



**Delivered by Mayor Steve Leary  
February 17, 2017 ▪ Noon  
The Alford Inn ▪ Winter Park, FL**

Thank you all and a special thank you to the Chamber for hosting us today.

We had much to celebrate this past year. But we also had a major loss and recapping Winter Park's 2016 begins with Roger Trindade. The loss of Roger the weekend of October 15 was horribly tragic. The Winter Park Police Department launched a thorough investigation into the incident. Their work led to the State Attorney's office filing charges against the accused participants. Our community came together and rallied behind the Trindade family and behind law enforcement. While it is impossible for us to comprehend the depths of despair that the family has experienced, we must have faith in the legal process. Please keep the Trindade family in your thoughts and prayers.

Now, the numbers.

For the ninth straight year, we held the line on our millage rate. We enjoy the third lowest millage rate in all of Orange County. We also maintain a healthy General Fund Reserve to protect us during emergency situations and to take advantage of sensible opportunities.

Our region is growing. After an exceptionally challenging downturn, we are on a healthy, balanced upswing. Housing starts are trending upward. Our state population continues to outpace all but three other states. Forecasts have the state population growing 1.7 percent annually over the next four years, and the Orlando region is forecast to outpace that at 2.2 percent annual growth rate. They are coming.

So how do we assure our future relevance in this hyper-evolving market? We do so by remembering the actions of our predecessors, by leveraging partnerships, inclusion and people. I believe in what I have labeled Generational Customization. Maintaining our uniqueness but allowing enough flexibility, so that those that come after us can continue to build upon and shape our history to meet new needs and tastes. We shouldn't restrict the possibilities of tomorrow by hiding in the memories of yesterday.

I reference partnerships often. Winter Park was built by individuals and organizations working together for our community. I speak to a room full of individuals and organizations that must work with others to be successful. This is rarely the case in government. However, in 2016 we partnered with Orange County Public Schools, Rollins College and the Winter Park High School Foundation to rebuild Showalter Field. Four organizations - one goal. The facility features a new, multi-sport artificial turf field, new collegiate style rubberized running track, and a new multi-media scoreboard.

We worked with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on many projects. With the FDOT and the developer of the Whole Foods® center, we opened the Lee Road extension. Three partners - one goal.

We acquired the Fairbanks bowling property from Rollins College to create a more fluid intersection at US Highway 17/92 and Fairbanks. Three partners - one goal.

You get the point.

We've worked with the FDOT to replace our major railroad crossings and plan to smooth and repair the remaining crossings this year. As well, we believe the work on Quiet Zones will begin this year which will lessen the blaring horns as trains traverse through Winter Park.

And we worked with our regional and national partners to be included in an Intelligent Traffic Signalization (ITS) pilot program along US Highway 17/92 to smooth traffic flow along this busy multi-jurisdictional thoroughfare. US Highway 17/92 is responsible for much of the congestion that we see on our local streets.

The work done, underway and under consideration is significant and cannot be overstated. Partnerships once again will deliver for Winter Park. Thank you Congressman Mica for your leadership with the ITS program and the FDOT for continuing to be an exceptional partner with the city.

Another project leverages our continued partnership with the Winter Park Health Foundation. Project Wellness is a state-of-the-art, unique healthy living center built upon the site of the old Crosby YMCA that will focus on improving the quality of life for Winter Park residents. These projects stand alongside some more seemingly pedestrian, but critical city-led initiatives.

Last year our electric utility underground over six miles of electrical distribution lines, exceeding our goal by a mile. Our work led to minimal outages during October's Hurricane Matthew. We were the first municipality in the region to have 100 percent of service restored. The areas most responsible for the majority of our outages in the past have already been placed underground.

Our first ever Urban Forestry Management Plan has been implemented and will help us strategically guide our investment and management of this valued asset.

In 2016, we approved new incentives for anyone considering adding their property to the city's historic register. Rather than forcing restrictions on unwilling or unknowing property owners, these incentives encourage individuals to maintain their structures for future generations.

And while these last few projects were undertaken by the city, we not only relied upon relationships, they were undertaken through inclusive processes which too is critical to our success.

The newly renovated Winter Park Golf Course, or the WP9 as it has been tagged. The project was led by an appointed Task Force which held many public forums to discuss the opportunity. Our new Pro Shop Manager Gregg Pascale and his team manage this course that has been featured on the Golf Channel®, other media outlets, and is being appreciated by thousands of golfers, pedestrians and motorists daily.

As well, after more than a year of public meetings, community input, a referendum, court proceedings and finally a judge's validation, we will begin work this year on our new library/events center on the site of the existing civic center in Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. Recently knighted British architect David Adjaye will lead the project and there will be ample opportunity for the community to further weigh in as the schedule becomes available.

These facilities have been and will be, built to the standards that we should all expect from Winter Park. They sit, and fit, alongside The Alford Inn, Park Avenue, Hannibal Square, and all of the other amenities that make Winter Park so special.

Vision Winter Park was a community-wide, consultant-led process, to secure feedback from residents, businesses and other community stakeholders. The resulting document was the starting point for our state required update to our Comprehensive Plan. The Comp Plan was recently transmitted to the state for preliminary approval after another, thorough, community-wide, multi-advisory board process. A thank you to all of the boards that invested so much time in this process, and especially our Comp Plan Task Force: Marc Reicher, Laura Turner and Nancy Miles. The success of these projects will in large part be due to the community inclusiveness.

Crime has been a topic of much community discussion this year. And while trends indicate that we are relatively flat when it comes to crime in Winter Park, stats don't mean a thing if your home has been burglarized or you feel unsafe in any way. While it is easy to throw more money and people at the issue, hiring an additional officer or two has marginal, substantive effect on crime.

Instead, we are working with our new police chief to develop new programs and efforts to combat crime. From different community policing strategies to utilization of newer technologies, we look forward to Chief Michael Deal's ideas and methods.

In addition to partnerships and inclusion, we are fortunate to have a community filled with individuals who invest in our quality of life. In addition to Congressman and Mrs. Mica, I have at my table Vincent and Terri Gagliano who are living the American dream. Vincent moved to Winter Park from France, speaking little English. Vincent and his family own Chez Vincent and Hannibal's restaurants. They were the first to place a flag in our new Hannibal Square. Not only that, they own the properties themselves and others in Winter Park. Thank you Vincent and Terri for investing in our community.

Chris Gardner. Raised in Winter Park, Chris helped build Kuykendall Gardner Insurance to great success and now serves as the CEO of Hub International Florida. Chris oversees 260 professionals statewide and 70 locally who help individuals, families and businesses with a full complement of insurance solutions. Chris is also the former Chair of the Winter Park Chamber of Commerce and is the current Chairman of the Board of our state's insurance entity, Citizen's Insurance. Chris inherited a potential assessment liability of over \$12 billion. This is your potential liability as a tax payer. In just four years as Chair, Chris has eliminated this potential liability. Completely. Thank you Chris for your lifelong commitment to our community and our state.

A Congressman and long-term resident. A CEO and lifetime resident. A restaurateur and relatively new resident. These neighbors, and others like them, define our character.

As we look to the future, there are obstacles. Similarly situated communities, not just nearby, but across the country and beyond. How and where businesses operate provide more flexibility to workers than ever before. Many professionals can choose to work from where they choose to live. This is inverse of the more traditional model of living near where you work.

And fringe groups who enjoy yelling FIRE, but have no plausible alternative to that which they oppose. Just saying NO, is not a long-term sustainable strategy. Fringe groups have always existed. This fringe element actually helps define the middle. Indeed the middle cannot exist without the fringe.

We live in a time of incredibly short attention spans. We have become a soundbite society. The ability to use technology to foment discord is now more readily available than ever before. Facebook®, Twitter® and even our more established media, whose currency used to be accuracy has instead opted for expediency to meet the seemingly insatiable demand for controversy. Sadly, we seem to require tumultuous times and events to publicly demonstrate our quiet unity. This cacophony, this noise, requires that we act differently, that we work differently.

We must continue to develop our relationships with one another. How we treat one another is incredibly important to the success of our community. Our democracy is a wonderful thing, but what it more regularly devolves to, is not.

We can choose a different path. A welcoming environment. Hold a door. Wave people across a crosswalk. Tolerate ideas and concepts that may be different than yours, but add to a greater whole. I often say that I wake to the future every day. To my 11-year-old triplets who look upon the day with wonder. Let us look upon tomorrow with opportunistic eyes. Let us decide how we will conduct ourselves. Let us make the conscience choice until it becomes an unconscious one.

We must also operate in a unique way. In 1997's *New Realities for the New Economy*, author Kevin Kelly challenges businesses to reimagine their path forward and encourages them to operate in "flux." This strategy is just as relevant to businesses and governments today, as it was in 1997.

While slight, on-going adjustments (or evolution) may be a bit unsettling, the path is nowhere near as tumultuous as major adjustments (or revolution) necessitated by continual non-action. We must operate in flux, seeking new methods and opportunities with a goal of managing the community canvas that we have been blessed to inherit so that as times and tastes change, we assure that without sacrificing what has made us special, we improve our offering.

The list of accomplishments that I have just read off is staggering:

- A library and events center
- Project Wellness
- Showalter Field
- A new golf course
- Aggressive electric undergrounding plan
- Better traffic and transportation solutions
- Vision Winter Park
- Renewed Comprehensive Plan
- Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Historic Preservation incentives
- New policing methods

and others.

In 2017 we will look to new ideas. New and improved recreational and learning facilities; enhanced and expanded playing fields and green space; technology advancements; a fiber-optic backbone to meet the growing needs of businesses and residents; transportation and traffic solutions; driverless vehicles to tie the core more tightly; the use of technology to smooth traffic; and opportunities such as an underground parking structure to ease congestion around our core. Our limitations are our imagination and our perseverance.

Future generations unknowingly count on our tenacity in demanding a more complete future. In addition to all of the physical amenities that we can offer, we must create a welcoming, warm and participatory community to be all that Chase and Chapman imagined.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement as we build upon, and within, our founder's vision of making Winter Park this special place.

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