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 together to discuss how to best allocate the funds for 2022.

Our priorities, just as the mission of the City of Winter Park, are to cut the municipal budget and increase the service levels. In the meantime, I always look for ways to improve the quality.

The city completed the renovation of several of Winter Park’s schools and parks. The city completed 34,000,000 in donations and grants and we made a healthy check.

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.

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
Greetings!

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

The city completed the renovation of several of our sports fields in 2022, with all Winter Park fields expected to be renovated by the end of the decade in accordance with our goals for maintenance and sustainability. The city has invested in improving the quality of our parks and green spaces, making them more accessible and enjoyable for all residents and visitors.

The city created the first new park in many years, nationally acclaimed WP9 Golf Course and our Winter Park Pines 18-hole course. 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.

The city formed the “Smart Cities” task force 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 created 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.

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

Commissioner Marty Sullivan, Commissioner Sheila DeCiccio, Mayor Phil Anderson, Commissioner Carolyn Cooper and

401 South Park Avenue
Winter Park, FL 32789

Randy B. Knight, City Manager

 Eric 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 herparamedic 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!

Sincerely,

Randy B. Knight, City Manager

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.

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 spearheaded 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!

Firefighter/Engineer

Erica Hall has been an important 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!

Sincerely,

Randy B. Knight, City Manager

Sheree Slaughter

Office Uniform Patrol

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!

Congratulations, Officer Slaughter! Thank you for saving lives and bettering our community! Congratulations, Officer Slaughter!

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 not possible. If a homeowner, due to a yard or road block, 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 outages 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 is 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 407-599-3564 or undergrounding@cityofwinterpark.org.

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 WiFi 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, a new road, a new street, a new parkland to MLK as well as a right turn lane from Denning Drive onto Fairbanks Avenue.

Potential and whoever is sitting on the Commission.

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

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 (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.

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.

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

Mayor Phil Anderton, Commissioner Carolyn Cooper and Commissioner Todd Weaver

report
City managers

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 service to all that we serve.

Congratulations and thank you for your commitment to saving lives and bettering our community! Congratulations, Stefano! Thank you for your dedication and hard work!

Stefano Alvernia has exhibited an exceptional work ethic, often going above and beyond to achieve the best possible outcomes. He voluntarily spearheaded 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 Urban Forestry Division that requires comprehensive documentation, extensive knowledge of city codes and ordinances, as well as exceptional teamwork.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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

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 the community while serving as a role model for her peers.

While Erica can be described as an outstanding high standard for herself, as well as the entire department.

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