



WILDWOOD CONNECTION



COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: MARCOS FLORES

This month we talk with Wildwood Commissioner Marcos Flores to learn a little more about him and his role as one of the city's five elected officials.

1. How long have you lived in Wildwood?

I've lived in Wildwood since 2000—it's been 24 years now. I grew up in Lake County and attended The Villages® charter schools, so I've been in this area all of my life.

2. How long have you served on the city commission and what motivated you to run for office?

I'm the newest and youngest member of the commission, having served since 2018.

My public service extends back to my former career in law enforcement. After I left that field, I looked for a new opportunity to serve and give back to the community. I've found it as a city commissioner.

3. What is your professional background, and how does that experience bring perspective and inform your decision making?

As mentioned, I had a prior career in law enforcement, which I began just after high school.

It taught me a great deal of patience and how to talk with different people. I learned the importance of getting all the facts, all the details, and the value of listening to everyone's input and point of view when assessing a situation.

That experience has proven invaluable as a commissioner, particularly when we are faced with difficult decisions about the best path forward as a city.

4. How has Wildwood changed since you have been in office?

When I was first elected, the availability of apartments and employment was still very limited.

In just six years, we have seen the creation of so many different opportunities to work and live in Wildwood. There is an abundance of apartments and other rental homes, along with different types of houses available to purchase.

The growth of commercial and economic activity has really enhanced career opportunities, too, making it much easier to work close to home.

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5. What challenges does the city's rapid growth present, and how is the commission addressing them?

I think the challenges we are seeing are those faced by most growing communities.

For one, as populations increase, so does traffic. Everyone is feeling those effects. We enjoy an excellent working relationship with our district, county, and state partners, which makes the challenges of overlapping jurisdictions easier to navigate, but the reality of traffic is that the solutions to alleviate it always take longer than we would like.

We also need to accommodate our growing population with increased wastewater treatment capacity. Clearly, we want to stay ahead of that demand and are doing that well.

As commissioners, we need to support our city manager and staff and provide them with the resources they need to focus on and successfully manage their areas of expertise.

Our public works and utility teams have an enormous amount of experience, and they are working with consultants and contractors who add exponentially to that experience and expertise. I don't think we could have a better team to address the challenges faced by any growing city.

6. What do you see as the city's greatest strengths?

Wildwood's commission is made up of five unique elected officials, each of whom brings his or her own skills and specific experience. We work together very well and always put our citizens' best interests first when we consider and take action on the wide variety of different issues we act upon.

7. How would you describe Wildwood to someone considering moving here?

It's a great place to live and it's a great place to start a family and career. Wildwood is centrally located, which makes it very convenient. We enjoy low taxes, low crime, and a safe community. Add in all the opportunity, and it's a home run—unless you don't like hot summers.

8. What do you feel the city is missing at this point?

I would say it's a work in progress, rather than missing, and that's organized activities for our growing population of youth and families.

Our parks and recreation department has gone through its share of change in the past several years, so it hasn't grown as fast as our residential development.

The team has a strong foundation, however, and is building well-thought-out, quality programming to give our kids healthy ways to spend time outside of school. I want to see it continue expanding to include more activities and opportunities for our residents of all ages.

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LAKE DEATON PARK UPDATE

Lake Deaton Park has a new fishing pier and boat ramp. The popular nature park has been undergoing renovations to strengthen and upgrade infrastructure. In addition to the new ramp and pier, improvements include sidewalk, parking, and internal road upgrades.

The project is wrapping and the park is expected to reopen for the Fourth of July holiday, barring weather or other unforeseen delays.

Please call 352-330-1343 with any questions.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA CELEBRATION AND FIREWORKS TO BE HELD JULY 3

Wildwood's annual Happy Birthday America event will take place Wednesday, July 3, 2024, on the grounds of the Wildwood Community Center, 6500 Powell Road.

Festivities kick off at 5:00 p.m. with vendors, food trucks, games, activities, and entertainment, including live music by Clark Barrios. A professional fireworks show tops off the night at 9:00 p.m.

"This is one of our biggest and best-attended events each year, and we have been working to make it better than ever before," said Parks and Recreation Director Courtney Kellem. "We appreciate the feedback offered by the public in past years and have incorporated as many of the suggestions received as possible."

The family-friendly event includes fun for all ages, from face painting, carnival games, inflatables, a free pie eating contest, and more to an adults-only beer garden serving those of legal drinking age with proper identification.

"We hope residents will join us for the celebration and encourage them to plan ahead," Kellem said. "Allow extra time for traffic delays and consider carpooling or other transportation. By all means, do not drink and drive. We want everyone to have fun and then get home safely at the end of the night."

Admission is free. To preregister for the pie eating contest, go to wildwood-fl.gov/parksrec or call 352-461-0134.



Photos from Wildwood's 2023 Happy Birthday America event.



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9. If you could meet with anyone, living or not, for one hour, who would it be and what would you ask them?

There are many people, but since I'm a big football fan, I'd say Tom Brady. He was an underdog when he started his career, and yet he rose to be one of the best in the sport.

I would ask him what challenges he faced and what he did to overcome those challenges. What did he do day to day to stay focused and motivated, even when the odds weren't stacked in his favor?

10. What is something about you most people don't know or wouldn't guess?

People might know or guess I'm a family man, and would do anything for my two kids, Eli, who's six years old, and Ava, who's four.

Since I tend to be quiet and shy around people when I first meet them, they probably would *not* guess I was on a SWAT team during my law enforcement career. First impressions can be deceiving—you can't always judge a book by its cover.

CITY BUDGET WORKSHOPS BEGIN IN JULY

The City of Wildwood's next fiscal year, FY 2024-25 (also known as FY25), begins October 1, 2024.

Throughout each 12-month budget cycle, managers compare actual project and operational costs to those forecast for the same period. They also compare recorded revenues with those projected.

The team uses these comparisons to help develop the proposed budget for the next fiscal year, factoring in the city's strategic priorities, capital improvements plan, and necessary adjustments resulting from uncontrollable circumstances.

The city's five-member commission delves into the proposed budget during workshops in July, examining and deliberating the need for each recommended expenditure, weighing those costs against anticipated funding from ad valorem taxes, developer impact and utility fees, governmental agreements, grants, and other expected revenue sources.

Through this detailed analysis, the city establishes a proposed millage rate, which is sent to property owners in the annual TRIM notice.

The proposed millage rate and budget are presented at public hearings during September, when residents and others have the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments. The commission then adopts a final millage rate and budget for the fiscal year to begin October 1.

This year's budget workshops have been scheduled for July 15 and 29, 2024. If deemed necessary, a third will be held August 19 to meet the August 23 mailing deadline for TRIM notices. Public hearings on the budget are scheduled for September 9 and 23 at 7:00 p.m.

Budget workshops and hearings are open to the public. Agendas can be found at wildwood-fl.gov.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL EVENTS AND RESOURCES

The City of Wildwood is participating in multiple back-to-school events this month to help ensure Wildwood students are prepared for the new academic year.

Friday, July 19, 2024, the Wildwood Police Department will pack a cruiser with hygiene supplies, such as shampoo, soap, and deodorant, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Walmart Supercenter #4262, 4085 Wedgewood Lane.

Shoppers can donate supplies as they enter or exit the store. For those who cannot attend, supplies can be dropped off in the lobby of the police station at 3939 County Road 462E, Wildwood, FL 34785, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., weekdays.

"This is one way we give back to the community with the help of our residents and partners," said Police Chief Randy Parmer. "It is moving to see our cruiser fill up with donations. It's even more exciting to have to bring in a second or third vehicle because the first is overflowing."

Saturday, July 20, 2024, the City of Wildwood will team up with United Church from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Wildwood Community Center, 6500 Powell Road, to provide haircuts, vision screenings, shoes, and school supplies to Wildwood students.

Reserve a free backpack and pair of shoes in advance at <https://tinyurl.com/BacktoSchool072024>.

"We have strong partners in our community, and are actively seeking more," said Parks and Recreation Director Courtney Kellem. "These relationships are essential in serving our residents and for creating a sense of both empowerment and pride among our citizens."

Saturday, July 27, 2024, the City of Wildwood will partner with Encounter Church, The City Ministries, and New Life Center Ministries Inc. at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park, 600 Walker Road, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Students can receive free school supplies, backpacks, and haircuts, all while enjoying a DJ, sports, face painting, water slides, and a fun foam machine.

"As a former educator here in Wildwood, I know well that many kids start school at a disadvantage because their families can't afford all of the supplies they need to thrive in the classroom," said Mayor Ed Wolf. "I am proud of our city and staff for offering these resources and grateful to all the residents and partners who donate their time and funds so generously."

The events are open to the public and free of charge. No registration is required, and all families in Wildwood are encouraged to participate.

"I would like to see every student arrive on the first day of school fully prepared," said Mayor Wolf. "Our teachers and administrators are dedicated and passionate, but it is hard for them to do their jobs effectively when the kids in their classrooms don't have the basic tools needed to learn what is being taught."

HUEY ST TO CLOSE TEMPORARILY STARTING JULY 2

City of Wildwood officials are advising travelers that Huey Street from Gamble Street to St. Clair Street will close to through traffic temporarily beginning Tuesday, July 2, 2024.

The closure will facilitate utility and drainage system upgrades along with roadway reconstruction and enhancements. Residents in the affected area will retain access to their properties at all times. Other traffic will be directed along local detours marked by signage.

"After several years of planning, design, and budgeting, we are eager to complete this project and bring these significant improvements to our citizens," said Public Works Director Jeremy Hockenbury. "As Wildwood continues to grow, we are working hard to ensure our infrastructure not only meets but exceeds the expectations and demands placed upon it."

Hockenbury and the city's contractor are closely managing construction schedules to reopen the road to traffic before the new academic year begins. Huey Street provides direct access to Wildwood elementary and middle high schools, and the improvements are expected to benefit bus, parent, and faculty travel.

"We want to assure the public we are seeking ways to minimize a necessary inconvenience as much as we possibly can," Hockenbury said.

Officials also expect to provide short-term through access to and from parking areas in Millennium Park during the city's July 3 Happy Birthday America celebration. Still, they encourage attendees to carpool and anticipate traffic backups for the popular annual event.

HOLIDAY SOLID WASTE PICKUP SCHEDULE

Waste Management, the City of Wildwood's solid waste collection contractor, will observe the Independence Day holiday on Thursday, July 4, 2024. There will be no residential or commercial collection service that day.

Residential collection schedules after the holiday that week will be delayed one day. Regularly scheduled Friday pickup will be done on Saturday, July 6, 2024.

Commercial customers whose service day falls on Thursday will have their container serviced on an alternate day during the week.

For more information about collection service, visit <https://tinyurl.com/WWSolidWasteCollection> or call 352-330-1336.

NEW SPLASH PAD HOURS

Effective July 1, 2024, splash pad hours will be as follows:

WEEKDAYS

12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m.

WEEKENDS

12:00 noon to 8:00 p.m.

The splash pad will be closed July 3 and July 4, 2024, to accommodate staffing of Wildwood's Happy Birthday America event.



EST. 1776

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICA

Entertainment: Clark Barrios | Carnival Games: Rock Wall

Fireworks at 9:00 p.m. Free Admission

Vendors, Live Music, Beer Garden, Games, Activities, and More!

Wildwood Community Center
July 3, 2024, 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION

Beer Garden Sponsored by Waste Management

Area's Best Fireworks Show

6600 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL 34785
352-461-0134
www.wildwood-fl.gov

WILDWOOD FLORIDA PARKS & RECREATION

PIE EATING CONTEST

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS GREAT AMERICAN TRADITION!

FREE

WE WANT YOU!

Please preregister at wildwood-fl.gov

352-461-0134

03 | JULY | 2024
6:45 p.m.

Wildwood Community Center
@ Happy Birthday America Celebration
6500 Powell Rd., Wildwood, FL

WILDWOOD FLORIDA PARKS & RECREATION

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Find more activities and events on the city's community calendar at www.wildwood-fl.gov/calendar.

THE CITY OF WILDWOOD & UNITED CHURCH PRESENTS:

Back to School Bash

JULY 20, 2024

School Supply Giveaway, Free Shoes, Vision Screenings, Hair Cuts, and More!

11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Wildwood Community Center, 6500 Powell Road, Wildwood, FL 34785

352-461-0134 | www.wildwood-fl.gov

WILDWOOD FLORIDA PARKS & RECREATION

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARK
JULY 27TH 12PM-4PM

BACK 2 SCHOOL

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY EXTRAVAGANZA

- LIVE DJ
- SCHOOL SUPPLY GIVEAWAY
- SPORTS
- KID'S HAIR CUTS
- FOAM MACHINE
- BACKPACK GIVEAWAY
- FACE PAINTING
- WATERSLIDES & MUCH MUCH MORE!

CO-SPONSORED BY:

WE ARE LOOKING FOR VENDORS, VOLUNTEERS AND SPONSORS

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT:
GWEN BROWN- 352-461-4648
LISA STOKES 352-303-8753
OR DONIA STEELE 563-209-6275

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARK
600 WALKER RD, WILDWOOD, FL 34785

THE CITY MINISTRIES | WILDWOOD FLORIDA PARKS & RECREATION | ENCOUNTER CHURCH

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Code Compliance

July 9, 2024
1:00 p.m.

Local Planning Agency

July 9, 2024
2:00 p.m.

Planning and Zoning

July 9, 2024
2:15 p.m.

City Commission

July 8, 2024
9:00 a.m.
July 15, 2024 (workshop)
9:00 a.m.
July 22, 2024
7:00 p.m.
July 29, 2024 (workshop)
9:00 a.m.

Project Review Committee

July 9, 2024
10:00 a.m.

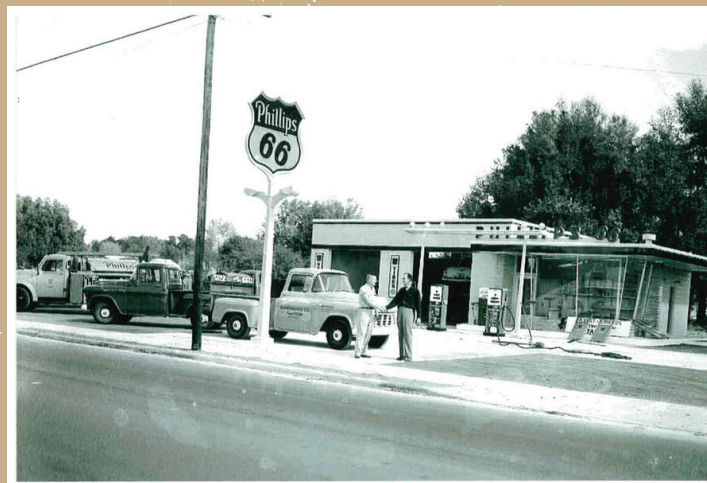
General Information

Unless otherwise specified, all meetings are held at City Hall, 100 N. Main St.

Agendas and minutes are posted on the city's website, www.wildwood-fl.gov. Click on the Agenda icon to view or download.

Meetings are open to the public. Attend in person or remotely by going to the city website and clicking on Government > Attend a Meeting Virtually.

Anyone wishing to speak during Public Forum should submit a comment card before the meeting begins.



A LOOK AT WILDWOOD HISTORY

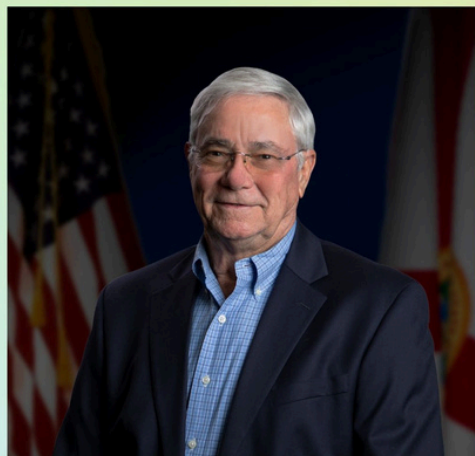
This photo shows a Phillips 66 gas station on Main Street. The date and photographer are unknown.

CHAT WITH A COMMISSIONER

MONDAY, JULY 15, 2024

12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center
101 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.



Mayor Wolf will visit with members of the public. Ask questions, socialize, and/or just listen.

Reservations are not required or taken.

Attendees are invited to bring their own lunch or refreshments.



CITY INFORMATION

Commission

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Joe Elliott
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Marcos Flores
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Julian Green
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jmchugh@wildwood-fl.gov
Development Services
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Human Resources
352-330-1340
Parks and Recreation
352-461-0134
Police (Non-Emergency)
352-330-1355
Police (Emergency)
911
Public Works
352-330-1343
Utilities
352-330-1336

City Hall

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