



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES**  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING AGENDA**  
**TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2016 @ 7:00 P.M.**

**ADDENDUM #2: Add Item #11 Council Reports (a) Mayor Browning #1. Letter from County Commissioner Paulette Burdick regarding "Preserve Our Agricultural Reserve".**

\*Note: on the original agenda sent out item #6 with the capital "F" (Site Plan) should read #6g.

*Mayor David Browning (Seat 4)*

*Vice Mayor Tom Goltzené (Seat 5)*

*Councilman Ron Jarriel (Seat 1)*

*Councilman Ryan Liang (Seat 3)*

*Councilman Todd McLendon (Seat 2)*

## Virginia Walton

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**From:** Paulette Burdick P. <PBurdick@pbcgov.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 15, 2016 3:11 PM  
**To:** Paulette Burdick P.  
**Subject:** Please provide copies of the attached letter to your mayor and city councilpersons or commissioners  
**Attachments:** letter to city leaders.docx

Dear Madame Clerk:

Please provide copies of the attached letter to your mayor and city councilpersons or commissioners. It regards an important issue which is coming up soon which will be of interest to them.

Thank you,

*Paulette Burdick*

County Commissioner  
District Two

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Under Florida law, e-mail addresses are public records. If you do not want your e-mail address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.

Greetings,

On Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup> the Board of County Commissioners will consider a number of amendments, which will result in highly productive agricultural land being converted to residential property.

All residents of Palm Beach County should be concerned with preserving this invaluable agricultural land. This is not an ordinary stretch of rural space, however enticingly it may be to a developer's eye. It is the No. 1 winter vegetable area east of the Mississippi River. It has produced more than 80 varieties of vegetables and a dozen types of fruit. Houses can go just about anywhere, but frost-free farmland, capable of reliably offering up bushels of locally grown produce in a world that should be increasingly concerned about food security, makes our limited agricultural land a unique and invaluable resource that must be protected.

The uniqueness of this land has been recognized for many years. The Ag Reserve master plan is one of the most successful undertakings of our county, preserving the land and promoting agriculture. In 1998, the county commission adopted an Ag Reserve Master Plan. In March 1999, Palm Beach County **overwhelmingly approved** a \$150 million bond issue - \$50 million for the acquisition of conservation lands, water resource lands, and lands for open space, and **\$100 million for acquisition of agricultural lands to preserve and protect farming in the Ag Reserve**. The citizens of PBC voted **to limit the land use with the express goal of preventing over development, safeguarding our water supply and guaranteeing a source of fresh vegetables**.

Now, however, the vision of the original Ag Reserve Master Plan and the bond issue are under attack. Once lost, the agricultural land will never be recovered and a historical treasure will be lost forever negatively impacting our residents and future generations.

As the population of PBC increases so does the demand for food. Worldwide, it has taken 12,000 years for world population to reach 7 billion, but in the next 25 years the population is expected to increase by 2 billion more. This will result in higher prices for fresh fruit and vegetables, which will have the greatest impact on our lower income residents.

PBC is a "Tale of Two Cities" - we have the wealthiest and the poorest residents in the nation. Nearly 100,000 (57%) children in our schools qualify for a free and reduce lunch and our ALICE residents (Asset Limited Individuals). All too many of our households are living from paycheck to paycheck.

27% of our residents earn less than \$25,000 a year; our low-income elderly are the hidden face of hunger. This is a significant problem because 200,000 residents in PBC are on social security. The average monthly Social Security check is only \$1,200 and they, therefore, must live on less than \$15,000 per year. They must make hard choices. Do they pay their rent or do they visit their doctor? Do they purchase medication or buy food? Fire rescue personnel are dismayed when they respond to a call and look into a person's refrigerator to find it empty.

Our local growers meet the demand for high quality produce for hotels, restaurants and Green Markets and also assist with food security at reasonable prices for all our residents. They add to the quality of life for our residents and visitors adding to better nutrition and health.

Today, I am requesting that you add your voice and support by writing to the PBC Board of County Commissioners or E-mail them [BCC-AllCommissioners@pbcgov.org](mailto:BCC-AllCommissioners@pbcgov.org) as a city leader or an individual to keep to the promise to Preserve Our Agricultural Reserve.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Paulette Burdick