



Loxahatchee Groves Newsletter

Message from Mayor Dave Browning



Mayor Dave Browning

Town Council Members



Vice Mayor Marge Herzog



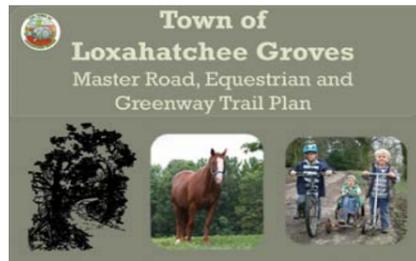
Councilman Dr. Bill Louda



Councilman Dennis Lipp



Councilman Dave Autrey



The Town of Loxahatchee Groves has started the process of **comprehensively** planning the future of all the public roads in our Town. The Town Council has retained the services of a certified traffic engineer, Jeff Maxwell from Calvin-Giordano to complete the study. The process began with a public participation workshop on 9/27/08. We welcome all public input, feedback and great ideas throughout this process.

During this process the Town will also plan the equestrian & greenway trails within our Town. The Town is the only entity that has included this in their plan & is the only entity that can authorize the construction of these equestrian trails & greenway paths.

There is a PROCESS that exists today that residents & landowners can participate in to request a road to be paved through the LGWCD. This process of paving of random petitioned roads is a process that does not provide for comprehensive future planning of the entire community roadway system. Unlike this process, the M.R.E.G. Plan will consider traffic impacts, traffic flow & the overall impact on the roadway system in our Town. In addition, the M.R.E.G. Plan will incorporate traffic engineer certified plans with safety adherence documentation for the installation of traffic control devices unlike the process that is being utilized now by the LGWCD (*the Town is the only entity that can authorize the installation of the traffic control devices*). The certification of plans by a traffic engineer does not necessarily mean that the road design must be a "green book" standard; it allows for some flexibility. The LGWCD process **may work** if it's incorporated within the Town's Comprehensive Plan & Master Road, Equestrian & Greenway Trail Plan.

During the planning process, the Town is ready to work with the LGWCD to address any immediate safety issues relating to the public roads within the Town.

2008-2009 Town Budget

At the September 16, 2008 Final Budget Hearing, the Town Council adopted a millage rate of 1.5000. This is the SAME as the millage for last fiscal year which will actually decrease your property taxes (due to the decrease in property value); **NO INCREASE.**

You can get a detailed explanation of the entire budget on the Town's website.

REVENUES	
Ad Valorem Taxes	\$442,699.70
Garbage Assessments	\$440,900.00
Communications Service Tax	\$147,499.98
Electric Utility Tax	\$108,000.00
FPL Franchise Fee	\$195,000.00
6 Cent Local Gas Tax	\$274,820.00
5 Cent Local Gas Tax	\$117,180.00
State Revenue Sharing	\$70,720.92
Half Cent Sales Tax	\$231,875.04
County Occupational Licenses	\$300.00
Legal Advertising	\$2,500.00
Interest	\$7,550.04
TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,039,045.68
EXPENDITURES	
Legislative	\$42,260.00
Executive	\$357,972.68
Town Clerk	\$3,220.00
Finance	\$11,500.00
Legal	\$144,000.00
Planning & Zoning	\$365,597.00
Police	\$289,200.00
Public Works	\$825,296.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$2,039,045.68

Greetings from your Mayor,

Some great news! I am now a first-time grandpa! Our son Eric, and his wife Leslie, had a baby girl, Liza, on September 22. She's beautiful! I guess that makes it official...I'm old! But that's OK. I look forward to her visits to Loxahatchee Groves over the coming years.

There is controversy right now in our community, ongoing comments on the internet, a petition to do away with the town, and concerns regarding the relationship between the Town Council and the LGWCD. My new granddaughter reminds me that no baby stands up and immediately runs a marathon. Neither does a "newborn" town. I ask all our residents and landowners to take a deep breath. Your patience and participation in the process will help direct our future.

I still believe incorporation is the best method there is for protecting our lifestyle. If I didn't believe that, I would not have run for a council seat. We are all neighbors. One of the advantages of being a small community is our ability to communicate with each other directly rather than allowing the media to dictate our course. Don't be afraid to call me; my phone number hasn't changed in 29 years.

Sincerely,

Grandpa Dave

Independent Study of the Potential Consolidation of the Town Government and the Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District



The Town of Loxahatchee Groves was incorporated in October of 2006 and in making the transition from our former neighborhood status to that of a new Town, there has been some confusion over service provision and the sharing of responsibilities between the Town and the Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District. In an effort to limit confusion, clarify responsibilities and eliminate duplication of services, the Town Council has commissioned a study of the pros and cons of several possible solutions. This is a normal part of the transition process and has been addressed by others in similar situations, most notably by our neighbor, the Village of Wellington.

This independent study will research the pros and cons of changing the Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District (LGWCD) from an independent taxing district to a dependent district. Please note that abolishing the District is NOT one of the options that the Town Council wishes to explore.

The Independent Study will be completed by October 21, 2008 and will be considered by the Town Council November 4, 2008 at their Town Council meeting.

The Town Council has asked that the study include the following options:

ALTERNATIVE 1: Making the Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District a dependent district of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves

ALTERNATIVE 2: Leave L.G.W.C.D. as an independent district but limit its role to its original water management and drainage functions under Chapter 298.

ALTERNATIVE 3: Make no changes in the respective authority of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves & the L.G.W.C.D.

ALTERNATIVE 4: Other recommendations that may not be listed.

Each alternative will be analyzed in the areas of cost, staffing, management costs, services planning, and governance issues. The study will note the advantages and disadvantages of each of the service delivery options noted above. It will examine current and future facility needs over a ten-year period and possible funding sources to sustain current operations and future service delivery, and the funding of long-term capital needs in Loxahatchee Groves. Finally, the study will outline legislative steps needed, if any, to accomplish the changes noted in each alternative.



Once the Town Council reviews the findings of the study, they will decide on the next course of action. In the event the Town Council determines that the consolidation is in the best interest of the residents and landowners of the Town, the Town will need to seek the approval of the state legislature prior to implementing any form of consolidation, or conversion of the LGWCD to a dependent district. This process is not immediate and would take several months to consider.

It is also very important to note that there would be no change in service provision by LGWCD to the Town during the independent study or during any legislative process.

The Town Council's desire is to ensure the most efficient and cost-effective delivery of government services to the residents and landowners of the Town of Loxahatchee Groves. The Town encourages public comments and participation during this process. In addition, any decision made by the Town Council will be presented to the residents through a referendum.

Public input is vital to this process, as is accurate information. Please feel free to visit the Town Management Office or contact us by phone at 561-793-2418 with your questions and concerns. You can also e-mail the office at clerk@loxahatcheeegroves.org.

Town Meeting Schedule

The Town Council meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. The meetings start at 7:00 p.m. and are held at the LGWCD. Stay involved and attend these meetings. If you are unable to attend, you can retrieve the minutes and recordings on the Town website.

This is the remaining schedule for 2008:

Oct: Tues 10/7 & 10/21 **Nov:** Tues 11/4 & 11/18 **Dec:** Tues 12/2 & 12/16



Solid Waste Services

WASTE PRO is the new waste hauling provider (starting 10/1/08)
411 Tallpines Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33413
Customer Service Phone #: 561-688-8912

- Residential Waste Pick-up:** Wednesdays & Saturdays
- Residential Vegetative Waste Pick-up:** Wednesdays
(6 cubic yards per pick up)
- Residential Recycling Pick-up:** Saturdays
- Residential Bulk Items:** Wednesdays & Saturdays
(Furniture, appliances, pianos, swing sets, water heaters, air conditioners, and other like household items. There is no weight limitation on any single bulk item.)
- Residential Construction and Demolition:** Wednesdays and Saturdays
(up to 2 cubic yards from minor home improvement)

Other Notes:

All containers (garbage cans and recycling bins) are to be returned to the point of collection and not thrown into streets, driveways or in front of mailboxes. When providing back door collection service, containers must be returned to the point of collection and not left on the curb. Routes must always be run from the same starting point.

Comprehensive Plan

On September 16, 2008 the Town Council approved transmitting the Comprehensive Plan to the Florida Department of Communities Affairs for review. The D.C.A. will issue their Objections, Recommendations & Comments Report (O.R.C.) by 11/23/08. It is anticipated that the adoption hearing will be Tuesday, January 6, 2009. The next step in the Town Council's planning process is to review and modify the Unified Land Development Code. This process may possibly begin in 2009. The Town is currently governed by the Palm Beach County U.L.D.C. as adopted in 10/06.

Special Note: There is rumor and misinformation out in the community based on this policy in the Comprehensive Plan: 3D.2.4 Policy: Local government entities shall require customers with private septic tanks to connect to public **gravity sanitary sewer** collection systems within 365 days of written notice that the service is available, as required by F.S. 381.00655. The Town is on **FORCE** mains, not gravity mains; therefore this is **NO** requirement to be connected.



14579 Southern Blvd
Suite 2
Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470

Town of Loxahatchee Groves

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Frequently Asked Questions

In each edition of the newsletter, Town Staff will address commonly asked questions from the residents and landowners.

Question: Are we a Town now?

Answer: Yes. The Florida Legislature in March 2006 passed the bill of incorporation. In November 2006 the citizens of the Town voted to incorporate by passing a referendum. The 1st Town Council was elected in March 2007 and the Town Council started meeting the same month.

Question: Since we are a Town does that now mean that we have two governmental entities in the Town?

Answer: Yes. As an incorporated Town, the Town Council and Government has municipal powers as provided by the Florida Constitution and State Statutes. The Loxahatchee Groves Water Control District is a Special 298 Drainage District that was created by the Florida Legislature.

Question: Why did we incorporate? What are the advantages?

Answer: As a Town, the residents and landowners have gained great advantages that were not available as an unincorporated community.

The Town now has the ability to control and have a meaningful voice in determining the future use of the undeveloped properties within the historic boundaries. This was the key issue that drove the incorporation initiative. The efforts and strides the Town has taken to support the removal of the E-Road/140th Thoroughfare is a shining example of what an incorporated Town can achieve; we accomplished, as a Town, what we have been unable to accomplish for many years as a neighborhood.

As an unincorporated community, there was no control over the revenues brought back into the community. With the financial crisis in our country and Palm Beach County cutting their budget and many jobs, the ability to get county money is diminished. The Town now has control over the revenues that are brought back into our community; for the current fiscal year, 2008-2009; the Town will bring over \$1.1 million in revenue. The net gain to the Town, after you take out the Loxahatchee Groves property taxes, is over \$710,000. This net gain gives us the finances to run this municipality and provide the needed services to the community. This net gain will increase over the years and bring even more money back to the community. Another cost saving for the Town is the solid waste hauling fee. Our fee is \$55.00 less per year than if the community was still unincorporated. **If you just take the gas tax revenue alone, this practically offsets the millage that is levied by the Town.**

The Town has the ability to apply for grants for the community that was not possible prior to incorporation.

Only an incorporated municipality has the ability and authority to create a Comprehensive Plan for the community. The Town is required to develop and implement a Comprehensive Plan by Florida State Statutes. Within this plan is a Transportation Element. This required element allows for the Town to COMPREHENSIVELY plan the entire future roadway system of the Town. During this process the Town will also plan the equestrian and greenway trails within the roadway system throughout our Town.

Important Phone Numbers

Town Management Office:

14579 Southern Blvd, Suite 2
Loxahatchee Groves, FL 33470
Phone: 561-793-2418
Fax: 561-793-2420
clerk@loxahatchee groves.org
www.loxahatchee groves.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday
9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

All Emergencies:

(Police, Fire, & Rescue): 911

Poison Control Center:

800-282-3171

Non-Emergency Fire:

561-616-7000

Non-Emergency Sheriff:

561-688-3000

L.G. Water Control District:

561-793-0884

SWA (trash disposal):

561-697-2700

American Red Cross:

561-833-7711

Emergency Management:

561-712-6400

Florida Power & Light:

561-697-8000

Bell South (telephone):

561-780-2355

