

Winter Park Update

March through May 2021

vision Winter Park is the city of arts and culture, cherishing its traditional scale and charm while building a healthy and sustainable future for all generations.

Mayor's Message

Greetings!

Spring is here and with spring in Winter Park comes our fabulous outdoor art festival. This will be the 63rd Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival. Thanks to the festival committee for hosting such a great event!

March also brings election season. Please make sure you vote on Tuesday, March 8, or earlier! The election also marks a milestone for your commissioners to compare our performance against our goals.

Years ago, a Yale University study concluded that individuals who wrote down their life goals were **ten times** more financially successful than those who did not. Cities are not businesses, but I believe the principal is the same. Setting written goals can help us reach them.

Your City Commission followed that advice and a year ago in March 2021, Commissioners Weaver, Sullivan and DeCiccio, Vice Mayor Cooper and I came up with our priorities for the next 12 months. Today, I can report that the most critical of those priorities have been completed or started:

- Your taxes did NOT increase. In spite of COVID, our financial reserves are in excellent shape and our budget is balanced.
- The city committed over \$1.485 million of federal funds (American Rescue Plan Act - ARPA) to supporting Winter Park non-profits during the decline in donor funds prompted by COVID.
- The Commission continued to bring more diversity and inclusivity to our resident boards, thanks to the Charter amendment that was passed in March 2020 giving all Commissioners, not just the Mayor, the authority to make advisory board appointments.
- The revised Orange Avenue Overlay (OAO) was passed – a guideline for redevelopment that protects Winter Park's charm and makes it easier for small businesses on Orange Avenue to upgrade their properties. Small businesses can now invest in their buildings with certainty regarding parking and stormwater needs.
- Because of this Commission, shoppers and diners visiting the Orange Avenue area will have safer, aesthetically pleasing, well-lit, long-term public parking adjacent to the park -- and off of busy Orange Avenue.
- The city prioritized our small businesses to ensure a successful holiday season with a tremendous holiday decoration package of lights and events on Park, Orange and New England avenues and Morse Boulevard. Anecdotally, we heard of sales increasing by up to 70% over last year.
- The city completed the renovation of several of our sports fields in Ward Park, with all Winter Park fields expected to be renovated by the end of 2022.
- The city created the first new park in many years, starting with the installation of seven large Live Oak trees on Progress Point at Orange Avenue and Denning Drive (see photo). This is the first step in "Putting the Park in Winter Park" on this important residential and business corridor.
- The city created the first 5- and 25-year strategic investment plans to make sure we balance the short-term and long-term goals of the city. As part of that long-range planning, the city

has funded traffic and connectivity designs -- and connected those plans with grant writing efforts to secure funding.

- The city formed the "Smart Cities" task force to make sure we have better and more reliable internet services to our homes and businesses. During COVID, internet connections became as important as roads/highways for many of our residents.
- The city allocated \$1.8 million of federal funds to the Winter Park Library to offset COVID challenges.
- The city successfully completed and opened the new Winter Park Library & Events Center in December 2021. The Events Center already has 79 events on the books for 2022 and 25 events booked for 2023.
- The city completed a record year of preserving our heritage by registering 12 homes on the Winter Park Register of Historic Places.
- Having already shifted some of our electrical power generation to solar, the city agreed to move forward on many sustainability efforts including actively seeking ways to meet the city's clean energy goals.
- And, last but not least, on January 26, the city agreed to move forward with a contract to purchase the Winter Pines Golf Course. When this transaction is complete, this will result in buying a successful business that will also grow city-owned green space by 93 acres. This is an investment in recreation and green space that will pay for itself from the business income and will not increase your taxes. We look forward to the synergy between the nationally acclaimed WP9 Golf Course and our newly acquired Winter Pines 18-hole course.

These are all exciting achievements for our residents, our businesses and our visitors. They make our city stronger and keep us competitive in the midst of a growing region.

I thank Vice Mayor Cooper and Commissioners Weaver, DeCiccio and Sullivan for their teamwork. And especially, I thank the city staff that has made all of this possible. The City Commission is scheduled to hold our next goal setting work session in March/April. If you have thoughts and ideas on your priorities, please let us know.

In the meantime, it's always good to take time to enjoy the charming reasons we live in beautiful Winter Park. I hope to see you at the annual Winter Park Sidewalk Art Festival Friday, March 18, through Sunday, March 20, along Park Avenue and in Central Park.

Sincerely, Mayor Phil Anderson

January marked a significant month for historic preservation

1. The city received a \$30,000 donation from Michael and Gail Winn to install a historic clock adjacent to Central Park at Park and Welbourne avenues.
2. The Historic Preservation Board received approval to install historic landmark signs for locations such as Central Park, Hannibal Square and Casa Feliz as well as additional signage for historic districts.
3. City Commission approved a resolution designating City Hall as a Historic Resource on the Winter Park Register of Historic Places. Built in 1964, City Hall is an example of mid-century modern architecture designed by a collaborative of the city's revered architects.

If you own a historic home or property, you can find more information about registering your property by accessing cityofwinterpark.org/historicpreservation.

City Manager's Report

Congratulations 2021 Employees of the Year!

Each year we celebrate three city employees as our Employees of the Year. These three individuals represent the 500+ city family members that are committed to providing high-quality city services to our residents and community. Thank you to Stefano, Erica and Sheree for living out our employee mission to "Make Every Day Exceptional" for all that we serve.

Stefano Alvernia Arborist, Parks & Recreation

Since he was hired as an arborist in 2019, Stefano Alvernia has exhibited an exceptional work ethic, often going above and beyond the call of duty. He voluntarily spear-headed the city's holiday lighting and decoration project, which was brought to a new level in 2021, with additional lights and various holiday themes throughout the city's downtown business district.

When complimented for his hard work and achievements, Stefano humbly defers the credit to his colleagues. Stefano effectively runs the entire residential permitting portfolio of the Urban Forestry Division that requires comprehensive documentation, extensive knowledge of city codes and ordinances, as well as personable social skills.

Congratulations, Stefano! Thank you for your dedication and hard work!

Erica Hall Firefighter/Engineer

Firefighter/Engineer Erica Hall is a critical member of the Fire-Rescue Department's operational and community educational teams. As a new firefighter, Erica's eagerness to learn and advance her skills was apparent by her drive to obtain her paramedic certification. Her promotion to the rank of Engineer within her short time with the department served as a demonstration of her commitment to serve the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding firefighter in the field, she also remains dedicated to fostering community education. She sets a very high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

Thank you for your commitment to saving lives and bettering our community! Congratulations, Erica!

Sheree Slaughter Officer, Uniform Patrol

Assigned to Uniform Patrol's Gold Watch, Officer Sheree Slaughter can be counted on to always inspire others with exemplary performance of her duties as she projects a professional and positive image that others wish to emulate. She serves as the department's community liaison at The Meadows (Margaret Square), where she meets regularly with management and residents to discuss their concerns and needs. She also initiates positive contacts with juvenile residents.

Officer Slaughter has included her colleagues at organized events at the Winter Park Community Center, Hannibal Square Heritage Center and various city parks. She has also participated in events such as children's birthday parties and distributed holiday gifts donated by citizens. Officer Slaughter regularly receives praise from fellow officers, supervisors, city officials and most importantly, the citizens that she serves.

Congratulations, Officer Slaughter! Thank you for helping to keep us safe!

Please help me congratulate these outstanding city employees!

Sincerely, Randy B. Knight, City Manager

City to underground service lines

Since acquisition of the electric utility in 2005, the city has been working hard to underground all overhead distribution lines in the city. The cost of undergrounding the distribution lines is covered by the electric rates customers pay on a monthly basis. Fortunately, the city has been able to do this while charging rates that, on average, have been lower than the predecessor utility was charging.

The cost of undergrounding the service drop (the electric line going from the pole to the house) has always been the responsibility of the homeowner. In the past, the city has given the homeowner the option of leaving the service drop overhead, or paying a discounted rate of \$1,000 to have it put underground at the time crews are working in the area undergrounding the distribution lines.

About half of the customers have chosen to leave their service drop overhead. Unfortunately for the city, that causes inefficiency in the overall project and is less aesthetically pleasing when the project is done. To leave the service drop overhead means the city has to feed that overhead wire from the new underground distribution system. In many cases that new underground system is in the front of the home and the old pole is in the backyard creating even more cost to the city. To increase efficiency, the city will now be undergrounding all service lines to homes while crews are in the neighborhood. Undergrounding service lines while crews are already there is extremely productive and results in more complete undergrounding projects.

In order to accomplish this without slowing down the overall undergrounding schedule, the citizen Utilities Advisory Board recommended that the City Commission implement a temporary rate increase through 2026 in residential customer electric bills of \$0.009 per kWh. The Commission approved that increase in January and it will be effective Friday, April 1, 2022. This decision will:

1. Ensure the city completes undergrounding on time, moving from 70% complete today to 100% by the end of 2027.
2. Allow all customers to experience the reliability and aesthetic improvements that come from a fully undergrounded system.
3. Minimize the financial impact with a modest rate change. For customers with the lowest needs, a customer using 500 kWh would see an increase of less than \$5.38 per month. For the average utility customer consuming 1,300 kWh, the increase will be \$13.93 per month.

City crews will now be undergrounding the service lines to homes that are within undergrounding projects. City crews will also connect the meter base, if possible. If crews are unable to connect the meter, due to size, the city will hire an electrician to change out the meter base at the city's expense. Homeowners will need to contact their cable provider to underground their personal cable service line to their home if applicable. Once both the electric and cable service lines are underground, the city will be able to remove the pole.

Each homeowner will be contacted to coordinate the conversion and to arrange the power outage required to complete this switch over. Once the city has completed all the conversions within scheduled undergrounding projects as noted at cityofwinterpark.org/undergrounding, electric crews will go back and begin undergrounding all other remaining overhead service lines.

Homeowners that have already paid the \$1,000 to underground their service line while city crews were working on an undergrounding project will be reimbursed. The reimbursement will automatically appear as a credit on these homeowners' March utility bill.

exceptions

- If a homeowner paid to have their service undergrounded for convenience, new construction or remodel [not part of an existing undergrounding project], this money will not be reimbursed.
- Homeowners that desire to have their service line underground and are not within a scheduled project area as noted at cityofwinterpark.org/undergrounding, are still required to pay the cost of that undergrounding.
- If a homeowner's electrical equipment needs repair or replacement, the resident will be responsible for this. Only the meter base replacement is included as part of the service line undergrounding effort.

The city's reliability has improved dramatically from average interruption time of >160 minutes when the undergrounding project started, and finished 2021 at <37 minutes. Ridding the last of these poles and overhead lines should make service even more reliable and streets more attractive.

For customers that do not have undergrounded lines yet, this change ensures the city will finish the project on time and customers will ultimately benefit from better service. For additional information, please contact [407-643-1661](tel:407-643-1661) or undergrounding@cityofwinterpark.org.

Commissioner's Column

A message from Commissioner Sheila DeCiccio

The outlook going into 2022 is strong for Winter Park. Although Winter Park started the year with the pandemic still an issue, businesses had a healthy recovery and one that is better than the region as a whole.

- Park Avenue vacancy rates are about 2%, which is better than pre-pandemic and a huge improvement from the 11% high of last year.
- Winter Parks office vacancy rates are about 3.5% versus the Orlando MSA of over 8%
- Winter Park retail vacancy is about 3.3% versus the Orlando MSA of over 4%.
- According to a pedestrian counter recently installed on Park Avenue 240,000 visitors were counted during December 2021.
- The city received glowing feedback from the merchant community across all types of businesses that this holiday season was one of the best ever. Great reviews were had for the enhanced holiday decorations as a driver for demand and ambiance.

There are some exciting plans going forward this year, but one of the biggest events closing out 2021 was the opening of the new Library & Events Center. During the last two weeks of December, the library had over 11,000 visitors, 3,000 of those at the open house. Average daily visits are up over 150% at 600-650 people a day, and one regular Saturday in January saw 1,400 people. Circulation and class attendance are also up. There was a 450% increase in the number of resident library cards issued in December, and by the second week of January, the library had already reached the yearly anticipated amount of non-resident library cards issued.

Going forward in 2022, the Commission is looking at the following:

- Purchasing the 18-hole Winter Pines Golf Course.
- Renovating the Central Park main stage.
- Significant headway made in the park development at Progress Point.
- Completing renovation of the sports fields at Showalter Stadium and Martin Luther King, Jr. Park (MLK).

- Landscaping at the corner of Fairbanks Avenue and Denning Drive after demolition of the dry cleaners and salon, which will add more parkland to MLK as well as a right turn lane from Denning Drive onto Fairbanks Avenue.
- Expanding free public Wi-Fi to all major parks.
- Accelerating the undergrounding of overhead residential electric service lines.
- Installing solar panels on the utilities warehouse at the City Operations compound.

The Commission will be determining what, where and how to spend the infrastructure money from the federal and state governments as soon as we have clarity as to what is included in the bills.

No matter what decisions/policies this or any commission institutes, it will be up to the staff to implement. That is why I want to end this message by thanking and giving a huge shout out to all Winter Park employees, of which there are approximately 535, who keep this city running, whether through a hurricane, pandemic or whoever is sitting on the Commission.

Different Commissions have set forth different policy directives, whether it is for a new library, parks, roads, etc. It is the staff that carries out the initiatives long after those Commissions are gone. Often the projects take years, but they get done. This is in addition to opening the parks seven days a week, setting up for the Farmers' Market every Saturday, keeping the electricity, water, power grid, IT, security, roads, police, fire, etc. going. Many of these functions are 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all of which make Winter Park the wonderful place to live and work in.

We are so very fortunate to have this dedicated staff. Again, THANK YOU for your hard work and deep caring for Winter Park.

Sincerely, Sheila DeCiccio

Quick Tip: ATTN residents – we need YOU!

Are there aspects of your neighborhood or community that you would like to enhance? Is there something happening in the city that you wish you could change? Are you looking to make a positive impact in your city government? Are you simply looking for ways to become more involved and engaged?

If you answered yes or even maybe to any of these questions, find out which advisory board is best for you and submit your Citizen Board Application by accessing cityofwinterpark.org/board-app. To be considered for the annual appointment process, please submit by **Friday, April 1**. Otherwise, applications are accepted year-round.

Changes to your utility bill & online payment system

Beginning Monday, May 2, 2022, the city is upgrading its billing system which will generate a more detailed bill for utility customers. It is also launching a new online payment service that is faster, more secure, convenient and user-friendly. As part of this transition, **all utility customers who are currently paying online will need to create a new account to continue online payments.** This can be accomplished by accessing cityofwinterpark.org/billpay Monday, May 2.

New features will include the ability to:

- » Access and pay multiple accounts at once.
- » View payment history, consumption information and past billing statements.
- » Make payments via credit, debit, eCheck or digital wallet channels cityofwinterpark.org/billpay (PayPal®, Venmo® and PayPal Credit).
- » Save payment information for future use.
- » Sign up for paperless billing with email reminders.
- » Schedule automatic payments.

Additionally, a new automated phone payment system will also allow a quick account balance review and payment with a credit card, debit card or eCheck.

For more information, please access cityofwinterpark.org/billpay.

2022 Election

Winter Park voters will be able to vote Tuesday, March 8, on the following:

Candidates

Commission Seat 3

Kristopher Cruzada

Anjali Vaya

Commission Seat 4

Elijah Noel

Todd Weaver

Charter Amendments

Q1: Require Supermajority Vote to Sell City Property

Shall Sections 2.08 and 2.11 of the Winter Park City Charter be amended to require at least four of five members of the city commission to vote in favor to approve the conveyance of fee simple title of city-owned property?

Q2: Require Supermajority Vote to Rezone Parks and Public Lands

Shall Sections 2.08 and 2.11 of the Winter Park City Charter be amended to require at least four of five members of the city commission to vote in favor to (i) approve a comprehensive plan future land use map amendment or rezoning of city-owned park land; and (ii) approve a comprehensive plan future land use map amendment, rezoning or change of use of land currently zoned public and quasi-public district or zoned parks and recreation district?

Q3: Require Supermajority Vote for Residential and Lakefront Property Map Amendments

Shall Sections 2.08 and 2.11 of the Winter Park City Charter be amended to require at least four of five members of the city commission to vote in favor of a comprehensive plan future land use map amendment or rezoning (i) from a residential category to a non-residential category, or (ii) to lakefront property from a residential use to a commercial use, mixed-use, medium density residential use or high-density residential use?

Q4: Require Supermajority Vote for Density/Intensity Increases

Shall Sections 2.08 and 2.11 of the Winter Park City Charter be amended to require at least four of five members of the city commission to vote in favor of approval of a comprehensive plan amendment, land development code amendment or rezoning that increases the maximum allowed residential units per acre (density) or floor area ratio (intensity) by more than twenty-five percent from the existing maximum allowed density or intensity of use?

Q5: Require Supermajority Vote to Approve Development in Wetlands

Shall Sections 2.08 and 2.11 of the Winter Park City Charter be amended to require at least four of five members of the city commission to vote in favor of development orders authorizing development within wetlands?

Q6: Ordinance Changes During Adoption Process

Shall Section 2.11 of the Winter Park City Charter be amended to require an additional public meeting and reading of a proposed ordinance before its adoption if during the adoption process either (i) a substantive or material change is made, or (ii) a change is made to a proposed zoning or comprehensive plan amendment ordinance resulting in an increase in the maximum allowed density or intensity of uses or a change to the permitted uses?

Important election info

general election » Tuesday 03.08.22

more info » ocfelections.com [Orange County Office of Elections]

cityofwinterpark.org/elections | cityclerk@cityofwinterpark.org

Changes to leaf blower code

On January 12, the City Commission passed Ordinance #3230-22 that restricts the hours and provides a timeframe of when internal combustion powered leaf blowers may be operated. During the pandemic, many residents found the excessive and unnecessary noise from gas powered leaf blowers disturbing as they worked from home or home schooled. The City Commission also found that the use of leaf blowers that are powered by an internal combustion engine or motor to clear public and private property negatively impacts air quality, water quality, public health, and noise levels citywide.

There have been many advances in technology in leaf blowers that can provide effective levels of performance using alternate means of energy, including electric power, that are quieter and less disruptive. These advancements in technology allow for similar performance with lower on-site emissions and noise production. In fact, the city's Parks & Recreation Department is proving the viability and effectiveness of this technology as it is fully transitioning to battery-powered lawn maintenance hand tools as well as transitioning from gas utility vehicles to lithium ion effective this summer.

The approved ordinance states:

- All internal combustion engine or motor leaf blowers will be prohibited within the city starting in July of 2025.
- From the date of enactment (January 12, 2022), all internal combustion engine or motor leaf blowers are limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and noon to 6 p.m., on Sunday.
- Any debris blown into the public right of way must be removed within 30 minutes.

Please access the official complete ordinance at [cityofwinterpark.org under Government » Ordinances & Resolutions](https://cityofwinterpark.org/under%20Government%20Ordinances%20&%20Resolutions).

Save these dates

Saturday, April 16

- what** bunny hops & stops
- when** 8 a.m. to noon
- where** neighborhoods & parks throughout the city
- info** [407-599-3342](tel:407-599-3342) | cityofwinterpark.org/events

Saturday, April 23

- what** household hazardous waste dropoff
- when** 8 a.m. to noon
- where** Palmetto Avenue & Denning Drive
- info** [407-599-3364](tel:407-599-3364) | cityofwinterpark.org/events

Includes e-waste dropoff. Residential only ~ no contractors, please.

Thursday or Friday, May 5 or 6 & May 12 or 13

- what** spring cleanup
- when** after 5 p.m. the evening before your 2nd regularly scheduled trash pickup day
- where** north of Fairbanks/ Aloma avenues corridor **{may 5 or 6}**
south of Fairbanks/ Aloma avenues corridor **{may 12 or 13}**
- info** [407-774-0800](tel:407-774-0800)

This large-item pickup service will provide a 'bonus' day pick up for old furniture, broken appliances and other bulky items. {curbside service customers only}

please note yard waste and household hazardous waste {see date above} is NOT included in the Spring Cleanup.

Monday, May 30

- what** City Hall closed in observance of Memorial Day
- when** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For updates on things to enjoy, please access cityofwinterpark.org/events.

City Commission

Mayor Steve Leary, Commissioner Marty Sullivan, Commissioner Sheila DeCiccio, Commissioner Carolyn Cooper and Commissioner Todd Weaver

City Commission meetings are held monthly on the second and fourth Wednesdays.

Who to contact

commission & administration

City Commission	407-599-3234
City Manager Randy Knight	407-599-3235

Assistant City Manager Michelle del Valle	407-599-3236
City Clerk Rene Cranis	407-599-3277
City Information	407-599-3399
Fire-Rescue Non-Emergency	407-644-1212
Police Non-Emergency	407-644-1313

department directors

Building & Permitting Services Gary Hiatt	407-599-3237
Communications Clarissa Howard	407-599-3343
Electric Utility Dan D'Alessandro	407-599-3294
Finance Wes Hamil	407-599-3292
Fire-Rescue Chief Dan Hagedorn	407-599-3297
Information Technology Parsram Rajaram	407-599-3432
Natural Resources & Sustainability Gloria Eby	407-599-3471
Parks & Recreation Jason Seeley	407-599-3334
Planning & Transportation Bronce Stephenson	407-599-3440
Police Acting Chief Pam Marcum	407-599-3272
Public Works Troy Attaway	407-599-3233
Water & Wastewater Utilities David Zusi	407-599-3219

Email addresses can be found at cityofwinterpark.org/contact

outages

Power & Street Light Outages	1-877-811-8700
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helpful info

The Winter Park Update is published quarterly with a circulation of approximately 16,500, including both residents and businesses. To suggest article ideas, please contact [407-599-3343](tel:407-599-3343) or choward@cityofwinterpark.org.

City of Winter Park | [401 S. Park Ave. | Winter Park, FL 32789](#)