

INSIDER

CITIZEN NEWSLETTER

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Setting Goals for the City



At the May 14 retreat, attended by City Commissioners and City staff, Assistant City Manager Dale Smith uses a map of Winter Haven while he discusses economic growth.

During an annual retreat held recently, Winter Haven City Commissioners and staff evaluated accomplishments made over the last year and determined where we go from here.

Among visions discussed at the retreat, Commissioners, staff, Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Winter Haven representatives shared projects they'd want to accomplish in the next five and 10 years.

Highlights of visions in the five-year plan that will make Winter Haven the most premier City in Central Florida, include:

- Completion of the CSX intermodal facility
- A master plan for the Selected Area near the planned CSX facility
- "Grow" the City from its current 40 square miles to 50 square miles
- Partner with other local agencies to develop a more accessible public transportation system
- More compact, multi-story, development to prevent urban sprawl, to include first-level business and upper-level residential
- A downtown parking garage
- Completion of the Lake Maude Recreation site that will incorporate recreational opportunities for all ages

In the coming 10 years, plans include:

- An operational Integrated Logistics Center, with businesses to complement the intermodal facility
- Creation of a thriving downtown to include residential, dining, shopping, jobs, a hotel and a cultural arts district
- At least six acres of parks for each 1,000 residents
- Creation of a series of interconnected trails/paths to downtown and the Chain of Lakes waterfront development
- Double the City's tax base
- An airport commerce center to complement the new terminal
- Commuter rail along U.S. Highway 92 in proximity to the airport

Implementing quality standards for all new development will be essential as we bring this vision to reality. Three important development standards were discussed during the retreat and ordinances addressing those standards are being developed. Ordinances being prepared will require new subdivision standards for residential development; monument signage for businesses; and tree protection and preservation throughout the City.

Proposed subdivision standards include dedication of at least 5 percent of every development to green space; requiring Florida-friendly landscaping; improving street networking and sidewalks; installing traffic-calming devices where appropriate; and after identifying environmentally sensitive areas, limiting buildable lots within those areas to no less than one acre.

The City's current sign code was adopted in 1959 and revised in 1970. With new sign technology and development patterns drastically changing in the past 40 years, a new sign code is now being prepared. The most noticeable change the new sign code will bring about is phasing out traditional pole signs in favor of "low-profile" monument signs that are more visible to pedestrians.

Trees are an integral part of community life that enhance the quality of life for all City residents. Trees renew our air supply by absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen. Considering the importance of community trees, a new tree ordinance will require a permit for removal of any protected or historic tree; all trees permitted to be removed during development must be replaced in accordance with tree mitigation requirements.

Each of these standards being proposed for new development, signage and trees will enhance efforts to make the City of Winter Haven a "Distinctively Different," premier City.

Park Renovations



Renovations at Patterson Park include "Split Ring in Motion," from the Florida Outdoor Sculpture Competition and zoysia sod, a drought-tolerant grass. New landscape beds include 150 daylilies, 100 coontie palms (a Florida native cycad), white bird of paradise, bottlebrush trees and yellow tabebuia. Water for irrigating the park was connected to the City's existing reuse water system. The park is connected to the Chain of Lakes Trail. Stop by to check it out.

Caution, Sudden Improvements



Downtown is still open for business while improvements are being made along Third Street, north and south of Central Avenue. When completed, the project will contribute to a distinctively different and beautiful downtown Winter Haven.

Construction has already started on streetscape improvements along Third Street, from Avenue A Southwest north to Avenue D Northwest. The \$2 million project includes new sidewalks, curbs and gutters, brick pavers, landscaping, period lighting, benches, trash receptacles and street resurfacing.

A vital element of being a distinctively different, premier City, is having a strong, vibrant downtown. Winter Haven would not have that without customers who support our downtown restaurants, shops and other businesses.

It wasn't so long ago that one could not imagine enjoying a fine meal, or simple hot dog for that matter, getting a new hairstyle, purchasing a unique gift, buying a new musical instrument, enjoying your favorite book or savoring a great cup of coffee anywhere in downtown Winter Haven. Access to all businesses will be maintained throughout the project, so continue to patronize all your favorite downtown merchants. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Project updates, including photos, will be posted regularly at mywinterhaven.com. Just click on the CRA link on the left of our homepage for the latest information and to learn which roads are being affected by construction.

When Can I Water My Lawn?

If your house number ends in...

- 0 or 1, water only on Monday
- 2 or 3, water only on Tuesday
- 4 or 5, water only on Wednesday
- 6 or 7, water only on Thursday
- 8 or 9*, water only on Friday



*and locations with no discernible address

For more information, or to report a violation, call the City of Winter Haven Code Enforcement Division at 291-5697, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. After hours, call the Winter Haven Police Department at 291-5858, or visit the Southwest Florida Water Management District website at: www.watermatters.org

Summer Library Fun

Summer is a great time to visit the Library. Activities are planned almost every day.

- July 2** "Miss Connie" - stories, puppets and songs **2 p.m.**
- July 3** Ronald McDonald greets kids **10 a.m.**
- July 7** Family program on Antarctica and Asia **10 a.m.**
- July 8** K-5 learn about Antarctica and Asia **10 a.m.**
- July 9** Teen crafts for grades 6-12 **2 p.m.**
- July 10** Crafts for K-5 **2 p.m.**
- July 11** Last day of Florida Library Youth Program

Playaways Now at Library

If you enjoy Books on Tape, you'll like Playaways even more. The Winter Haven Public Library now has best-selling and award-winning titles on self-playing digital audiobooks, or Playaways. Playaways are lightweight, compact, easy-to-use players that come with one pre-loaded audiobook. These digitally-recorded audiobooks offer:

1. Simplicity - plug in the earphones and press the Playaway button.
2. Digital technology - delivers crisp, flawless sound. Plus, using a simple keypad, listeners have the ability to book mark and adjust voice speed and volume.
3. Portability - Made of durable plastic, the palm-sized Playaways weigh 6 ounces. Compact and light, a whole book fits in your pocket.

Recently acquired titles include: Robin Cook's "Crisis," Mary Monroe's "God Don't Like Ugly," Elmore Leonard's "The Hot Kid," John Grogan's "Marley and Me," Janet Evanovich's "Motor Mouth," Jude Deveraux' "Someone to Love," and Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God."

Visit the Library today to check out a Playaway audiobook.

July, August and September Special Events

Rock N' Freedom Fest
Independence Day holiday
Cruisin' Winter Haven
Labor Day holiday

Martin Luther King, Jr., Park
City offices closed
Downtown
City offices closed

July 3; 6 - 9:30 p.m. (fireworks at 9:30 p.m.)
July 4
First Saturday of every month; 4 - 9 p.m.
September 1

The Winter Haven Insider is a City of Winter Haven publication intended to inform area residents and businesses. If you have any questions or comments, please call 863-291-5600, or write Joy Townsend, editor, at 451 Third St. NW, Winter Haven, FL 33883, or email at jtowndsend@mywinterhaven.com.