

# CIVIC ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

## STATE OF THE TOWN SPEECH

### MAYOR JACK MCDONALD

4-12-10

GOOD MORNING –

THIS NOVEMBER WILL KICK OFF OUR CENTENNIAL SEASON. A TIME TO CELEBRATE AND CHERISH THE TOWN WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CREATE AND PRESERVE FOR NEARLY 100 YEARS WITH OUR TRADITIONS INTACT BUT THEIR CONTINUED VIABILITY A MATTER OF CONCERN.

THE KICKOFF WILL BE DECEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> WITH THE DEDICATION OF A STATUE OF A MAN WHO LIVED HERE - HENRY FLAGLER. THE NEWLY FORMED CENTENNIAL COMMISSION HAS ENDORSED A PROJECT CALLED CENTENNIAL GREEN THAT WILL BEAUTIFY THE ROYAL PALM WAY MEDIAN BETWEEN COUNTY ROAD AND OCEAN BOULEVARD. PLEASE JOIN ME IN SUPPORTING THE PROJECT AND CELEBRATING A UNIQUE YEAR IN PALM BEACH.

I WANT TO REMEMBER LOST FRIENDS AND VOLUNTEERS: BILL BROOKS, JANE VOLK AND JESSE NEWMAN, FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR TOWN.

(THE BALANCE OF MY COMMENTS WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 14 MINUTES, SO NO FIDGETING).

I WANT TO RECOGNIZE AND REAPPOINT OUR VOLUNTEER GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS JAMES KARMAN THE MPO, GERRY FRANK LAKE WORTH AND SOUTH PALM BEACH, ROBIN TURNER AND DONALD SINGER CITY OF WEST PALM BEACH AND TERRY LEVINE WEST PALM BEACH WATER ADVISORY BOARD.

THEY VOLUNTEER HUNDREDS OF HOURS ATTENDING INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS AND WRITING REPORTS THAT PROVIDE INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT.

THANK YOU

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO COMMENT ABOUT LAST YEAR'S MAYORAL ELECTION AND THE EVOLUTION OF PALM BEACH ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

**FIRST THE 2009 MAYORAL ELECTION:** IT IS STILL GOING ON. THE ELECTION RESULT HAS BEEN IN LITIGATION SINCE THE FEBRUARY 2009 ELECTION.

SINCE 2-09 I WON A GENERAL ELECTION, A RUNOFF ELECTION, A RECOUNT, TWO LAWSUITS, A JUDGMENT REHEARING AND AN APPEAL.

DURING THE PAST 14 MONTHS I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT CONTINUOUS LITIGATION DOES DIVIDE YOUR FOCUS AND COMPLICATE YOUR ABILITY TO PERFORM TO THE STANDARD YOU DESIRE.

THIS IS AN EXTRAORDINARY SITUATION AND WITH LESS THAN ½ OF THE TERM REMAINING ONE RARELY FACED BY A SEATED PUBLIC OFFICIAL. THE LOSER HAS A

RIGHT TO APPEAL THIS DECISION TO THE FLORIDA SUPREME COURT AND I EXPECT AN APPEAL.

EXCLUDING LEGAL FEES WHICH APPROACH \$100,000.00 FOR THE 3 DEFENDANTS (THE TOWN, THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS AND ME) IT IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE ELECTION IN TOWN HISTORY.

BECAUSE OF THIS ELECTION AND ASSOCIATED LITIGATION THE SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS NOW REQUIRES MUNICIPALITIES TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT THAT REQUIRES THEM TO PAY FOR ELECTION COSTS AND ANY RESULTING LEGAL FEES.

**PALM BEACH CAMPAIGNS:** WHILE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DEBATE THE ISSUES AT COMMUNITY FORUMS HAVE DIMINISHED SINCE MY FIRST ELECTION IN 1995. THERE WERE NO DEBATES IN THE 2009 MAYORAL RUNOFF.

FINANCE AND CAMPAIGN TACTICS HAVE TAKEN ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS. IN 2006 MASS USE OF STREET SIGNS AND INVASIVE TELEPHONE POLLING BEGAN, IN 2008 OUR FIRST \$100,000.00 PLUS CAMPAIGN, IN 2009 OUR FIRST \$200,000.00 PLUS CAMPAIGN, AND INCUMBENTS BEGAN PUBLICALLY ENDORSING OPPONENTS OF OTHER INCUMBENTS, WE ALSO SAW THE FORMATION OF A P. A. C TO SUPPORT A CANDIDATE.

THIS KIND OF SPENDING FUELS PUBLIC SKEPTICISM ABOUT ELECTIONS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS. CAMPAIGNS HAVE BECOME MORE NEGATIVE AND MORE FOCUSED ON STYLE INSTEAD OF SUBSTANCE. DEBATES ABOUT REAL ISSUES TAKE A BACK SEAT TO ADVERTISING AND MARKETING AND MARKETING PIECES FLOOD MAILBOXES WITH IMPLAUSIBLE PROMISES.

ALSO IN 2009 INCUMBENTS BEGAN MAKING PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND WRITING LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TAKING POSITIONS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES THAT WOULD COME BEFORE THE COUNCIL. THIS IS ANALOGOUS TO A JUDGE DECLARING A DEFENDANT GUILTY BEFORE THE TRIAL.

IS ANYONE SURPRISED BY THE RESULTANT LACK OF CAMARADERIE, CIVILITY AND TEAMWORK? WHAT IS MOST SURPRISING AND WHAT SHOULD TROUBLE YOU IS THAT THIS HAS TAKEN PLACE IN A NON PARTISAN POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT. MONEY DRIVEN CAMPAIGNS OFTEN FORCE TRUE PUBLIC SERVANTS THOSE WITH ALTRUISTIC MOTIVES WHO PLACE SERVICE ABOVE SELF FROM THE RACE.

THE INTEGRITY OF THE NON PARTISAN PROCESS IS AT STAKE AND AS THE TOWN'S ELECTED LEADER I WILL STEP FORWARD TO CHALLENGE ITS DIMINISHMENT. IN MY NEXT CAMPAIGN I WILL NOT USE STREET SIGNS, CONDUCT TELEPHONE POLLING, ACCEPT SUPPORT FROM A PAC,

ENDORSE ANOTHER CANDIDATE, SEND HOUDINI MAILERS OR TO SPEND MORE THAN \$50,000.00 ON MY CAMPAIGN.

**COUNTY BUDGET TASK FORCE:** THIS YEAR I RECOMMENDED THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL APPOINT A COUNTY BUDGET REVIEW TASK FORCE. COUNCILMAN KLEID WAS SELECTED TO CHAIR IT. TOMORROW HE WILL ISSUE A REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL RECOMMENDING THAT A 7 PERSON CITIZEN TASK FORCE BE CREATED TO PURSUE GREATER COUNTY FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PASSAGE OF HOME RULE IN 2008 TO PALM BEACH MAGNIFIES AS STATE AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL FINANCES AND BUDGETS DETERIORATE.

THIS NEW CHARTER PROTECTION HELPS PALM BEACH AS COUNTIES LOOK TO CITIES AS FUNDING SOURCES OR SHIFTING OF EXPENSES. ONE POSSIBLE EXAMPLE:

THE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM WILL LOSE 1 MILLION OF FUNDING THIS YEAR. IF THE COUNTY COULD FORCE US INTO THEIR LIBRARY SYSTEM, OUR COSTS WOULD HAVE GONE FROM \$242,400 TO 7,383,000.

## **DEPARTMENT REVIEW**

### **PUBLIC SAFETY -POLICE -**

IN 2009 WE HAD OUR LOWEST RECORDED CRIME LEVEL IN THE PAST 25 YEARS. THE DEPARTMENT HANDLED **80,000+** CALLS FOR SERVICE AND MADE **2,000+** ARRESTS A NEARLY 25% ARREST INCREASE OVER 2008.

THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVED 7,766 – 911 CALLS. YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN THE REASONS FOR PALM BEACH 911 CALLS - #1 IS WHERE IS WORTH AVENUE? – THAT COMMENT IS COMPLIMENTS OF THE POLICE CHIEF AND BECAUSE HE IS NEW HE THOUGHT HE COULD BE FUNNY ----- IT IS FUNNY ACTUALLY

#1 IS MEDICAL, #2 IS SUSPICIOUS PERSON/CRIME IN PROCESS #3 IS ALARMS. WE CONTINUE TO PAY SIGNIFICANT LEGAL FEES RELATED TO FELON JEFFERY EPSTEIN FOR HIS CONVICTION ON PROCURING MINORS FOR PROSTITUTION. ----- A CASE ONE PALM BEACHER PRESSURED OUR POLICE CHIEF TO DROP BECAUSE EPSTEIN WAS A FRIEND. THE CASE WENT FORWARD TO CONVICTION.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY - FIRE**

FIRE-RESCUE HANDLED **1,371** EMS CALLS AND **1,146** FIRE CALLS AND HANDLED **39** FIRES. YOU MAY WONDER WITH 1,146 FIRE CALLS WHY ONLY 39 FIRES BECAUSE ONLY 39 WERE FIRES. A LARGE MAJORITY ARE FALSE ALARMS.

THE DEPARTMENT HAS WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CIVIC ASSOCIATION ENCOURAGED GOOD SAMARITAN MEDICAL CENTER TO IMPLEMENT A THERAPEUTIC HYPOTHERMIA PROGRAM FOR POST CARDIAC ARREST RESUSCITATION PATIENTS.

I WANT TO EXPLAIN THIS PROGRAM BECAUSE OF ITS IMPORTANCE TO YOU. THE USE OF INDUCED HYPOTHERMIA WHICH IS THE COOLING OF A PATIENT WHO HAS BEEN RESUSCITATED FROM A CARDIAC ARREST IS A PROCEDURE THAT SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVES RATES OF SURVIVAL AND NEUROLOGIC OUTCOME.

INDUCED H INVOLVES COOLING A PATIENT FROM A NORMAL BODY TEMPERATURE OF 98.6 DEGREES TO 89.6 FOR 24 HOURS. THIS IS DONE BY INJECTING SALINE COOLED TO 39.2 DEGREES INTO THE VEINS OF A PATIENT WHILE APPLYING COLD PACKS TO THE ARMPIT, GROIN AND SIDES OF THE NECK. COOLING A PATIENT AFTER A CARDIAC ARREST HELPS REDUCE THE INJURY THAT OCCURS TO BRAIN CELLS FROM AN INFLAMMATORY CASCADE PROCESS.

COOLING THE FLUIDS MUST BE DONE WITH MEDICAL GRADE PRECISION. FR HAS INCLUDED A REFRIGERATION UNIT INTO THE DESIGN OF NEW RESCUE AMBULANCES WHICH ARE SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY THIS MONTH.

OUR AVERAGE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TIME IS **4 MINUTES AND 42 SECONDS**. THERE WERE **915** MEDICAL TRANSPORTS. WHERE DO MOST OF THOSE TRANSPORTS GO?

GOOD SAM -**568**, JFK -**286**.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS - (PROJECT UPDATES)**

**FLAGLER BRIDGE** - WE BELIEVE THE CITY OF WPB WILL AGREE WITH THE TOWN REGARDING APPROVAL OF A TRADITIONAL STYLE DESIGN. HOWEVER, DOT HAS REFUSED TO INSTALL DECORATIVE LIGHTING FIXTURES AND WE CONTINUE TO PURSUE FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES. CONSTRUCTION IS STILL PLANNED TO COMMENCE NEXT YEAR.

**ACCELERATED CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM:** THIS IS A 40 MILLION DOLLAR PROGRAM DESIGNED TO RENEW THE TOWN'S EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS. THE SANITARY SEWER FORCE MAINS AND PUMP STATIONS WILL BE REPLACED OR UPGRADED.

A NEW FORCE MAIN WILL BE INSTALLED BENEATH THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY. STORM WATER PUMP STATIONS WILL BE RENOVATED AND PIPES REPLACED WHERE NECESSARY. STREETLIGHTS AND TRAFFIC SIGNALS WILL BE REPLACED OR UPGRADED. I WANT TO COMMEND PALM BEACH FOR (BALANCING A DIVERSE/HEAVY WORKLOAD OVERSEEING MOST BASIC DAILY SERVICE NEEDS OF OUR RESIDENTS..

**FINANCE AND TAXES** - THE FY10 BUDGET WAS ADOPTED WITH THE SAME 7 MILLAGE RATE AS OF 2009. (I WANT TO COMMEND PETER ELWELL & JANE STRUDER FOR CREATING A FINANCIAL PLAN) THAT WILL PREVENT PREVIOUSLY PROJECTED DEFICITS THERE ARE 38 MUNICIPALITIES IN PALM BEACH COUNTY AND WE PROVIDE THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF SERVICE WHILE HAVING THE THIRD LOWEST TOTAL TAX RATE IN THE COUNTY.

I OFTEN RECEIVE COMPLAINTS THAT WE HAVE HIGHER TAXES COMPARED TO OTHER TOWNS AND CITIES. SO CONSIDER THIS AS A BASIS FOR COMPARISON: IF YOU OWN A 1 MILLION DOLLAR HOME IN WPB YOUR TAX IS: 23,495 IF THAT HOME IS IN PALM BEACH YOUR TAXES ARE 18,289.

**PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION** - THIS DEPARTMENT IS THE FINANCIAL BAROMETER OF THE TOWN. IN 2008 WE ISSUED **10,000+** PERMITS AND IN 2009 **7,000+** DOWN **29%** CONSTRUCTION. VALUE DIPPED FROM **238,168** AND TO **165,630** DOWN **30%** AND FEE INCOME FROM **7,806,620** TO **5,564,709** DOWN **29%** .

**TOWN SERVING:** THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION IS NOW SOLICITING PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE RELEVANCY OF TOWN-SERVING REGULATIONS. SHOULD BUSINESSES THAT EXCEED 2,000 SQ. FT. BE REQUIRED TO PROVE THEY ARE TOWN SERVING?

THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WANTS THE REQUIREMENT ELIMINATED. THE COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER SUCH ISSUES AS: IF THE REQUIREMENT IS STILL RELEVANT AFTER 30 YEARS, WHAT WOULD BE THE RAMIFICATIONS OF ELIMINATING IT? IF RELEVANT WHAT SHOULD THE SQ. FT. LIMITATION BE? IS THERE A BETTER CRITERION?

TOWN SERVING WILL BE AN INTRIGUING ASPECT RELATING TO THE PROPOSED NEW PUBLIX AND MY MAIL INDICATES IT WILL SUPPLANT THE PLAZA MOMENTARILY AS THE SEASON'S MOST CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE.

**HEART OF PALM BEACH HOTEL**- WAS SOLD IN 2009 AND THE REQUIRED CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION DATE IS FEBRUARY 14, 2011.

**TOWN WIDE UNDER GROUNDING** MORE PRESSING CAPITAL PROJECTS HAVE TAKEN PRIORITY. WE CONTINUE ASSISTING GROUPS OF PROPERTY OWNERS WHO WISH TO RELOCATE OVERHEAD LINES AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE. WE ARE CURRENTLY WORKING ON PROJECTS FOR: VIA FONTANA, SEAGRAPE CIRCLE, EVERGLADES ISLAND, LAKE TOWERS CONDOMINIUM AND EAST INLET DRIVE.

**PALM BEACH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - RUNWAY EXPANSION** - ON HOLD, WHY? PROJECTED LANDINGS IN 2019 WILL BE WELL BELOW 2004. THE EXPANSION WOULD COST 400 MILLION IN TODAY DOLLARS – WE MUST BE WARY AND VIGILANT.

**RECREATION** - VISITS AT 280,000 WERE DOWN FROM 2008. THE PAR 3 GOLF COURSE WAS RESTORED AND REFLECTS THE VISION AND DEDICATION OF RAY FLOYD, HIS COMMITTEE AND MANY PUBLIC SPIRITED RESIDENTS. THIS COURSE WILL BE THEIR LEGACY AND THEY HAVE GIVEN US. SOMETHING WE CAN ENJOY AND BE PROUD OF FOR GENERATIONS. NO POTABLE WATER IS BEING USED TO WATER THE COURSE

**TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE:** THE 2010 ELECTION HAD A 43% VOTER TURNOUT ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE STATE. THE OFFICE HANDLED **93** MEETINGS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL & SHORE PROTECTION BOARD, ANSWERED **237** PUBLIC RECORD REQUESTS AND ISSUED **158** CHARITABLE SOLICITATION PERMITS WHICH WERE AN INCREASE OVER 2008 (119)

THIS IS MY 6<sup>TH</sup> STATE OF THE TOWN SPEECH AND IN PREPARING IT I REVIEWED MY FIRST IN 2005. AND I WANT TO SHARE SOME OF THOSE 2005 COMMENTS WITH YOU BECAUSE THEY STILL RESONATE TODAY “OFTEN IT IS SAID THAT IF YOU DO NOT

EMBRACE GROWTH YOU ARE NOT PROGRESSIVE.”

DO WE WANT TO BE LIKE WEST PALM BEACH, A GOVERNMENT THAT PURSUES DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH? OR MORE THE WAY WE ARE?  
I THINK WE WANT TO CONTINUE TO BE, WHAT WE STARTED OUT TO BE: AN OASIS OF BEAUTY, SAFETY, TRANQUILITY AND CIVILITY. NOW, MORE THAN EVER, WE MUST ERROR ON THE SIDE OF GROWTH CONTROL AND PRESERVATION.

WE NEED TO EVALUATE EVERY ISSUE AND EVERY PROJECT ON HOW IT BENEFITS OUR RESIDENTS. BACK TO 2010 I READ WITH INTEREST PRESIDENT ERVIN DUGGAN’S MARCH LETTER TO 4 ARTS MEMBERS WHERE HE RESPONDED TO A QUESTION REGARDING DRESS AT CONCERT PROGRAMS. HE EXPLAINED THAT MOST OF OUR PATRONS SEEM TO PREFER, EVEN IN THIS EVER MORE CASUAL AGE A WORLD IN WHICH WE PREFER TO DRESS UP RATHER THAN DOWN. MUCH OF LIFE IN PALM BEACH HARKS BACK TO A TIME WHEN ELEGANCE IN DRESS AND MANNERS, AND A CERTAIN COURTLY CIVILITY, WERE THE NORM RATHER THAN THE EXCEPTION. CONCLUDING WITH THE 4 ARTS LIKE PALM BEACH ITSELF WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE A BASTION OF TRADITION. HIS COMMENTS CONNECT WITH MY CONCLUSION IN 2005:

“YOU SEE THERE SHOULD REMAIN AT LEAST ONE TOWN IN AMERICA WHERE YOU CAN WEAR A JACKET AND TIE TO DINNER. AND IT WILL TAKE ALL OF US TO KEEP THAT.”

I CONCLUDE AND CAN REPORT THAT OUR TOWN IS IN BETTER CONDITION THAN MOST GOVERNMENTAL UNITS; WE REMAIN A SAFE, BEAUTIFUL PLACE WITH EXCELLENT SERVICES, EXCELLENT EMPLOYEES, EXCELLENT MANAGEMENT AND HAVE THE CONFIDENCE AND FORESIGHT THAT WE CAN MEET OUR ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES.