants can receive up to \$100 rebate per toilet.

For more information and to check your availability, please visit ConservationPays.com.

The Resident's Guide to Government provides a convenient resource to help people stay connected to their local government. It includes contact information for County officials and Federal, State, and local agencies. Visitors can subscribe to eNews and social media sites. Please sign up at Broward.org/District4 to receive email updates from our office. If there is anything that we can do to assist you with your vision for a better Broward, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 954-357-7004 or by email at clamarca@broward.org.

One final note, as we celebrate the holiday season and prepare for an exciting new year, I offer you a very Happy Hanukkah, a very Merry Christmas and the most prosperous 2018 for you and yours.

As always, it is my honor and privilege to serve you.
Best regards,

Chip

Dear Broward County Residents,

I am honored to serve as your county commissioner, representing our coastal communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale and all of the amazing communities in between. Here are some recent highlights from around Broward County.

LEED Certification for County Facilities

The new state-of-the-art Ravenswood Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility and the new Animal Care and Adoption Center have achieved Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification and Silver certification respectively from the U.S. Green Building Council.

As an internationally recognized mark of excellence, LEED provides building owners and operators with a framework for identifying and implementing practical and measurable green building design, construction, operations and maintenance solutions. LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building, home or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. As a lifelong construction professional, this is very important to me.

The Ravenswood Bus operations and Maintenance Facility project included the construction of a new 3-story parking garage, operations and maintenance buildings, fuel station and bus wash.

The Animal Care and Adoption Center set new standards by becoming the first LEED climate controlled shelter in the state of Florida.

It's Manatee Season

Broward's Environmental Planning and Community Resilience Division cautions boaters to be on the lookout for manatees moving throughout our waterways. November 15th marked the beginning of manatee season and seasonal manatee protection zones are in effect thru March 31st. As air and water temperatures drop, manatees begin moving south for warmer water such as springs and energy center discharge canals for refuge, and slower seasonal speed limits go into effect.



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ELLYN BOGDANOFF: ELSS OPT-OUT LEGISLATION UPDATE

Eric Berkowitz

**Six years after Ellyn Bogdanoff's 2010 Opt-Out legislation enabled thousands of high-rise associations to forgo retrofitting a \$multi-million fire sprinkler system, angry Fire Sprinkler association lobbyists hell bent on recovering the lost windfall dispatched an official from the Fire Marshal's union to solicit the Office of State Fire Marshal for a "friendly" interpretation of the Florida Fire Prevention Code (FFPC).*

Looking Back: 2017 Session

The resulting May 4, 2016, Declaratory Statement authorized local Fire Marshalls to demand that thousands of Florida high-rise associations retrofit a \$multi-million Engineered Life Safety System (ELSS) - an arbitrary stew of fire safety features that invariably includes a sprinkler system. Vested with broad Statutory discretion, many local Fire Marshalls began rejecting any ELSS permit application that didn't include a sprinkler system. Brazenly exceeding their authority, others simply ordered associations to install a sprinkler system, arrogantly specifying a hand-picked engineer and/or contractor for these installations.

Angered by this mercenary scam to circumvent the intent of the legislature for the sole purpose of bloodletting \$billions from association homeowners, Statehouse Representative George Moraitis (R - Fort Lauderdale) teamed with Association Advocate Ellyn Bogdanoff and State Senator Kathleen Passidomo (R - Naples) to file legislation providing associations with the right to opt-out of the costly ELSS. As Bogdanoff tenaciously battled with sprinkler lobbyists throughout the session, Moraitis told vetting committees that thousands of elderly retirees on fixed incomes would be forced from their homes by the astronomical assessment. The legislators concurred. With one exception, every lawmaker in both chambers approved the bills.

In exchange for Governor Rick Scott's promise to approve the legislation, the bills were amended to require approval by 2/3 of the association's voting interests to forgo an ELSS. Without extending a standard courtesy of first informing the bill's sponsors, on June 26, 2017, the Governor broke his promise and vetoed the legislation, citing the June 14 fire at Grenfell Tower in London for his decision. Ironically, since the London fire was attributed to combustible aluminum cladding affixed to the building's exterior, an ELSS wouldn't have altered the outcome.

Round 2: Planning the 2018 Rematch

The next day, Bogdanoff notified the legislation's supporters "Our opposition seized the moment and in an abundance of political caution, Governor Scott vetoed the bill." Concluding that the tragedy should not have impacted the ELSS opt-out, she remarked "We lost the battle but we have not lost the war. We will regroup and press on." On July 18, 2017 Galt Mile officials met with Moraitis and Bogdanoff to discuss

refiling the bill during the 2018 legislative session.

Bogdanoff opened with a rundown about how the veto changed the playing field. The legislative strategy would have to be reconfigured to preclude a replay of the 2017 aborted endgame. Bogdanoff said she would explore alternative new fire suppression technologies and harvest authoritative substantiation for the legislation, specifying recent contractor bids to additionally document the mind-boggling financial burden. She was also considering certain legal actions - possibly targeting local fire marshals who overstepped their authority or demonstrating that the ELSS is a blind for retrofitting fire sprinklers - thereby violating the 2010 opt-out statute.

Moraitis and Bogdanoff detailed the procedural requirements for a veto override, exhorting its dependence on advocacy by the legislative leadership. They planned to discuss the legislation with Senate President Joe Negron and House Speaker Richard Corcoran, as their cooperation would also help facilitate an understanding with the Governor's office. Moraitis and Bogdanoff favored cloistering their preparations until they could coalesce the key elements of the strategy.

*Citing "political complications" inherent in an election year session and a tragic July 14 fire in a Honolulu high-rise, Bogdanoff later suggested altering the near-term objective. In late August she proposed legislation to extend the December 31, 2019 ELSS installation deadline while convening a task force to study the cost and explore other options. In short - a holding action until she and Moraitis could cultivate traction with the legislative leadership - or after Governor Scott is term limited into another line of work on January 7, 2019. In early December, fate smiled - as House Speaker Richard Corcoran gave Moraitis his blessing to refile the unadulterated ELSS Opt-Out bill. On December 12, Bogdanoff sent supporters a "First Update", signaling that Round 2 of this struggle is underway. See for yourself. Read on... - [editor]**

Continued on page 18



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FIRST UPDATE

By Ellyn Bogdanoff

I just wanted to give you a quick update before the holiday season takes over our lives. I met with Rep. Moraitis last week and he has decided that he will file the exact opt out bill from last year. He was encouraged to do so by the Speaker. I also spoke with Senator Farmer and he is filing the Senate companion bill. They have until 12PM on the first day of session to file but I suspect both will file before then so staff has time to do the analysis and we can get on the committee agenda. If the bills are filed, I will let you know the numbers so that you can track them if you want. I will be sending out regular updates as I did last year. This will be an interesting ride since it is an election year. I am sure I will have plenty of material to keep you entertained.

If I don't write to you before the season kicks in, Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and a happy and healthy New Year. Let your fellow associations know it is not too late to add their names to the list, and I don't mean Santa's list. The more associations we have the more power in our message. Please encourage them to join the ELSS 2018 Opt Out Group.

Until next time...Ellyn

**Following the Governor's veto, State Senator Kathleen Passidomo (R – Naples), who had previously filed the Senate bill, exclaimed her intention to withdraw from the 2018 effort. Later, she said she would participate. To dispel further confusion, Bogdanoff recruited Senator Gary Farmer (D – Broward), who won the Senate seat vacated by former Senator Jeremy Ring. Since the recently redrawn Senate District 34 boundaries now include the entire Broward coast, Farmer represents the Galt Mile in the Florida Senate, as does Moraitis in the Statehouse. Ironically, when Bogdanoff filed her Fire Sprinkler Opt-Out legislation in 2010, Ring filed the companion bill in the Senate.*

House Speaker Richard Corcoran is a fearless political force of nature. Providing Moraitis with a green light to refile in 2018 will help rebuild credibility undermined by the 2017 gubernatorial flip-flop. Moraitis apparently considers Corcoran's support sufficiently influential to set aside a legislative delay pending Scott's departure or the threatened "political complications" of an election year session. Instead, he will dust off last year's successful package and jump in with both feet.

The bill's supporters face another issue. Given the rigors of an election year playing field, the new team will need sufficient resources to effectively engage fire sprinkler association lobbyists with daunting deep pockets (and fire marshals on their payroll). While Moraitis and Farmer are paid by the state, Bogdanoff has to rely on contributions from those in the fiscal crosshairs of this ELSS mandate. As thousands of high-rise association homeowners threatened with a crippling assessment are apprised of the struggle's resumption, their associations are asking the lawmakers about how they can help – an issue that Bogdanoff addresses in her "First Update". For info or to participate, email Bogdanoff at lobby@bplegal.com or ebogdanoff@bplegal.com.

*In high-rise associations across the state – including those on the Galt Mile, unit owners conversant with this issue have been pressuring association boards to increase their modest contributions to this effort – given the \$multi-million alternative. However, time is short. Although the 60-day legislative session ordinarily begins on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March, lawmakers seeking an extended post-session electioneering window voted to commence the 2018 session on January 9. Mirroring last year's strategy, the team plans to hit the ground running and stay one step ahead of the opposition. More to come... - [editor]**



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