Cape Coral Hit with 20 Inches of Rain Over 3-Day Period

Rainfall total ranks as one of the highest in city’s history

On Friday morning, August 25, heavy rain began to fall in Cape Coral. For 72 hours, the rain continued, and by the following Monday, Cape Coral had received about 20 inches of rain. “In my 28 years with the City of Cape Coral, this is the worst rain event I have experienced with the amount of rain and all of the flooding,” said Cape Coral Fire Chief Don Cochran. “The good news is there were no major life-safety issues, and we had very minimal property damage as a result of this event.”

About 50 percent of the city’s 4,000 miles of roadway was partially or temporarily flooded. Several roads and intersections were closed including Burnt Store Road, Chiquita Boulevard and Trafalgar Parkway, Skyline Boulevard and Diplomat Parkway.

By Monday afternoon, the rain stopped and the standing water had drained from most of the streets. The city had only minor private property damage, while most of the overall property damage occurred to public

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Final Public Hearing Date for FY 2017 Operating Budget

The City’s final public hearing date for adopting a final budget is scheduled for Monday, September 25 at 5:05 p.m. in Council Chambers. This final public hearing comes at the end of a 10-month process to develop the annual operating budget.

City Manager John Szerlag’s proposed budget recommended a tax rate of 6.50, which is 0.25 mils lower than the FY 2016 rate of 6.75. The budget includes:

- $6.5 million annually for local road resurfacing
- $312,000 annually for median improvements
- $520,000 annually for an alley paving program

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City Attorney
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Fire Services
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On The Move is a quarterly newsletter produced by the City of Cape Coral for the citizens of the city. The publication is mailed as a courtesy to every household and business in the city. Comments or questions can be directed to the City Manager’s Office, P.O. Box 150027, Cape Coral, FL 33915-0027 or by email to newsletter@capecoral.net.
Mayor’s Message

Can you believe the year is more than half over? Time flies when you're having fun. I'd like to begin by welcoming our school employees and students back to school. May you all have a great 2017-18 School Year! It’s an exciting time of year for our schools, but it’s also a time of increased traffic on our streets and roads. Remember to keep an eye out for students walking, or biking, to and from bus stops and schools.

Writing this message is a bittersweet moment for me as this is the last time I will write the Mayor’s Message for On The Move. It has been such an honor and a privilege to serve as Mayor of our great city. I wanted to find a unique way to describe my term as mayor. Something different and perhaps a little fun. I came up with four song titles and lyrics that describe a little bit of each of my four years.

I'll start with “Getting To Know You” from “The King & I.” “Getting to know you, getting to know all about you…” The first year was filled with training, travel, meetings, and phone calls as I learned what being Mayor would require. The second year’s song is “Bohemian Rhapsody” by Queen. “Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy? Caught in a landslide, no escape from reality…” It was time to get down to work. Bimini Basin became a focus for residents, staff, and Council. Council approved the next step in making this vision a reality. The City Manager’s Sustainability Plan, the PST, the FSA, a lower millage rate, working out pay parity for City employees, and updating the classification system all came before City Council in this year.

The third year is “Hit Me With Your Best Shot” by Pat Benatar. “Knock me down, it’s all in vain. I get right back on my feet again…” This was the year of change for both the City and for me. Cape Coral continued to move forward. Street paving was underway with an orderly and sustainable plan; streetlights were installed at all permanent Lee County School District bus stops, and our police department replaced cars that were years past their expected service lives. Lee County faced a summer of algae blooms, and concerns about the Lake O’ water releases. I, and the other Lee County Mayors, traveled to Washington, DC, where we met with our Federal representation to lobby for our clean water concerns, an effort that continues with Sen. Bill Nelson offering great support.

This all leads me to my last year. The song for this year is “For Good” from “Wicked.” “Who can say if I’ve been changed for the better? I do believe I have been changed for the better. And because I knew you, I have been changed for good.” The lyrics are appropriate to summarize this four-year term.

This past year, we have continued to move forward. We are again considering a lower millage rate; street paving continues; North 2 Utilities Expansion Area is ready to begin; we are attracting new businesses every month; and, we are on many Top 10 (or 20, 50, etc.) lists for places to retire, safest cities, bicycle friendly, and several others. Cape Coral is still experiencing growing pains, but with continued smart, progressive growth, we will remain on those Top 10 lists. We will continue to attract businesses and residents who fall in love with Cape Coral as it is, yet are excited to bring Cape Coral into the future.

I look forward to returning to private life, expanding my consulting business and spending time with my, now adult, children. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as the First Woman Mayor of Cape Coral.

City Manager’s Message

Welcome to our fall issue of On The Move. We are heading into the final stretch of the 2017 Hurricane Season, which also is the most active period. We have seen the type of devastation these storms can inflict on communities with Hurricane Harvey causing billions of dollars of damage and uprooting the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents in Texas. Please keep these families in your thoughts and prayers as they work to recover from this massive storm. If you are interested in providing some type of assistance, please make sure to use reputable organizations.

When you see the destruction caused by Hurricane Harvey, the street flooding Cape Coral experienced the same weekend seems trivial. Yet we received some of the most consistent and heavy rainfall in recent history. About 20 inches of rain fell over a three-day period, which resulted in many roads and intersections flooded and impassable. The rain simply had no place to go with canals full, outfall pipes blocked and high water tables.

The good news is that our stormwater system did function exceptionally well considering the excessive rainfall, and most of the water had receded within a few hours of the rain stopping. The flooding certainly was a major inconvenience to our residents with some residents unable to leave their driveways. Please know that without our interconnected system of canals, swales, storm pipes, weirs, storm drains and catch basins, flooding could have been much worse and caused significant damage. At the same time, we discovered some locations in the city that may require additional stormwater upgrades. City staff will be identifying those problems and potential solutions.

The final public hearing for the FY2018 – FY2020 Operating Budget for the City of Cape Coral is Monday, September 25 at 5:05 p.m. While this is a three-year rolling budget format, City Council only adopts the upcoming fiscal year. My proposed budget includes a 0.25 mil reduction in the property tax rate. This is the fourth reduction in the past five years. City Council began lowering the rate in 2013, when the millage rate was 7.9570 mils. This year’s proposed millage rate reduction equates to about $3.2 million.

The proposed FY2018 budget includes funding to continue our annual road paving plan ($6.5 million) as well as funds for median improvements, alley paving, streetlights and $1 million for capital maintenance for City parks and government facilities.

Even with these expenditures, we did have to delay some capital needs and staff positions due in part to unfunded mandates passed along from the Florida Legislature. We now must budget $3.2 million of annual costs related to pension changes and Workman’s Comp required by the State.

We do have several projects continuing to move forward. The North 2 Utilities Extension Project is set to begin in a couple of months. Residents in this area should expect some disruption and inconvenience in their everyday activities over the next year during construction. That said, our prime directive is safety to residents and construction workers. Any questions or concerns you have can be addressed by staff. When the project is finished, almost 9,000 parcels will have water, sewer and irrigation services.

We also have updates in the newsletter about our Bimini Basin and Seven Islands projects. I know our residents will be excited about the progress we continue to make on these two projects, which will have significant impacts on our community.

Best regards,
Rain .............................................................. from page 1

infrastructure such as roadways, weirs and berms. Numerous potholes also have popped up as a result of the significant rainfall.

The heavy rain also caused some infiltration and inflow into the sewer system. This resulted in some backflow issues at a few manhole covers. It also added to the amount of flow through the wastewater reclamation facilities, which required the City to dispose of several million gallons of reclaimed water down the City’s deep injection well.

While some residents expressed concern about the flooding, the City’s stormwater system performed very well overall. The City’s stormwater system one of the best in the state; however, no stormwater system can immediately whisk away 20 inches of rain when the water has no place to go and the rain is continuing. As most residents probably noticed, within 24 hours of the rains stopping, nearly all of the standing water had drained. That is the sign of a well-functioning stormwater management system.

Budget .............................................................. from page 1

$1 million for capital maintenance of parks and general government facilities

$100,000 annually to continue streetlight program enhancements for installation of new fixtures as well as the ongoing costs

Final millage rates will be set and the operating budget will be adopted at the second public hearing on September 25.


City Manager Recommends Reduction in Fire Services Assessment

Substantial increase in building cost values used to determine assessment spurred decision

City Manager John Szerlag has recommended a reduction in the recovery rate for the Fire Services Assessment from the publicly noticed rate of 64 percent to 59 percent after being advised that building cost values increased substantially this year. The City uses these underlying values to calculate the assessment amount. Most of the “ranch” style homes in Cape Coral had increases in the “building cost value” of more than 30 percent.

“When we originally recommended maintaining the 64 percent recovery rate for the fire services, we assumed the building cost values would remain fairly constant as they had in previous years,” said Szerlag. “After learning these values spiked significantly and would result in much higher assessments for many of our homeowners, we recalculated the rate and reduced the initial assessment amount.”

By lowering the recovery rate to 59 percent, the City reduced the overall fire assessment revenue by $1.9 million. This reduction in revenue is being taken from the City’s fund balance.

Cape Coral Achieves GFOA Distinguished Budget Award

The City of Cape Coral received the Government Finance Officers Association “Distinguished Budget Presentation Award” for the FY 2017 – FY 2019 rolling budget.

The GFOA has been promoting the preparation of high quality budget documents since 1984. The purpose of the program is to encourage and assist governments in preparing excellent budget documents for the benefit of citizens and other parties with a vital interest in a government’s finances.

This is the 19th time that the City of Cape Coral has won this award. To earn the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, the City had to substantially conform to the program’s demanding criteria. This required the professionalism and commitment of numerous individuals as well as many hours of staff time. The award reflects a high degree of dedication and leadership.

Congratulations to our Finance staff and other City staff who worked to put the City of Cape Coral back on the list of GFOA’s Distinguished Budget Award winners.

2017 City Council General Election

The City of Cape Coral will be holding a General Election on Tuesday, November 7. City voters will elect a Mayor and Council Members for Council Districts 1, 4, 5 and 6. This is a non-partisan election.

Please note: Although candidates must qualify in their respective districts, the elections themselves are “at large” and not district-specific races. This means all voters in Cape Coral can vote for candidates in every district.

Early Voting for General Election

The City will be providing the opportunity for early voting for residents. Early voting dates for the General Election are:

- October 30, 31 and November 1, 2, 3 and 4

- Locations: Lee County Cape Coral Branch Office (1031 SE 9th Place, #3) and Cape Coral Library (921 SW 39th Terrace)

Financial Services staff received the Distinguished Budget Award.
Total Taxable Values Increase by 9.57 Percent in Cape Coral

On July 1, the Property Appraiser’s Office provided the City with the Certificate of Taxable Value for FY 2018 ad valorem tax rolls. The City’s taxable assessed value was $13.19 billion which was 9.57 percent higher than the prior year’s final gross taxable value of $12.04 billion. This is the sixth consecutive year that total taxable values have increased following five years of steep decline.

While total taxable value increased by 9.57 percent, properties in Cape Coral that are homesteaded only can increase by the CPI or 3 percent, whichever is less. This year, the CPI is 2.1 percent. As an example, a homesteaded property with an assessed value of $125,000 will increase by $2,625 for a new value of $127,625.

Ad valorem taxes are the single, largest revenue source for the City’s General Fund, which is the primary operating fund. This fund includes police, fire, parks and recreation, public works and administrative services.

The Final Taxable Value will be provided by the Property Appraiser in October.

City Saves $9.9 Million with Bond Refinancing

The City of Cape Coral generated $9.9 million in interest savings after recently refinancing $101 million of outstanding Utility Assessment Bonds. The savings was about $550,000 more than the City anticipated. The additional savings was due to very strong investor interest for the refinancing bonds, which generated orders of $969 million. This was more than nine times the amount of bonds available. The high demand for the bonds enabled the City to reduce interest rates in several maturities, which generated the additional savings compared to initial pricing levels. The savings will be realized over the life of the bonds, which mature in 2028.

“Our Finance Department does an excellent job keeping a close watch on the financial markets for opportunities to save money by refinancing our bond debt,” said City Manager John Szerlag. “The $9.9 million in interest savings from this refinancing will provide a reduction in the annual payment for property owners who currently are paying their utility assessments via installments and also will generate savings to the City’s Water and Sewer Fund.”

The rating agencies cited the still-strong projected liquidity after planned cash drawdowns through 2016 for capital projects. They also referenced the primarily cash-funded $151 million, 5-year capital improvement plan. The agencies noted that the City’s water and sewer system: (a) has a strong customer base that participates in the broad and diverse Cape Coral-Fort Myers metropolitan statistical area; (b) has service rates that Standard & Poor’s consider affordable; and, (c) has good operational and management policies.

New Fire Stations Planned for Cape Coral

Two new fire stations are scheduled to be built over the next year, which will improve the delivery of fire and rescue services to the community.

Design for Fire Station 11 has been completed, and the City is in the process of receiving bids for construction. The complete plans for the project and total associated costs will be presented to City Council in early October. If approved, the construction is anticipated to begin in early November. Fire Station 11 will be located at Burnt Store Road and NW 11th Street.

Site design to replace the aging Fire Station 2 on Nicholas Parkway is in the FY2018 Operating Budget. Once design is complete, construction is expected to begin in October 2019. Fire Station 2 was built in 1974 and is one of the oldest buildings in the city. The station has been remodeled several times, and the continuing repair and maintenance have become cost-prohibitive.

Fire Stations 11 and 2 will be built using the same design. The City has purchased the rights to this design plan, which will save time and money when new fire stations are built in the future.
Cape Coral Honored for Future-Focused Water Resources Initiatives

The City of Cape Coral Utilities Department received a “Utility of the Future Today” award for the department’s future-focused initiatives. Cape Coral was one of just 25 water utilities in the country to receive this recognition.

The Utility of the Future Today award celebrates the achievements of forward-thinking, innovative water utilities that are providing value-added service to communities. The recognition specifically focuses on leadership in community engagement, watershed stewardship and recovery of resources such as water, energy and nutrients.

“This national recognition gives validation to the hard work of our Utilities staff,” said Cape Coral Utilities Director Jeff Pearson. “Cape Coral is honored to be recognized alongside other exceptional utilities who strive for excellence in employing innovative initiatives and long-term sustainability.”

The recognition program was established in 2016 by four water sector organizations - the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF), the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation (WE&RF) and WateReuse, with input from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The Utility of the Future framework provides a model for utilities of all sizes to achieve more efficient operations, enhanced productivity and long-term sustainability. The Utility of the Future concept is being promoted as the nation’s water systems transform operations through innovation and technology.

Honorees will be recognized during an awards ceremony at Water Environment Federation’s Technical Exhibit and Conference this October in Chicago.

City to Host General Election Debates

The City of Cape Coral and CapeTV will host a candidates’ debate for the upcoming general election. Council seats in District 1, District 4, District 5 and District 6 will be on the ballot this year along with the mayor’s seat. The District 5 seat election is to complete the remaining two years of former Councilwoman Rana Erbrick’s term. Erbrick resigned to run for mayor.

The debate for the districts will be conducted on Thursday, October 26, and the debate for mayor candidates will be Friday, October 27. The debates will be 90 minutes. Debates begin at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers and will be broadcast live on CapeTV (Channel 98 on Comcast and Channel 94 on Prism). Debates can be viewed via videostream on the City website and CapeTV website (www.capecoral.net).

Joe Mazurkiewicz, executive director of the Cape Coral Council for Progress, will be the moderator, and questions will be posed by Tom Hayden, News-Press and Valarie Harring, Cape Coral Daily Breeze.

The debates will be taped for replay on CapeTV and will be available for downloading/viewing on the City’s website: www.capecoral.net.

Special Events Division Receives FFEA Awards

The Special Events Division of Cape Coral Parks and Recreation won two Sunsational Awards from the Florida Festival and Events Association (FFEA). For the past 23 years, the Florida Festivals & Events Association has celebrated achievements in outstanding event marketing, programming, service and innovation through the Sunsational Awards.

The FFEA presented both awards to the City’s Special Events Division for the Tour De Cape event. The annual Tour De Cape is a two-day bike ride and running event that is held in mid-January. The City was awarded third place for outstanding outdoor advertisements, billboards and signage. Two members of the Special Events Division accepted the awards at FFEA’s annual conference held the first week of August in Orlando.

The City of Cape Coral is an active member of the Florida Festival and Events Association. The association is comprised of event professionals and organizations and is the leading resource for fairs, festivals and events in the state. Since 1994, the Florida Festivals and Events Association, Inc. (FFEA) has grown to more than 550 members strong and collectively represents 3,500 events throughout the state of Florida. FFEA has hosted more than 3,300 event organizers, vendors, speakers and sponsors at its annual convention and trade shows.

Seven Islands Vision Plan Continues Moving Forward

The City continues to move forward to implement the Vision Plan adopted by City Council last December. On July 24, the Council transmitted a land use change for the Seven Islands from “Single-family/Multi-family” to “Mixed Use.” The “Mixed Use” Future Land Use Category allows the full range of uses in the approved Vision Plan.

The next steps in preparing this property for future development are:

1) Create a new zoning district for the Seven Islands
2) Start the process to rezone the property.

The City’s consultant and DCD staff are working on the new zoning district, which should be coming to the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council by the end of the year.
2017 Citizen Survey Complete

The 2017 Citizen Survey is complete. Overall, ratings in Cape Coral generally remained stable for 2017. Of the 133 items for which comparisons were available, 112 items were rated similarly to 2015, while 11 items showed a decrease in ratings and 10 showed an increase.

“Excellent/good” ratings for “Overall quality of life” (78 percent) and “Cape Coral as a place to live” (83 percent) continued to increase and are nearing their high levels in 2005 (81 percent / 84 percent respectively). “Place to raise children” and “Place to retire” received “excellent” or “good” ratings from 78 percent and 80 percent of respondents respectively. “Overall image” received “excellent/good” ratings from 56 percent, a slight increase from 2015.

The survey also showed 85 percent of respondents were “somewhat” or “very likely” to recommend living in Cape Coral to others, and 86 percent were likely to remain in Cape Coral. The latter is the highest mark recorded for the category.

Under the “Governance” section of the survey, there were some positive results. “Services provided by the City” continued an upward trend and were rated as “excellent” or “good” by 64 percent of respondents. This is the highest rating since 2005 and continues the positive movement that began in 2011. “Value of the Services for the Taxes Paid” also increased from 40 percent to 46 percent, the second highest rating recorded for this category. The “Overall direction” remained constant with half of the respondents giving “excellent” or “good” ratings to the direction the City is heading.

Web Survey Option

With this survey, the City provided an online web survey option to the citizens. This option generated 827 responses. There was no mechanism to limit who responded and how many times, or even if they lived in Cape Coral. While the number of respondents is much higher than the mail version, please keep in mind the web results have not been weighted and are not statistically valid.

Having said that, it was very interesting to see how close the web results mirrored some of the “excellent/good” ratings with the mail results:

- Overall quality of life: Mail 78%, Web 78%
- Cape Coral as place to live: Mail 83%, Web 83%
- Overall image: Mail 56%, Web 52%
- Recommend living in Cape Coral: Mail 85%, Web 81%
- Likely to remain in Cape Coral: Mail 86%, Web 85%

Survey results are available on the City website (www.capecoral.net) under “Government,” “Publications,” “Reports.”

City Council Rejects Land Use Change for Old Golf Course

On August 21, City Council rejected a proposed land use amendment for the old golf course property in the southeast Cape. The large scale comprehensive plan amendment was submitted by the owner of the 175-acre parcel, Florida Gulf Venture LLC. The proposed amendment would have changed the future land use from “Parks” to “Single-Family.” A “Single-Family” land use would match the current zoning on the property, which is R-1B (single family). After five hours of public input and discussion, the motion to approve failed on a 4-4 tie.

City Council members subsequently directed City Manager John Szerlag to research and identify options related to future development opportunities of the golf course property.
Cape Coral Recovers $100,000 from Unlicensed Contractor for Couple

An investigation by the City of Cape Coral’s Code Compliance Division resulted in the recovery of more than $100,000 from an unlicensed contractor for a German couple building a home in the city. Thanks to the efforts of DCD Licensing Investigator Paul Gates, Helmut and Anja Weiss received a check for $105,333.75 from the contractor. This is the highest dollar amount ever recovered through mediation by the City’s Code Compliance Division.

“We are certainly pleased that we were able to mediate this issue successfully and recover these funds for Helmut and Anja Weiss,” said Code Compliance Manager Rich Carr. “Hiring unlicensed contractors comes with substantial risk, which is why we encourage our citizens to choose one of the many reputable, licensed contractors in Cape Coral who do excellent work, and are bonded and insured.”

Mr. and Mrs. Weiss hired Reinhard Eichinger (Cape Coral) of the Jonas Group to build a single-family residence on a parcel they owned in southwest Cape. Several months later, the City received information from the Cape Coral Construction Industry Association (CCCIA) that Mr. Eichinger was working in the City as an unlicensed contractor. A subsequent investigation by Gates revealed that he was working as both an unlicensed contractor and unlicensed real estate agent. Mr. and Mrs. Weiss were unaware that Mr. Eichinger was unlicensed when they signed the contract to build the residence. Mr. Eichinger cooperated with the investigation and was willing to participate in the mediation process. He also agreed to return the couple’s money. As outlined in Ordinance 6-10.1(c), the purpose of the mediation process is to identify any action that will be taken to abate the violation. Mr. Eichinger was cited for violation of Ordinance 6-14(f) and received a $1,000 fine. All information was provided to the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation.

The City of Cape Coral urges residents to call the City’s Code Compliance Division at (239) 574-0613 to verify whether a contractor has the appropriate licensing prior to signing any contracts and/or paying for services. To report an unlicensed contractor performing work in the City of Cape Coral, call (239) 242-3873 or send an email to unlicensed@capecoral.net.

Runway Improvements Completed at Seahawk Park

In July, the asphalt air strip at Seahawk Park was completely rebuilt. The City spent $39,900 to pulvamix the runway after researching several other options such as sealcoating the asphalt, microsurfacing and repaving. Pulvamixing is a technology that uses a complex machine to pulverize the existing asphalt surface and mix it into the existing base material. This eliminates existing cracks from appearing through the new asphalt, which is a common issue. The base layer becomes stronger and can be compacted. This blended base is then resurfaced with new asphalt. The newly built runway should remain crack free for many years.

The runway was originally made of grass but quickly evolved into a small concrete runway. In 1999, the air strip was expanded and lengthened considerably to its present size of 582 feet long by 53 feet wide, and was resurfaced with asphalt. The asphalt cracked over time due to the age of the runway and to being exposed to outdoor elements. The poor conditions impacted the take-off and landing operations, especially on the smaller model planes with tiny wheels.

The runway at Seahawk Park is used by the 334 members of the Cape Coral R/Seahawks Club. The club was formed 25 years ago, and the group of remote-controlled aircraft enthusiasts have been flying model planes there ever since. The air club is one of the 10 largest in the country of more than 2300 clubs. Seahawk Park hosts a large two-day air show in March each year. The free event is attended by thousands of people. It features hundreds of aircraft including propeller planes, jets and helicopters. For more information about the park or the air club, please visit www.rseahawks.org.

RMA Finalizing Bimini Basin Market Assessment and Feasibility Analysis Reports

The City’s project consultant for the Bimini Basin development is finalizing their Market Assessment for development of the Bimini Basin. Redevelopment Management Associates expects to provide the report to the City within the next few weeks. RMA also is finalizing a “Feasibility Analysis,” which includes development scenarios for Bimini Basin and an “Implementation Plan” for moving forward. These reports will be scheduled for presentation to City Council at a Committee of the Whole meeting later this year. The documents will be posted on the City website when complete.
Celebrate Cape Coral’s 60th Anniversary at Cultural Park

In 1957, the dream of Cape Coral and a “Waterfront Wonderland” came true. On October 28, Cape Coral’s Cultural Park Theatre and Cape Coral Historical Society & Museum will celebrate the city’s 60th Anniversary.

The public is invited to attend a reception at the theatre to commemorate Cape Coral’s 60 years with hors d’oeuvres and an historic display of the Cape’s founding fathers Leonard and Jack Rosen. This will be followed by a silent auction and a performance of “The Wizard of Tarpon Point.”

The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. with the performance at 7 p.m. Tickets are $20 with open seating and may be purchased at Cultural Park Theatre Box Office (239) 772-5862 or Cape Coral Historical Society & Museum (239) 772-7037. The Gunterberg Charitable Foundation & Culliton Family are generously sponsoring this event. All proceeds support the Cultural Park Theatre and the Cape Coral Historical Society & Museum.

Cultural Park Theatre is located at 528 Cultural Park Boulevard. Find this event on Facebook or visit www.capecoralhistoricalmuseum.org.

City Expands Public Search Function for Records

Citizens are now able to search the contents of all minutes, ordinances and resolutions filed electronically with the City Clerk’s Office using a new full-text search tool on the City’s website. The newly searchable information includes minutes from all public meetings and any resolutions or ordinances passed at Council meetings.

The full text search is an expansion of the City’s enterprise information platform for managing content and processes from Hyland Software. The Public-Sector Constituency Web Access feature provides instant web access without needing staff to upload to the website.

Each year, thousands of pages are entered in the system. There are more than 10,000 meeting minutes, 4,000 ordinances and 6,500 resolutions. The Public-Sector Constituency Web Access full-text search allows users to enter a keyword and retrieve a list of related documents. The search result will give the user a score along with a sample of text found around the word. Searchers may also make use of Boolean operators and wildcard capabilities.

Contact the City Clerk’s Office if you need any assistance navigating through the full-text search by calling (239) 574-0411.

HR Launches Saba Talent Management System

The Human Resources team has officially launched the Saba Talent Management system. This system is being used to deliver and track training events, facilitate performance reviews and provide a tool for continuous feedback and development. A recruiting module also is currently being developed, which will facilitate the hiring processes.

The system is accessible to all full-time regular employees within the City of Cape Coral. This software will enable the City to provide standardized, trackable training as well as organized and timely performance appraisals. Saba will provide employees with “at a glance” training opportunities and the ability to maximize their potential with development plans and career pathing.

Land Use Development Regulations Rewrite Update

The City’s consultant for rewriting the Land Use Development Regulations, Calvin Giordano & Associates, is continuing the task of drafting the comprehensive rewrite of our land use (zoning) regulations. The first sections dealing with Floodplain Management Regulations and Nonconformities were presented to the Planning and Zoning Commission at their August meeting. Additional sections will be scheduled for review this fall.
Cape Coral Remains 2nd Safest City in Florida

Cape Coral maintained its ranking as the 2nd safest city in the state of Florida in 2016 based on the official statistics provided by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

Cape Coral did experience an increase in violent crime of 12 percent. The increase was a result of violent crime incidents rising from 200 total incidents in 2015 to 224 total incidents in 2016. Non-violent crime declined by 1.8 percent, dropping from 3,136 incidents in 2015 to 3,081 in 2016.

“Despite the increase in violent crimes for 2016, Cape Coral is down in violent crime by 6.7 percent over the last two years and is the safest city in Florida for violent crime relative to its population,” said Police Chief Dave Newlan.

Total crime incidents, including violent crime and property crimes, decreased year over year by 0.9 percent from 3,336 to 3,305.

Index Crime Rate Decreased

The overall Index Crime Rate for Cape Coral decreased by 3.2 percent. The “Index Crime Rate” is calculated for the number of Part I crimes per 100,000 residents. Part I Crimes include: Murder, Sex Offenses, Aggravated Assault, Robbery, Burglary, Larceny, and Motor Vehicle Thefts.

“I’m proud of all of our Police Department personnel who work hard to keep crime low and make Cape Coral a safe place to live,” said Chief Newlan. “Our partnership with our citizens is an enormous help toward this goal, and we will continue to work with the community to improve in 2017.”

FY2017 Road Paving Plan Underway

About 155 lane miles of major and local roads to be resurfaced

The City’s Public Works Department recently began the FY2017 Major and Local Road Paving projects. Community Asphalt Corporation is resurfacing 155 lane miles of major and local roads, and the work should be complete by January 2018.

Major Roads

- Durden Parkway – west from Old Burnt Store Road to Burnt Store Road
- Old Burnt Store Road – from Caloosa Parkway to the north end of pavement
- Kismet Parkway – from Old Burnt Store Road to the west end of pavement
- Embers Parkway – from El Dorado Boulevard to Chiquita Boulevard
- Four Mile Cove – from Del Prado Boulevard to the extension
- Archer Parkway – from Kamal Parkway to Shelby Parkway
- Skyline Boulevard – from Cape Coral Parkway to Gleason Parkway
- Cape Coral Parkway – from Santa Barbara Boulevard to Chiquita Boulevard
- SE 24th Avenue – from Viscaya Parkway to Rosen Park/SE 15th Terrace

Local Roads

- Residential streets bounded by Del Prado Boulevard east to Caloosahatchee River between Coral Pointe Drive and Veterans Parkway
- Residential streets bounded by Del Prado Boulevard east to Caloosahatchee River between SE 40th Terrace and SE 46th Street
- Residential streets bounded by Del Prado Boulevard west toward Rubicon Canal between Everest Parkway and Shelby Parkway
- Residential streets bounded by Skyline Boulevard, Gleason Parkway SW 2nd Avenue and SW 47th Street

Extra Caution for Manhole Covers

Crews will be raising the elevations of the manhole covers as early as three weeks prior to the paving operations. This is a necessary step in the paving process. The City asks residents to use extra caution when maneuvering around these manholes.

The City’s Five-Year Paving Plan for Local and Major Roads is updated each year as staff evaluates the pavement condition of the roads throughout the City and estimates paving costs. A map is available on the Public Works page of the City’s website: www.capecoral.net.
Cape Coral Fire Department Presents Annual Awards

At the Cape Coral Fire Department’s annual Ceremony of Recognition, new hires, promotions and retirees are recognized. Three major awards also are given during this ceremony: Probationary Firefighter of the Year, Paramedic of the Year and Firefighter of the Year.

Firefighter Daniel Rouah was selected as the 2016 Probationary Firefighter of the Year due to his conscientiousness, dependability, and initiative. In his short time with the department, Firefighter Rouah, among other accomplishments, has become a CPR instructor and a hazardous materials technician. He has completed all requirements to be an acting Fire Engineer/Driver, received two Phoenix Awards, and was elected to the Cape Coral Professional Firefighters Local 2424 board as a shift representative. Additionally, he currently is taking classes to obtain his Fire Officer 1 certification. Firefighter Rouah has excelled in his response to emergency calls, which include traffic accidents, residential structure fires, and the first arriving engine at the Sun Splash fire.

Firefighter Jean Etcheverry received the 2016 Paramedic of the Year award. His efforts have increased the level of care provided by all ranks of the department for the residents and visitors of Cape Coral. He regularly goes above and beyond what is expected. He recently completed his Bachelor’s degree and attended a world-renowned medical conference and a training program on active shooter incidents, both while off duty. The knowledge he gained benefited the public at a motorcycle accident where the rider lost his leg and in the treatment of a patient who sustained two gunshot wounds. He has assisted with implementing an active shooter program that has been adopted by our police, fire and EMS departments. Not only has he accomplished all of the above in the last year, but he also delivered a healthy baby boy at a resident’s home in a bedroom with no light except that which was provided by a cell phone.

Firefighter of the Year for 2016 was awarded to two firefighters, Firefighter Chad Johnson and Firefighter Trevor Gant, for their actions at a residential structure fire. The call for this fire came in at 2:58 a.m. When they arrived on scene, they saw Cape Coral Police Department officers waving them over. They learned from these officers that someone was still in the house. The two firefighters entered the residence through a rear bedroom window and located the victim who was bedridden due to a medical condition. Using teamwork, they transferred the patient out the bedroom window to the officers. After the rescue, these firefighters continued to assist the other crews with fighting the fire. Though the victim whom the firefighters rescued required medical care, his life was saved thanks to their efforts. Two small dogs also were rescued from this fire, and two other residents were able to escape on their own. A tragic outcome from this fire was prevented thanks to the teamwork between the Cape Coral Police Department, Lee County EMS and the Cape Coral Fire Department, and particularly Firefighters Johnson and Gant.

Tiny Houses in Cape Coral?

Council asks staff to evaluate options for building “tiny houses”

At the Committee of the Whole meeting in May, City Council and City staff discussed the topic of “tiny houses” in Cape Coral. The general consensus was the City would evaluate the process and parameters that would be necessary to move forward with this type of housing. One specific parameter would require tiny homes to be clustered together in a “tiny home” community setting with appropriate buffers. They would not be allowed in existing single-family residential areas.

Staff is continuing the research and will draft regulations, which will need to be in place and included in the overall update of the land use regulations.
Cape Councilmember Jim Burch Receives “Home Rule” Hero Award Again

Councilmember has been recognized by Florida League of Cities all four years of term

District #1 Councilmember Jim Burch was recognized by the Florida League of Cities with their 2017 “Home Rule Hero” award. The FLC recognized 70 city officials in 2017. Councilmember Burch has received the award every year of his term as a city council member.

“I have been fortunate to receive the award for an unprecedented four years in a row thanks to the support of City Council and staff,” said Councilmember Burch. “There is a major inclination to minimize home rule authority by the State Legislature, and we have positioned ourselves to take on the challenge to protect that authority.”

“Our Home Rule Heroes are shining examples of local advocacy in action,” said Boca Raton Mayor and Florida League of Cities President Susan Haynie. “These dedicated municipal officials take time out of their busy schedules to cultivate relationships with their legislators and help them understand the issues that are most important to their constituents back home.”

Councilmember Burch continued to advocate on behalf of Cape Coral and other pre-platted communities.

Cape Councilmember Jim Burch Receives “Home Rule” Hero Award Again

Environmental Resources Offering Free Environmental Class

Do you live on a freshwater canal? Have you ever wondered what those aquatic plants you see are? Are you new to the area and interested in learning about what’s growing in the canals of Cape Coral?

Biologists with the City of Cape Coral and scientists from Lee County Hyacinth Control will host a free class on how to identify some of the common plants seen in our freshwater canals. The class is November 3 from 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at Rotary Park Environmental Center, 5505 Rose Garden Road.

This free educational class will include information on nutrients and stormwater, and will provide a hands-on opportunity to check out local aquatic plants up close.

For more information, call the City’s Environmental Resources Division at (239) 574-0785.

Parks Director Steve Pohlman Retires

Cape Coral Parks & Recreation Director Steve Pohlman retired from the City effective August 31.

“Steve Pohlman served as Cape Coral’s Parks & Recreation director for 18½ years,” said Szerlag. “Many major accomplishments in quality of life areas are attributed directly to the efforts of Mr. Pohlman and his desire to make Cape Coral a better city.”

City Manager John Szerlag has appointed Parks Superintendent Kerry Runyon as Acting Parks & Recreation Director until the position is filled on a full-time basis. Szerlag intends to conduct a national search for a new director.

Special Event Season Returns

Cape Coral Parks and Recreation is proud to kick off another amazing event season in October with the return of “Movies in the Park.” On Saturday, October 7 enjoy a free night out with the family and catch the new “Ghostbusters” movie at Jaycee Park on a giant inflatable movie screen starting at dusk. Get there early for the best seat. Plan to pack lawn chairs or blankets and enjoy a fun night under the stars. The Parks and Recreation Department is hosting five movie dates this season. Check the Parks and Recreation website for upcoming movies and park locations.

October also brings the start of the Cape Bike Night season. Bike Night is a crowd pleaser for all with live entertainment on two stages, more than 80 vendors, giveaways and the Slow Bike Races. Join us for the first Cape Bike Night of the season on Saturday, October 14 from 5-10 p.m. on 47th Terrace in downtown Cape Coral.

The 20th Annual Fall Kid’s Fest returns to Lake Kennedy Community Park next to Sun Splash on Saturday, October 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring the family and enjoy stage entertainment, giveaways, inflatable rides, interactive experiences, craft and food vendors, face painting, pony rides and firetrucks.

For more information about Cape Coral events visit CapeParks.com.

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For more information about Cape Coral events visit CapeParks.com.
$300,000 renovation project was completed this summer at Coral Oaks Golf Course. All 18 holes and practice putting surfaces on the golf course have been upgraded with TifEagle bermuda grass and are scheduled to be open by October 1. Minor renovations were made to Knickers Pub, a new air conditioning system was installed and the ceiling was replaced. The money was also used for landscaping and trees. New GPS-enabled golf carts will be added in the fall.

The Arthur Hills designed championship course boasts eight lakes and 37 bunkers making it entertaining and challenging for golfers of all skill levels. The course hosts several popular programs and events. The Cape Coral Junior Golf Association's Junior Golf Program at Coral Oaks Golf Course completed its 29th year this summer. Two-hundred and forty kids participated in the summer long program, which was made possible by more than 70 volunteers.

Golfers are invited to register for the 2017 RE/MAX Realty Team Cape Coral City Championship golf tournament at Coral Oaks Golf Course the weekend of October 21-22. As in previous years, competitors will vie for the lowest score in a 36-hole stroke play format consisting of five men’s flights and a ladies’ division. The entry fee is $150 per person and includes all green and cart fees, range balls, a tee gift for each golfer, lunch on Saturday, an awards banquet on Sunday, trophies for the top finishers, plus admission to Friday evening’s kickoff party. Tournament rules, packets and tee gifts will be distributed during the kickoff party.

Golfers who wish to only play in the Kickoff Pro-Am event on Friday in addition to the weekend tournament will receive a special discounted entry fee of $240.
Environmental Recreation / Fall Wildlife Viewing

Are you interested in getting close to nature this fall? Visit the butterfly house at Rotary Park, donated by the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, to see all the native butterflies! Butterflies are not only beautiful to observe but their life cycle, from egg to butterfly, is an interesting undertaking. All stages of their life cycle can be viewed at the butterfly house. Free tours are available Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. year-round. See native Florida butterflies in the butterfly house during a tour or find them flying freely in the Rotary Park gardens anytime.

Rotary Park is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail and there are many birds to see, so be sure to bring your binoculars and field guide when exploring this beautiful park. Possible sightings include song birds, wading birds and raptors. In addition, rare migratory species typically start arriving at the park during the first weather change to spend some time filling their bellies in the park’s plentiful gardens. Visit park staff for recommendations on what to plant in your yard to attract birds and butterflies.

Nature of Cape Coral Bus Tours, hosted by the Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife, begin in October. The bus tour visits multiple sites to view burrowing owls, manatees, scrub jays, wading birds and more. Call Rotary Park for dates and times. The Rotary Park Environmental Center is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily and is closed on Sundays. Call (239) 549-4606 to tour the butterfly house or to register for a butterfly gardening class.

Celebrate the Holidays at Cultural Park

The public is invited to “Celebrate the Holidays at Cultural Park” on Saturday, December 9 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 528 Cultural Park Boulevard. The hosts of this inaugural event are the Cape Coral Historical Society & Museum, Cultural Park Theatre and Cape Coral Art League.

The celebration is a triple open house at all three facilities featuring music and good cheer. Guests will be entertained by carolers from local schools, holiday decorations and Santa’s arrival by a fire truck. Attendees are asked to bring a nonperishable food item for the Cape Coral Caring Center’s “Holiday Food Drive.”

For more information, visit the Cape Coral Historical Museum website at www.capecoralhistoricalmuseum.org.

New Software Allows Easier, Faster Access to Public Records

To enhance transparency for the public, the City recently launched GovQA software. This cloud solution will help the City track records requests across multiple departments, standardize records processing and fulfill requests in a timely manner.

With this easily accessible web portal, the public can be sure they are receiving complete and accurate records in a reasonable timeframe. GovQA allows the requester to submit a new request, track the progress and receive updates by email. The requester can also read any correspondence or notes about specific requests and download electronic records deliverables.

Requesters can continue to contact City officials in person, in writing, over the phone or by email, but the requests will be tracked internally through the new cloud service. The requester can remain anonymous. Frequent requesters, such as reporters and attorneys, may find it more useful to set up an account.

Frequently requested documents will be added to an online repository for quick retrieval without the need for an official request.

Public records requests can be submitted online at www.capecoral.net.
Galvanized Pipe Replacement Program Moves to Section 2A

When the first water lines were installed in the city, contractors installed 2-inch galvanized pipe along certain streets and generally in the last 300 – 500 feet of the numerous cul-de-sacs. After many years of use, this pipe is showing its age. The galvanized pipe is especially susceptible to leaks and, in some cases, has difficulty supplying the desired water pressure and flow to residents along the affected streets.

The City has been working to remedy the situation and to date has completed upgrades in four sections of the Cape. At the beginning of August, the City began work on Galvanized Pipe Replacement Program Section 2A. Section 2A basically encompasses the area bounded on the west by Del Prado Boulevard South; on the south by the Plato Canal, on the north by the Moody Canal; and, on the east by the Caloosahatchee River.

The Section 2A project has an overall estimated construction cost of about $2.46 million and is considered a maintenance and upgrade project and is funded as a capital improvement project. The affected property owners are not assessed for these improvements. This project will replace 18,240 linear feet of galvanized and/or undersized water pipe with new, 6-inch ductile iron and/or PVC waterline. The project also includes the replacement of 445 residential services along with numerous valves and assorted fittings. As part of the project, 34 fire hydrants are being upgraded and another 35 new fire hydrants are being installed to enhance available fire protection. Areas that are disturbed during the installation of the new pipe line will be restored to closely match the existing lawn.

Before the project begins, the street will be videoed to ensure the system will withstand the daily operating line pressures when placed in operation. After the new line passes the pressure test, the line is chlorinated to destroy any bacteria. This is followed by a series of bacteria tests to ensure the new line is safe for potable water usage.

While all this work is underway, the existing water line remains in service. The pipe replacement project should take about a year to complete. Customers should experience an increase in flow and sustained water pressure as a result of the new water lines. The new waterlines have less leaks to repair and less loss of water, which saves money in the Water & Sewer Fund. This helps keep water rates stable.
Cape Coral Animal Shelter Continues Moving Forward

The Cape Coral Animal Shelter (CCAS) organization is making progress in its efforts to build a new No-Kill shelter with veterinary clinic in Cape Coral. The possibilities are endless to save 40,000+ animals over a 20-year span. To date, nearly $1.4 million has been raised in donations and capital campaign pledges. The target goal is $2.2 million, and organizers hope to begin construction this winter with the grand opening in the spring 2018. The future location of the Cape Coral Animal Shelter will be 325 SW 2nd Avenue, just north of Lake Kennedy.

Building plans are underway and moving through proper channels and phases of the building process. Fundraising efforts include dedicated events and a Capital Campaign aimed to provide a unique opportunity of support for the shelter and create a family legacy. Capital Campaign Naming Rights opportunities are varied ranging from Dog Kennels, Cat Rooms, Tree of Life Family Name Plaques to trees for the Memory Garden and outdoor play areas. These Naming Rights items can be purchased upfront or pledged. Capital Campaign items and donation opportunities can be found on the Cape Coral Animal Shelter website: www.capecoralanimalshelter.com. Another wonderful way to help the shelter is to enroll in the monthly automatic donation program.

Local Cape Coral businesses are hosting special dog house donation boxes throughout the city. Contributions go a long way in helping the CCAS organization build a much-needed shelter for homeless and in need pets.

UPCOMING EVENTS

✱ October: Weekly Saturday Yappy Hour at Cape Harbor: Downtown Farmers Market at Club Square & Surfside Sunset Market at The Shops at Surfside
✱ November 18: Cape Coral Animal Shelter 1st Annual Golf Classic - “Fore the Cape Coral Animal Shelter”: Being held at Coral Oaks Golf Course, Cape Coral 8:30 a.m. shot gun start. All team registration and sponsorship opportunities details can be found on www.capecoralanimalshelter.com
✱ December 9: Mutt Strut/5k – Details to come.

For more information on the Cape Coral Animal Shelter, including upcoming events and fundraising activities, visit the website: www.capecoralanimalshelter.com. The Cape Coral Animal Shelter is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Construction to Begin Soon on North 2 Utilities Extension

Construction is expected to start soon on the North 2 project for the extension of water, sewer and irrigation, storm drainage improvements and new roads. Information packets have been mailed to each property owner that includes property assessment costs for each utility, the project schedule and frequently asked questions.

In July, the City held a public meeting to provide construction project information and to answer any questions from property owners and the Northwest Neighborhood Association related to the various aspects of the project. The Utilities Extension Project website was updated based on questions and concerns that were discussed at the meeting. In August, City Council approved the final water, sewer and irrigation assessment resolutions and the

Arts Studio to Host “Aquarium” Exhibit and Array of Fall Happenings

Pounce into the 25th annual “Aquarium” exhibit at the Cape Coral Arts Studio. This unique and dramatic gallery exhibit depicts life beneath the waves, whether real or imaginary, realistic or abstract. Special lighting and sound effects make this exhibit unusual and mood altering. The “Aquarium 2017” exhibit will be on display from September 1-28 and a reception will be held to meet the artists on Friday, September 8 from 5-7 p.m. The reception and the exhibit are free and open to the public.

Upcoming exhibits at the Arts Studio include:

- October: “Small Scale Work” by Alicia Schmidt
- November: “Terry Lynn Spry and her Students”

The fall session of classes begins the week of October 2, at the Cape Coral Arts Studio. Register early because classes fill up. Classes meet weekly for seven weeks. There are a variety of adult classes for all skill levels including: mosaics, painting, pottery, glass, jewelry, beading, drawing, stone sculpture, stained glass and more. The facility has classes for kids including; clay, cartooning, draw/paint, polymer clay and more. The Arts Studio also offers a full mini class session, which meets for five weeks and begins the week of November 27.

In addition to classes, the Cape Coral Arts Studio 27th annual holiday art sale, “Holly Daze”, will take place from December 1-22. This event is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily and is closed on Sundays. The holiday art sale features handcrafted, affordably priced, fine arts and fine craft work created by the Arts Studio’s instructors, students and friends. One-of-a-kind pottery works, fused glass, jewelry and holiday items can be purchased. “Holly Daze” is free and open to the public.

The Arts Studio is located at 4533 Coronado Pkwy in Rubicon Park. Register online at www.capeparks.com, where you can find class descriptions, material lists and fees. Feel free to stop by the Arts Studio, call (239) 574-0802 or email swilkins@capecoral.net for any questions concerning exhibits, events or classes.

City Council Continues Five-Year Plan for Establishing Stormwater Rates

Second year of plan raises stormwater fee to $111 for FY 2018

In 2016, City staff presented the CDM Smith Rate Study for the stormwater fee to City Council. The study recommended a stepped approach to increasing the stormwater fee to maintain the sustainability of the Stormwater Fund. Council approved a five-year plan that would increase the fee from the current rate to $111 for FY 2018.

The City’s stormwater fee had remained at $75 for many years until a modest increase was approved in 2015 raising the rate to $80. The CDM Smith Rate Study detailed the dire financial situation with the Stormwater Fund, which was close to exhausting its fund balance. Rate increases were necessary to maintain the level of stormwater management required for a 120-square-mile city.

The stormwater fee is scheduled to increase to $115 in FY 2019, $119 in FY 2020 and $125 in FY 2021.
Cape Coral’s Cost of Government Compares Favorably to Other Florida Cities

Residents can use Munetrix web-based benchmarking tool to compare costs

As City Council finalizes the FY 2018 Operating Budget for Cape Coral, one of the main goals is to make sure Cape Coral remains one of the most affordable cities in Florida. At the same time, it is important to provide good service levels to the citizens. For the past four years, City Council and City administration have worked together to keep costs low and provide quality services to the community.

Cape Coral residents can compare Cape Coral’s financial positions with other Florida cities using Munetrix. The Munetrix web-based system uses the audited financial data submitted on an annual basis by each municipality to the State of Florida. The latest data available is for FY 2015.

These financial comparisons show Cape Coral is one of the most affordable cities in Florida. Cape Coral was 6th lowest in spending per capita for all funds within our 15-city regional planning area. The five cities in the area that ranked lower than Cape Coral are not full-service cities – they do not provide all public safety services. In addition, Cape Coral ranked 6th in spending per capita when compared to nine other Florida cities with populations over 100,000.

To access Munetrix, go to the City’s home page at www.capecoral.net. Click on the “Open Government” link under the “Government” dropdown menu. Click on “Municipal Benchmarks” to view Cape Coral’s benchmarking information.

City Completes Yacht Club and Other Park Improvements

Numerous improvements were recently completed at the Yacht Club Community Park and other parks in the city. The Yacht Club was built in 1958 and is one of the original landmarks of the city. The park’s pavilion building is an original structure that was built to provide a meeting and recreation place for residents and visitors to the new city. The building features glass walls on the north and south sides and wooden buttress beams that support that structure. A smaller adjacent building, the Tony Rotino Center, has a similar design and is utilized mainly for planned activities.

Improvements were necessary for safety reasons due to 60 years of sun, rain and nearly constant use. The aging wooden exterior surfaces were allowing water and fungus intrusion, which created the perfect environment for insects and wood rot. The beams were at risk of losing their structural integrity without timely improvements. After research and careful cost analysis by Public Works staff, the soft wood was removed and/or replaced with a special epoxy material, voids in the beams were filled with anti-fungal hardeners, fiberglass rebar was incorporated for added strength and remaining wood was treated. Due to the red color of the epoxy and the significant number of repairs, the beams were stained red to provide a uniform appearance.

In addition to structural beam improvements, minor repairs and staining were also made to the remaining exterior wood surfaces of the pavilion building and the Rotino Center. Other improvements to the Yacht Club Community Park are scheduled for later this year including; new gutters, acid washing of copper surfaces and pressure washing the roof.

Below are some of the recent improvements that have been completed in area parks:
• Strausser BMX Sports Complex: Paved concession stand area
• Rotary Park: Repaved exercise stations and roadway improvements
• Repainted the “Welcome to Cape Coral” sign on Hancock Bridge Parkway
• Special Populations: Parking lot repairs
• Cultural Park: Parking lot sealcoating and striping
• Joe Stonis Park: Horseshoe area metal shelter improvements
• Founders Park: Walking path resurfaced; Metal shelter improvements
• Lake Kennedy Senior Center: Newly paved walkway.

Sun Splash Wraps Up 2017 Season

The Sun Splash Family Waterpark thanks all guests that visited the waterpark and helped to celebrate its 25th season. Sun Splash is the perfect place to mix both value and family-fun while being protected by the park’s award-winning lifeguards. The staff at Sun Splash Waterpark received a five-star safety rating from Starfish Aquatics Institute. This prestigious recognition is the highest rating awarded by the Institute.

The 2017 waterpark season highlights included the Mother’s and Father’s Day weekend specials, military discount days and discounted nights. In addition, “Slide Nights” were held throughout the summer on alternating Fridays and Saturdays from 5-9 p.m. The most exciting part of the 2017 season was the opening of Pirate’s Cove, the park’s new interactive children’s play structure. Pirate’s Cove features 32 different interactive play features. Both children and adults enjoyed this new addition to the waterpark.

In 2016, the main building of the waterpark that housed guest relations, the Calypso Café and Treasure Trove Gift Shop, was destroyed by a fire. The building was a total loss and staff have been operating out of temporary structures ever since. The new permanent building is expected to open for the 2018 season.

Although the season is wrapping up, there is still some time to slide into fun at Sun Splash. The waterpark is only open weekends from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. through September 24. Stop by cool off and enjoy the late-season specials. Visit www.SunSplashWaterpark.com to learn about special events and discounts and to register to receive free e-mail updates. Also, follow Sun Splash on Facebook and Twitter, or call (239) 574-0558.
Nor-Tech Hi-Performance Boats to Locate World Headquarters in Cape Coral

Nor-Tech will be establishing their world headquarters in Cape Coral as a result of a new expansion effort. Nor-Tech will be building a new 45,000 square foot building in the North Cape Industrial Park. Between land, construction and equipment costs, Nor-Tech expects to invest almost $3 million in Cape Coral.

The project is particularly important to the Cape as it brings new jobs and investment into Cape Coral. The job creation component is exciting as up to 150 new jobs may be created. Up to 80 of those jobs will be at an average wage of $45,000. All of this is in addition to their existing facility in North Ft. Myers, which has 135 existing employees.

To help facilitate the project, City Council approved a job-based incentive in support of the new investment and job creation effort. The maximum incentive will not exceed $120,000 over a three-year timeframe as Nor-Tech expands their Cape Coral operations, moves their world headquarters here and creates the new jobs. The incentive will only be paid out if the jobs are created at a certain wage rate.

Parks Project Update

During the off season, Cape Coral’s Parks and Recreation maintenance staff have been busy with a number of exciting projects. The fitness trail at the entrance to Lake Kennedy Community Park recently received new fitness equipment and has been selected by Playcore as a “National Demonstration Site for Adult Outdoor Fitness”. The equipment that was selected provides a full body workout.

In addition, the playground surface at Jim Jeffers Park was recently replaced with X-grass, which is a synthetic material. Park pavilions throughout the city were repaired and painted for a fresh look including; Cape Coral Sports Complex, Burton Park, Storm Football Complex, Camelot Park, Jim Jeffers Park and Joe Stonis Park. The Veterans Park bocce pavilion columns were also renovated and painted. Several parking areas at city parks were resurfaced and lined including; Cape Coral Sports Complex, Northwest Softball Complex, Yacht Club Boat Trailer Parking, Koza/Saladino Park, Burton Park, Burnt Store Boat Ramp, Rosen Park, BMX Park and the Lake Kennedy Senior Center. For more information on park projects, visit www.CapeParks.com.

Skate Park Renovations Coming This Fall

There are new and exciting renovations coming to Eagle Skate Park this fall. On July 28, a public meeting was held with the American Ramp Company to get community input on upcoming park changes. The park’s aging wood ramps are going to be replaced with new steel ramps and based on community feedback a solid grey color will be used for the floor. The Skate Park is expected to close for approximately six to eight weeks beginning in late August or early September. A grand reopening event will take place upon completion. For the latest information on closure dates and the status of the renovations, be sure to follow the Skate Park’s Facebook page.
2017 Coconut Festival Coming November 9-12

Cape Coral Parks and Recreation is proud to announce the 11th anniversary of the Cape Coral Coconut Festival at Sun Splash Festival Grounds from November 9-12. The festival is the City’s signature event celebrating friends, family and the community.

Join us on Thursday, November 9 from 5-10 p.m. for a Coconut Festival sneak peek and enjoy food, shows and carnival rides. On Friday, November 10, grab your cowboy hat and boots for “COCO Country” where a national country music star will kick off the festival concerts on the main stage. The sky will light up with a spectacular fireworks show at 9 p.m.

Be prepared to rock n’ roll for “COCO Rock” on Saturday, November 11.

Saturday’s lineup will also feature a national music artist and a fireworks display following the stage entertainment, plus another great day of food and carnival rides. Sunday, November 12 provides another full day of carnival rides and community stage entertainment. Make plans to join the fun this year and get ready to “GO COCO NUTS” in Cape Coral. Over 30,000 people are estimated to attend the City’s largest carnival, concert and entertainment event in Cape Coral. Thank you to Storm Smart, Culver’s, Achieva Credit Union, Dolphin Key Resort, Bruce L. Scheiner Attorneys for the Injured, The Beaches of Fort Myers and Sanibel, Jason’s Deli, Lightning Wireless Solutions, Happenings Magazine, Cat Country 107.1 and The Westin Cape Coral at Marina Village for proudly sponsoring this event. For more information, visit the event website at CocoFest.com or call the Cape Coral Special Events Division at (239) 573-3128.

Economic Development Boosts Business Retention Program

To encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses, the Cape Coral Economic Development Office has increased their efforts. The Business Retention and Expansion program is designed to demonstrate the City’s appreciation for the businesses, and help identify immediate needs and future plans. The program will assist in obtaining data and opportunities the businesses may need that the City or one of its partners may be able to provide.

Economic Development staff will visit businesses and use a business survey process to accumulate baseline data on the company to help track their progress. This data is inputted into a Customer Resource Management program so staff can track changes, input notes and perform follow-up at an agreed upon time with the company.

All of this occurs as a result of a business visit and allows staff to meet with business owners, provide information about available programs and services to the owners, respond to specific requests and learn about business needs, plans, and attitudes of the community through the survey.

If you own a business in Cape Coral and would like to schedule a visit with our staff, please contact Nita Whaley, Business Retention Specialist with the Economic Development Office at (239) 574-0443 or nwhaley@capecoral.net. Reach out today to see what your Cape Coral may be able to do for you.

Cape Coral’s Lot Mowing Program Keeps Overgrowth on Vacant Lots in Check

The City of Cape Coral’s Lot Mowing Program was established in 1971 to provide mowing on all unimproved and certain non-exempt vacant lots, medians and rights of way in the city. This includes easements, alley ways, drainage easements and cul-de-sacs. The program provides benefit to the citizens of Cape Coral by controlling vegetation, growth and vermin habitats.

There are about 60,000 vacant lots on the current program. These lots are cut seven times a year between March and December. Each of the seven mowing cycles are phased to occur every five or six weeks.

Lots are assessed based on the square footage of the parcel. This past year, the City also added trimming around burrowing owl nests as part of the responsibility of the mowing contractors. The fee is collected as a separate non ad valorem assessment on the property tax bill. For FY 2018, the annual lot mowing fees range from $49.62 to $65.54 depending on the location of the lot.

Property owners who have unimproved parcels can elect to opt out of the Lot Mowing Program by contacting the Citizens Action Center (311). If owners opt out, they still will be required to maintain and mow the property.