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**Office of
the Mayor**

2022 State of the City Address

Speech delivered by Mayor Phil Anderson

Winter Park Events Center | February 25, 2022 | Noon

I looked earlier and I thought, look at this room. What an amazing group of people, that in a very small town, can make such a difference in this region. Thank you very much for being here and for really making Winter Park a special place. It's my pleasure to stand up here and tell you that the State of the City is strong, but the state of the people who live and work here is really stressed.

The state of the city is strong,...

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LUNCHEON

We have had two years of real challenges we have never seen before. We've had a pandemic, we've had social issues that have come before us and frankly, recent international and local events outside of our control are making us stressed. And while the State of the City is good, in fact, great, those of us who live here, we're feeling it.

What I wanted to do first, before we get into that is really give you our thanks. I want to thank our medical community for all that they have done over the last two years. And in particular, I want to thank our mental health community who often doesn't get the credit that they deserve for helping us deal with this kind of stress.

I want to thank our first responders, our police and fire, for all that they have done. I want to thank our men and women in uniform who today, are faced with decisions we might not have expected a mere few weeks ago. And I want to thank our business community that has gathered here to persevere through a really rocky couple of years. You have given us so much to escape to and enjoy. Thank you so much for making our lives what it is.

But I also want to thank our city staff, our Commissioners and the other institutions that give us the parks, the arts and all of the spiritual experiences that we need right now to heal, and to renew, and to strengthen. So, thank you very much.

While all these events are out there, a lot of them are outside of our control, I want to bring us back to one thing that's in our control. We control how we feel about our neighbors and how we invest in our community. Because of that investment, our city, the State of our City is very, very strong.

And the reason we're strong is really in three places. We are financially sound. We have made it through the last couple of years with no tax increases. We have offered strong support for our businesses and the community. And we have executed on priorities that reflect the values of our residents.

Strength of the city

- Financially sound, no tax increases
- Strong support for business and commerce
- Priorities reflecting resident values



And if you go to the financially sound, I've mentioned, we we've persevered through the last few years. There's no tax increase. We have the highest reserves in the city's history. \$17 million not touched during this recession. Every project that this Commission has approached is fully funded without taxes.

Financially sound

- No tax increases
- Highest reserves in history
- Every project underway is fully funded without tax increase
- Rising residential home values
- 5/25 year investment strategy



And we have phenomenal rising residential values, which, more than anything else in our community drives household wealth. We've done that because we have also executed on something for the first time ever, we have a 25-year investment plan that gives us clear cut choices about where what we spend our resources on. And that's what politics is all about.

We have discussion about what the needs are, but without the resources it doesn't amount to anything. We now have a framework to really use to look at those choices. And I think Betsy mentioned the effort, the Prosperity Project.

What this Prosperity Project will do is it will highlight some of those discussions. Where do we want to use those resources? What are we missing and how can we be a better community? I'm actually thrilled and excited to see that Prosperity Project come.

There's a great saying that I'm fond of. I want to get it right. It says "Freedom is hammered out on the anvil of discussion, dissent and debate," by Hubert Humphrey. I think if you've witnessed a Commission meeting or two, you'll know that we're exercising a whole lot of freedom. And we're very proud to welcome more of those opportunities to establish our freedom.

This Commission stepped forward with very strong support for our commercial and retailers. We tripled the amount of money we spent on our holiday events and our holiday decorations. For those of you that were on Park Avenue, Orange Avenue or Morse Boulevard, you will have seen more decorations than you've seen in many, many years. We thought that was important, coming out of a really challenging time. Let's go out and celebrate. Let's make sure that the community sparkles. And I think we did a good job there.

Strong support for business, commerce & institutions

- More than tripled budget for holiday lighting & events
- Citywide office occupancy growth from 95.6% (2021) to 97.1% (2022)
- Retail occupancy growth from 94.9% (2021) to 96.7% (2022)
- Park Avenue occupancy growth from 92.2% (2021) to 98.0% (2022)
- Fully funded library's grand opening year
- Approximately \$1.5 million in grant support for local non-profits from federal fund allocations



We've mentioned how our occupancy rates are a strong indicator of economic health has occurred. We have higher occupancies now in office, in all retail, and in Park Avenue. We also made sure that in spite of recession-driven donor shortfalls, we made sure that our library was fully funded by allocating about \$1 million a year of American Recovery Act funds for the successful grand opening of one of our biggest assets, the library.

And we are thrilled that they have launched, they are setting a new standard for the community, for our kids, and for the next generation. We allocated \$1.5 million to our non-profit world, again, struck by donor shortfalls during the recession. This was a place that we really needed to put our money.

The last bit is we filter everything through what is the resident looking for. What are those that have made Winter Park great and this is actually a slide from the 2016 Visioning exercise where hundreds of residents and business enterprise were asked what do they value in Winter Park. And you can see here the highlights. These are word clouds. The biggest letters are the things that are most important or that occurred that were mentioned most frequently. You'll see history and heritage, small town feel, and proactive growth. By filtering all of our decisions along these categories, I believe that we are doing the will of the people.

Priorities reflecting resident values



The priorities that we've been focused on are our children and our parks. Thanks to my fellow Commissioners, we made sure that all of our playing fields for our kids will be renovated by the end of this year. Instead of stretching it out over ten years, we found a way to do it now. We're focused on traffic and safety and connectivity.

When I look at the safety, we've clearly allocated a great public parking spot parking area off Orange Avenue, not on Orange Avenue, but off. So now people can get out without worrying about their doors getting hit, but that's what cities do. Cities give the infrastructure for enterprise and for their residents. I will also mention that that is also the home place of our first urban park. Last week, I was asked, "Phil, what is the best part about being a Mayor?" And I had two or three answers. There's a dozen on the other side, but two or three best parts, and today, the best part has been going to Progress Point, watching seven live oak trees go in the dirt knowing that those trees will be there for 200 years. That is more permanent than anything else we could ever achieve. Every building around us is going to come down before those trees leave there.

And the best emergency response in the region. And finally, small town feel, what do we need to do to make sure that we preserve that small town feel for our existing residents and for our children.

Priorities reflecting resident values

- Children & parks
- Traffic, safety & connectivity
- Best emergency response in region
- “Small Town Feel” design guidelines



So that's really the way I view the strengths of the city. We've been out there. We are financially strong. We are working with our business community and promoting commerce, and we're doing the will of the people. And frankly, we're open to a lot of discussion and debate and dissent. And we do it, I think, in a civil way. It takes us a few hours, but we do it in a civil way.

And with that, what I'd like to do at this moment is highlight that word cloud one more time. When I look at this, the most frequently responded item is the history and heritage of our community.



When I was asked to name the Mayor's Founders' Award knowing that this was the biggest response, it was only one person that came to mind, actually two people Jack and his wife, Jack and Peggy Rogers. This year, the Mayor's Founders' Award is going to honor someone that has lived his entire life here in Winter Park. Mr. Jack Rogers, "In for an appreciation for your leadership and modeling Winter Park's, core values as the city of homes, culture and heritage," I want to recognize Jack, if you could join me up here.

Mayor's Founders' Award | 2022

JACK ROGERS

In appreciation for your leadership in modeling Winter Park's core values as the city of homes, culture, and heritage.

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I'm going to say a few words about Jack. It's a roast. Jack is a third-generation architect. His grandfather, his great uncle, his father has been part of a prominent architectural family for almost 100 years. Jack's great uncle designed the Yale Club in New York City. If any of you all are Ivy Leaguers, whether he went to Yale or not, you know what to be jealous of. It was followed by Gamble Rodgers, the second one coming down here to Winter Park and building such fantastic places as Casa Feliz. Then it continued with Jack's leadership of his firm, Rogers, Lovelock and Fritz (RLF), and you'll see on the bottom right, this is a one of my favorite office buildings on Morse Boulevard that really fits well.

Jack Rogers

- 3 generations of architects
 - John Arthur Rogers, Grandfather
 - Gamble Rogers I, Great Uncle
 - Gamble Rogers II, Father, Winter Park in 1928
 - John ("Jack") Rogers
- 4 family generations in Winter Park
 - Peggy Rogers, wife of 48 years
 - 3 children
 - 5 grandchildren



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He's a lifetime resident of Winter Park. He and his wife of 48 years have three children, John, Betsy and Jeffrey, and five grandchildren. They led the preservation effort for Casa Feliz and in 2006, Jack was recognized by the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, for significant achievement in the preservation of Florida's rich heritage. He's widely respected for his work with the American Institute of Architects, the Central Florida Builders Exchange, and his architectural firm of 28 years, RLF.

Jack and his wife have had a rich connection with the community, with their work and their support of the Cornell Fine Arts Museum at Rollins College, Winter Park Library, Council of 101, the Women's Club of Winter Park, All Saints Church, Winter Park Land Trust, Florida Hospital and Hospice of Central Florida.

His recreational interest we won't go into, but I did learn they include boat building, ask Jack about boat building. There's so much to say about this family with such deep roots in Winter Park, but I cannot think of any one person or any family being more symbolic of the key core value of Winter Park.

With that, Jack, I'd like to present you with the Mayor's Founders' Award. I thought we were getting a wood base and we got a marble base, and it's heavy. But, Jack, on behalf of my office, on behalf of the Mayor and frankly, the rest of the community, we want to thank you.

This is an original vessel. It's a vessel crafted by Toby Magee who was here during the Winter Park Art Festival many, many years ago. The title of the piece is "Landscaped with a Lake," which is perfect for your view on Lake Osceola. Thank you so much.



Thank you for the opportunity to serve.