



CITY OF LAKE WALES
 201 W. Central Avenue
 P.O. Box 1320
 Lake Wales, FL 33853

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 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
 PO BOX 191
 LAKE WALES FL 33859-0191

The Lake Wales City Commission
meets the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6:00 pm.
The meetings are held at the City Administration building located at
201 W. Central Avenue or stream live at
Lakewalesfl.gov/LiveStream.

MAYOR & CITY COMMISSIONERS

Mayor Jack Hilligoss
 jhilligoss@lakewalesfl.gov

Deputy Mayor Robin Gibson
 rgibson@lakewalesfl.gov

Commissioner Terrye Howell
 thowell@lakewalesfl.gov

Commissioner Daniel Williams
 dwilliams@lakewalesfl.gov

Commissioner Danny Krueger
 dkrueger@lakewalesfl.gov

IMPORTANT CITY NUMBERS

Administration Services (863) 678-4182
 City Manager ext. 225
 City Clerk ext. 270
 Special Events ext. 270

PUBLIC/SUPPORT SERVICES

Cemetery Administration ext. 225
 Parks/Facility Rentals ext. 242
 Parks/Streets Administration ext. 299
 Purchasing ext. 242
 Information Technology ext. 717
 Parks/Streets After Hours (863) 978-7468

HUMAN RESOURCES

Employment ext. 233

UTILITIES

Administration ext. 708
 Customer Service (863) 676-4775
 After Hours (863) 632-2349

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Permitting (863) 676-5112
 Code Enforcement (863) 676-5118
 Building (863) 676-5112

FINANCE

Customer Service ext. 707

LIBRARY

(863) 678-4004
 Main Desk ext. 221
 Bookmobile ext. 230
 Books by Mail (863) 679-4441

POLICE

Emergency 911
 Non-emergency (863) 678-4223

FIRE

Emergency 911
 Non-emergency (863) 678-4203
 North Station (863) 679-4426

LAKE WALES HISTORY MUSEUM

(863) 676-1759

Upcoming **Events**

LAKE NIGHT CINEMA

Lake Wailes Park
 December 17th

THIRD THURSDAY MARKET

Corner of Scenic Hwy/Stuart Ave
 December 15th | January 19th

LAKE WALES LIVE

Downtown Linear Park
 December 16th | January 20th

PHOTOS WITH SANTA

at Grand Opening of Park Avenue
 Connector Trail December 17 at
 Lake Wales Park.

VIEW MUSEUM EVENTS AT:

<https://lakewaleshistory.org/>



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Our City wants to hear from you! Scan the QR Code with any smart device to provide feedback via our Customer Feedback Survey or visit: www.lakewalesfl.gov/NewsletterSurvey

Please scan the code with each edition! We value your thoughts.



City of
Lake Wales
 FLORIDA

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NEWSLETTER

NEWS

IMPROVEMENTS

INVOLVEMENT

FEEDBACK

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WORDS FROM THE *City Manager*

It's a great time to be in Lake Wales! As the City gears up for 2023, we look forward to a future of progress and sustainability. Our mission is to make Lake Wales better and more beautiful year-after-year.

Our fiscal-year budget for 2022-23 includes several key priorities designed to enhance City services and programs.

This year, we were able to reduce the property tax millage rate to the lowest rate in many years, while maintaining fiscal health, investing in our reserves and preparing for the future.

A substantial amount of streets are scheduled to be resurfaced in 2023. Our pavement management program, created in 2019, is fully funded for the first time this year. We have an inventory and current condition rating of most streets in the city that will guide our resurfacing efforts.

Pedestrian safety is a priority. We've increased the general sidewalk maintenance budget and have allocated \$2.5 million for new sidewalk construction in the historic core. Plans include rehabilitating existing sidewalks and constructing new sidewalks along select streets.

We will grow the city responsibly. With your help, the City is on track to complete a vision plan that will help us guide land development in the City's utility service area in unincorporated Polk County. We will know what land areas to protect, and which land areas are suitable for development as it relates to a land owner requesting property annexation.

Economic growth is key to our success as a city. We are formulating a retail recruitment strategic plan to recruit restaurants, hotels and retail businesses. We will also be developing new programs to incentivize large-scale businesses to relocate to Lake Wales.

Enhancements to public safety include the addition of five equipped law-enforcement officers and one property and evidence technician. The fire department will receive a new state-of-the-art fire truck.

Planning for a better parks system, sports facilities and recreation activities are in the works as we initiate the comprehensive parks and recreation master plan.

It's important we protect and preserve the character of our community. We have added an additional code compliance officer this year to help maintain the community's appearance.

The City and CRA will continue to implement the award-winning Lake Wales Connected urban design plan which includes: continuing to expand the affordable housing program; grand opening of the Park Avenue Connector Trail; groundbreaking of the Northwest Neighborhood Pedestrian and Sidewalk Improvements project; and groundbreaking on the Park Avenue Streetscape project and redesign of Market Plaza downtown.

Continuing to provide superior customer service and increasing the overall effectiveness as a government organization is a top priority of mine for 2023. The City of Lake Wales 2022 Community Survey yielded positive results. Customer service satisfaction rates 22 percent above the national average.

As we continue building on the legacy of the city's founders with our "Lake Wales Connected" plan, it excites me to see 2023 as a transformative year.



LAKE WALES CONNECTED

"City in a Garden" is the manifestation of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.'s vision for downtown Lake Wales, designed to encourage pedestrian traffic. It envisions a continuous downtown live oak tree canopy to produce shade and other botanical features. Also, with the vision's emphasis on a botanical-rich environment, the city hired its first full-time horticulturist, Lester Gullede to maintain and grow our garden city.

Parks & Horticulture staff recently planted five Japanese blueberry trees and four additional cathedral live oaks in Crystal Lake Park along Sessoms Ave. The planting was a continuation of the City's efforts started on Arbor Day. It's the City's goal to establish an urban canopy across the city as part of the "City in a Garden" initiative.

Another "City in a Garden" project is about to start at Downtown Linear Park across from the Lake Wales Public Library. It will include a variety of trees, such as cathedral live oaks, canary island date palms and long leaf pines. Different types of perennial and annual flowers will be peppered throughout the landscape.

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CITY PARTNERS WITH THE COMMUNITY

to plan for the future, parks and recreation master plan

The City of Lake Wales commission adopted a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan to help guide the progress of the parks system, facilities and recreation activities that will take place over several decades.

Some of the major components in the master plan proposed to take place in the city's historic core and northwest neighborhood include: multi-sport stadium; multipurpose recreation facility; and new trails as part of the "Lake Wales Connected" plan.

City staff also invited residents to participate in an interactive website as well as provide feedback in a statistically valid survey. The quality of the parks and trail systems were both selected by residents in the 2022 Lake Wales Community Survey as two city services that should receive the most emphasis over the next two years.

Recreation Manager Stephanie Edwards said, "We plan to review the master plan and select the highest priority projects based on the needs assessment. Projects will be designed based on level of importance and submitted to the commission for approval."



CRA BOARD INVESTS

in small business incubator to strengthen entrepreneurs doing business in city's core improvement area, BizLINC

Board members of the Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) approved funding for a three-year grant agreement worth nearly \$1 million for the creation of a small business incubator by the Florida Development Corporation (FDC).

Derrick Blue, Chief Operating Officer at FDC said, "BizLINC will provide an environment for companies to turn innovative ideas into profitable realities."

The 3,570 square-foot business incubator will be located on Lincoln Avenue in the city's northwest neighborhood. BizLINC staff will provide qualified entrepreneurs a variety of training and business-related services, such as strategic planning, financial reporting, technical assistance, ecommerce, office space and much more.

"We plan to mirror the same process we've implemented in other cities," Blue said. "Starting a business, sustaining a business and expanding a business are three primary factors."

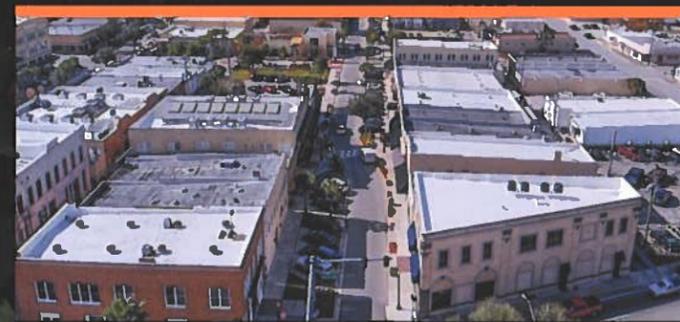
The mission of BizLINC is to help startup companies and entrepreneurs build successful companies, which in turn creates more job opportunities and drives new innovation and economic development in Lake Wales and beyond.

"Giving local entrepreneurs the tools to succeed will help revive the northwest neighborhood," City Manager James Slaton said. "Providing mentors and training for entrepreneurs is a key component of the City's 'Lake Wales Connected' plan," Slaton mentioned.

\$500,000 will be appropriated for the first-year of operation and \$400,000 for the second year. An additional \$300,000 may be provided to FDC on the condition the two-year projected deliverables are accomplished. The funding will be dispensed on an annual basis. The CRA plans to fund the agreement with money from the American Rescue Plan. Part of the agreement includes FDC's initial property investment of \$240,000.

FDC is a real estate development company. The founders of FDC have more than 60 years of collective experience in affordable housing development, weatherization, financial, project management and community and economic development.

Entrepreneurs interested in becoming members are encouraged to apply at mybizlinc.com.



CITY SATISFACTION

rates at or above the Florida average in 34 of 37 areas assessed, 2022 Community Survey

The City of Lake Wales 2022 Community Survey yielded positive results. Many residents who participated in the survey have a positive perception of the city.

Satisfaction with the overall quality of City services rates 14 percent above the Florida average. Customer service satisfaction rates 22 percent above average. 82 percent are satisfied with Lake Wales as a place to live.

Other areas that were rated high include: quality of fire services; library services; and feeling of safety. Areas to improve upon include: condition of streets; condition of sidewalks; and cleanliness and maintenance of the historic downtown district.

This is a good report card for City staff and the commission

- City Manager James Slaton said.

"The areas where we need improvement will be tackled as we progress through our street resurfacing plan and continue our construction efforts on the historic core."

Other enhancements include: wider sidewalks; safer crosswalks; and new landscaping. The enhancements are part of the "Lake Wales Connected" plan, a multimillion-dollar project geared to revitalize the historic core of the city.

ETC Institute, a recognized leader in market research and surveys facilitated the community survey.

82%
SATISFACTION

**LAKE WALES AS
A PLACE TO LIVE**



Division Spotlight:



Congratulations to CRA Project Manager Darrell Starling and CRA Specialist Cheryl Baksh for becoming certified redevelopment professionals. Both Darrell and Cheryl work behind the scenes of the Lake Wales Community Redevelopment Agency. They help provide affordable housing options to homebuyers.

CRA Project Manager Darrell Starling said, "It's rewarding to see our efforts positively impact families."

Starling and Baksh facilitate two programs that help homebuyers and property developers.

Affordable Housing Down Payment Assistance Program: Qualified homebuyers may receive up to \$15,000 towards down payment assistance. To qualify, the homebuyer's income must be at or below 120% of the area median income, in addition to meeting certain credit requirements.

Homebuyers interested in qualifying for the affordable housing down payment assistance program are encouraged to contact Hands of Central Florida at (863) 682-1025, or visit cflhands.org.

Private Developer Incentive Program: Both City and county impact fees may be waived to developers building affordable houses in the core improvement area that lays alongside US Highway 27 and Scenic Highway between Florida Avenue, Emerald Avenue and SR 60. Private developers interested in the developer incentive program may contact the CRA at (863) 678-4050 ext. 252.

