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Main: Program needs city funds to launch it, says advisory board member

Continued from page 1A

laborate with the entity.

In Apopka, the CRA director position resides within the community development director position. Before his retirement last spring, Jim Hitt, the previous city community development director, also served as the CRA director.

According to Jacob Smith, city administrator, the city is approaching the end of the recruitment process and waiting to hear from the recruiter. The city is also using the job recruiter to find a candidate to fill the community development director position.

In the meantime, the community development director duties are delegated to city planner Bobby Howell, according to Jacob

Smith, city administrator.

Velazquez brought up how before Hitt left, there were approvals of some CRA district projects. According to Radley Williams, city parks and recreation director, two CRA projects have begun: the skate park/pump track, for which its design had begun; and the Downtown Apopka Trail, which went out to bid on Sunday, July 7.

The wayfinding signage is a CRA project too, but public service is handling that, not parks and recreation. The city is finalizing two different contracts for the project, one for the sign itself, and the other for the cement base to install the sign, according to Mayor Bryan Nelson.

Amira Melnichenko, Main Street Apopka

advisory board member, thanked Nesta for bringing up Main Street Apopka “because it’s incredibly important that we get on this budget,” she said.

Melnichenko explained Main Street Apopka has raised money on its own thanks to local sponsors, donations and more, but the bulk of the Main Street Apopka launch would come from the city: “Essentially the big bulk of getting (the Main Street program) started is to get funds from your city. Then after the city funds are in, we can start applying for other grants, show that our community has skin in the game essentially for us to move forward. It’s really important that we get these funds sooner than later. That’s what I’m here to stress.”

Apopka Youth Works program from the finance budget to the mayor’s budget. There was also a slight increase in office supplies, operating supplies, and membership fees for various organizations, Sherman said.

The administrative services budget increased about 2.97 percent, which was primarily related to travel and training for a new city administrator in the amount of \$5,300.

The city’s special assessment budget’s increases were related to the increases in street light fees, repairs, and maintenance for various properties.

In regard to legal services, the city clerk, and the human resource budgets, the city saw some slight increases and decreases, Sherman said.

The city legal services budget increased 44.71 percent because the city has been adding funds to cover legal fees. This is over and above the amount for the salaries and wages for an in-house city attorney. So, the city is adding an additional \$336,000 for that; labor attorney for \$60,000; collective bargaining, \$10,000; and a position recruiter for \$25,000, Sherman said.

The city clerk’s office budget increased about 24.87 percent due to the new staff transferring into that department. Some of the old staff has left the city, Sherman said.

Human resource budget went down 74.07 percent. The city included a 2.7 percent contingency

Administrative budget

The first budget workshop, which occurred on Monday, July 8, covered administrative, legal services, city clerk, human resources, community development, and economic development budget.

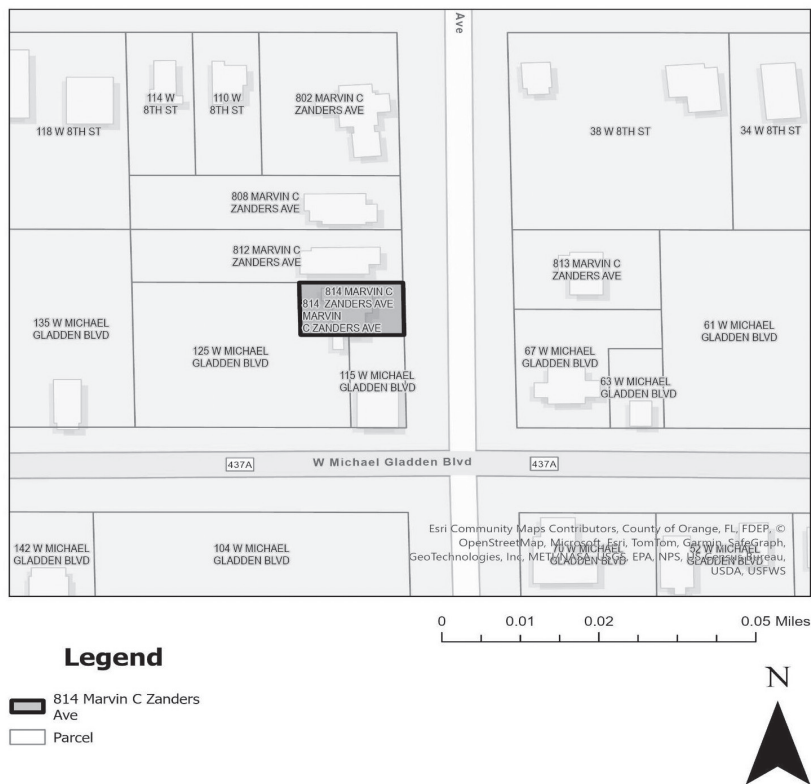
The city administration budget consists of the mayor’s budget, the city administrator, and special assessments. This budget saw an increase of about 1.10 percent overall for special assessments; the mayor’s budget, 8.51 percent; and the city administrator’s budget, 2.97 percent, according to Blanche Sherman, city finance director.

The 8.51 percent increase for the mayor’s budget was primarily due to the transfer of \$42,200 for the

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE SMALL-SCALE FUTURE LAND USE AMENDMENT CITY OF APOPKA

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Secs. 163.3184 and 166.041(3) (c), Florida Statutes and the Apopka Code of Ordinance, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.4.7.B, that **CYNTHIA HENDERSON** has made an application to the City of Apopka Planning Commission and the City Council for a **CHANGE IN THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM COMMERCIAL TO MIXED USE FOR 0.08 +/- ACRES**. This application relates to the following described properties:

ORDINANCE NO. 3056
AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, AMENDING THE FUTURE LAND USE ELEMENT OF THE APOPKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN OF THE CITY OF APOPKA; CHANGING THE FUTURE LAND USE DESIGNATION FROM COMMERCIAL TO MIXED USE FOR CYNTHIA HENDERSON GENERALLY LOCATED NORTH OF E MICHAEL GLADDEN BOULEVARD, OWNED BY CYNTHIA HENDERSON, COMPRISING 0.08 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Numbers: 09-21-28-0196-70-384
Contains: 0.08 +/- acres

NOTICE is given that a public hearing for Ordinance No. 3056 will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meeting in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, August 7, 2024 beginning at 1:30 P.M.** or soon thereafter.

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearing to speak. The proposed Future Land Use Application can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk’s Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka FL 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

Tell them you saw it in
The Apopka Chief

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Byrd: State law requires school districts provide bus transportation

Continued from page 2A

the state is categorized to be spent on certain expenses.

We are required by state law to provide transportation to all students who live more than two miles from their home school, but the funding received from the state covers less than half of what is needed and it is not keeping up with the cost of inflation.

I'm not exaggerating here. Here are the numbers:

*In Fiscal Year 2020, transportation expenses were \$60,815,524, categorical revenue from the state

was \$30,180,510; fifty percent of our costs was covered.

*Fiscal Year 2021, expenses were \$55,603,679, categorical revenue was 30,535,040; 55 percent of our costs was covered.

*Fiscal Year 2022, expenses were \$62,994,571, categorical revenue was \$29,998,479; 48 percent of our costs was covered.

*Fiscal Year 2023, expenses were \$72,381,245, categorical revenue was \$33,624,162; 46 percent of our costs was covered.

*Our fiscal year 2024 budget estimates expenses at \$77,362,898 and our categorical revenue at

\$34,960,759; 45 percent of our costs was covered.

Over the past four years, the cost of providing transportation has increased nearly \$20 million, but funding from the state has only increased by \$5 million over the same time period.

So how do we pay for the rest?

We pay from other parts of our operating budget, which means less money for operating costs that often limits our ability to provide all of the educational options we would like or provide the salaries we would like.

So "pay them more"

is not always as easy as it sounds, though we certainly try. In fact, the district is currently offering numerous bonuses like a \$1,500 perfect attendance bonus, a \$300 safe driver bonus, a sign-on bonus of \$2,000, up to \$9,000 in bonuses for drivers who drive combo routes and a \$300 referral bonus. The district will also pay for a new hire to get their commercial driver's

license training.

As I've shared before, this is just another example of the grossly underfunded public education system in Florida. Education is now only around 40 percent of the state budget where it used to be around 60 percent in 1985. Our public K-12 schools are receiving less of that 40 percent as well with the increase in funding for the

state university system, charter schools, and now homeschooling and private school vouchers.

Remember, there is no state law that requires any of them to provide transportation. That is only applicable to your public K-12 schools. Thus, a private school can use your tax dollars for anything

See BYRD Page 8A

AI: Overhaul of education is necessary

Continued from page 2A

also a worry that educational institutions won't be able to adapt quickly enough to the new tasks workers will perform. As a result, some experts anticipate more companies training their hires on the job.

Many higher education programs would then focus primarily on basic skills like communication and use of technology. As a result, the average time spent in college or university could be reduced to one or two years. But would this limit students' exposure

to broader topics like history and literature, and what would be the consequences?

Of course, most of this discussion is speculative. Still, I think there is a coming overhaul of education and training as a result of the upcoming disruption in the labor market due to technology like AI. Do you think this is the biggest issue facing us in the future, and if so, how should we respond? You decide.

Mike Walden is a Reynolds distinguished professor emeritus at North Carolina State University.

Moore: Maintenance is important

Continued from page 2A

san Branan. They have a gorgeous patriotic eagle carved out of a live oak near the entranceway. Their neighborhood's walls and sidewalks are pressure washed. The entranceway beds contain healthy plants and fresh mulch. The couple is additionally working with neighborhoods along Rose Avenue. Lockhart is a strong contender in 2024.

People of Southern Apopka have held four clean-ups on Sheeler Ave north of Apopka Blvd. Everyone I speak with is impressed with the progress. Trees have been trimmed, hedges cut back, and new sidewalks installed. The

team is led by Pam Welker, Sharon Lust, Justin Dierks, Tracy Hollingsworth, and Dave Durre. Sheeler Avenue and Road is very long. Plus, the Lockhart Team is tough to beat. If you live in this Sheeler Road or southeastern area of Apopka, please call my office at 407.836.5850 or email me at District2@ocfl.net. I will get you in touch with the leaders of POSA.

Heading south, is a mish mash of jurisdictions. I think we need to have the attitude that if it needs fixing – just do it. The three lowest scoring neighborhoods were Royal Oaks, Dunbridge, and Silver Oaks. I would expect the team to focus on

recruiting residents from these three neighborhoods and scheduling clean-ups in September and October. Royal Oaks is likely to take two Saturdays with so much frontage. The railroad section also needs weed-whacking and weed control. Both gas stations need a nudge. Go talk to the managers and tell them about the contest.

Maintenance is the name of the game. The Corridor of the Year Contest is about making maintenance a social, fun, engaging, and rewarding experience. If you like gardening or simply making sure your neighborhood always looks its best – "We Need You!"

Hayden: Our future depends on us

Continued from page 2A

the civil war, right?" I would like to give the young man credit for perhaps thinking about the Emancipation Proclamation, but even if that was his thought, neither one ended the civil war.

It's easy for us to find fault or to make light of situations like that, but that is what America has become. We can't blame anyone else except ourselves for what's going on. Our whole nation has fallen into apathy, and if it doesn't affect us, just let it go. Some of us older folks have decided to check out of the American way of life and let sleeping dogs lie. After all, the dumbing down of America will not have much effect on the rest of our lives. I'm not talking about today's youth. I'm talking about the generation that fought their way through World War II, the Korean war, and the Vietnam War. The generation that wouldn't give up.

Now we want to turn a deaf ear to the demise of our wonderful, exceptional nation. I wish there was a switch I could throw or window I could uncover to let the light shine in and rejuvenate the spirit of American pride that once prevailed in our hearts for the United States of America.

We have allowed *illegal* immigrants to completely inundate our borders and

our border states. Oh, we complain about it, and we want to do something about it, but we don't.

The people that are coming in *illegally* do not care about assimilating into the American way of life – their only concern is what they can get and how much we are willing to change our way of life to be compatible with their lifestyle.

Why should they assimilate? We're willing to bend over backward, and to make sure that they're comfortable with clothing, food, exceptional housing, and enough money to make sure they have their needs met.

This is not immigration. In any other nation it would be called an invasion! Where are the voices of the taxpayers that are footing the bill? Our culture is being homogenized with all of the other cultures coming across our border. Our teachers can't teach, our law enforcement can't enforce the law, and we are subjected to television advertisements and announcements that are given in a foreign language.

I do not run into many *illegal* aliens because they are living a lifestyle I cannot afford. When I come across someone that can't speak English, I tell them to get a translator, as I am not going to learn a foreign language to make someone comfortable in my nation with their culture!

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE ANNEXATION CITY OF APOPKA

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Florida Statutes 171.044, the Apopka Code of Ordinances, Part III, Land Development Code, Article II, Section 2.5.1.A, that **APPIAN ENGINEERING, INC. C/O LUKE M. CLASSON, P.E.** has made an application to the City of Apopka City Council for an **ANNEXATION** of a property located on the southwest corner of Ondich Road and Effie Drive. This application relates to the following described property:

ORDINANCE NO. 3066

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF APOPKA, FLORIDA, TO EXTEND ITS TERRITORIAL AND MUNICIPAL LIMITS TO ANNEX PURSUANT TO FLORIDA STATUTE 171.044 THE HEREINAFTER DESCRIBED LANDS SITUATED AND BEING IN ORANGE COUNTY, FLORIDA, OWNED BY PM S-1 REO, LLC; LOCATED ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF ONDICH ROAD AND EFFIE DRIVE; COMPRISING 54.85 ACRES, MORE OR LESS; PROVIDING FOR DIRECTIONS TO THE CITY CLERK, SEVERABILITY, CONFLICTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



Parcel Identification Number(s): 11-20-27-0000-00-037, 11-20-27-0000-00-069, 12-20-27-0000-00-001, 12-20-27-0000-00-012, 12-20-27-0000-00-046, 12-20-27-0000-00-048
Contains: 54.85 +/- acres

NOTICE is given that public hearings for Ordinance No. 3066 will be held by the **City of Apopka City Council** at its regularly scheduled meetings in the City Council Chambers of the Apopka City Hall, 120 E. Main Street, Apopka, Florida on **Wednesday, July 17, 2024 beginning at 7:00 P.M.** and **Wednesday, August 7, 2024 beginning at 1:30 P.M.** or as soon thereafter as possible.

Affected parties and the public may appear at the above listed hearings to speak. The proposed Annexation can be inspected at the Apopka Community Development Department located at Apopka City Hall on weekdays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. City Hall address shown below. Please be advised that, under State law, if you decide to appeal a decision made with respect to this matter, you will need a record of the proceedings and may need to ensure that a verbatim record is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing assistance to participate in any of these proceedings should contact the City Clerk's Office at 120 East Main Street, Apopka FL 32703, Telephone: 407-703-1704, no less than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

Apopka City Council
Apopka Planning Commission
Community Development Department

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The Apopka Chief is a consistent award-winning community weekly newspaper and a member of the Florida Press Association. The newspaper won the group's award as its best newspaper in 1982, 1987, and 1988, the only three-time winner. Letters to the editor are welcome, but must be signed and include a daytime telephone number, address, or email address for verification. Management reserves the right to edit letters.

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City of Apopka Telephone Numbers

City Hall	407-703-1700
Mayor's Office	407-703-1701
City Administrator	407-703-1649
City Clerk	407-703-1704
Community Devel.	407-703-1712
Code Enforcement	407-703-1738
Finance Dept.	407-703-1725
Fire (non-emerg.)	407-703-1756
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-703-1741
Police Chief	407-703-1769
Police (non-emerg.)	407-703-1771
Job Line	407-703-1743
Solid Waste Collect.	407-703-1731
Street Maintenance	407-703-1731
Utility Billing	407-703-1727
Medical, fire emergency	911
The city of Apopka was chartered in 1882. It is located at 28°30 north latitude and is 150 feet above sea level. Its population is about 48,000 and its total area is more than 30 sq. mi. www.apopka.net	

Orange County Telephone Numbers

Animal Services	407-836-3111
Auto/Boat Tags	850-617-2000
Building Dept.	407-836-8550
County Mayor	407-836-7370
County Commission	407-836-7350
County Attorney	407-836-7320
Clerk of the Court	407-836-2065
Elections Supervisor	407-836-2070
Fire/Rescue	407-836-3111
Solid Waste	407-836-6601
Garbage Collection	407-703-1731
Health Dept.	407-836-2600
Hunting/Fishing Lic	888-347-4356
Parks and Rec. Dept.	407-836-6200
Property Appraiser	407-836-5044
Sheriff Administrative	407-254-7000
Non-Emerg. Complaint	407-836-4357
Utilities	407-836-5515
All other departments	407-836-3111
Medical, fire emergency	911
www.orangecountyfl.net	

Other Area Numbers of Note

U.S. Senators	
Rick Scott (Rep.)	202-224-5274
Marco Rubio (Rep.)	407-254-2573
U.S. Representative	
Daniel Webster (Dist. 11)	352-241-9220
State Representatives	
Doug Bankson	407-476-6787
Carolina Amesty (Dist. 45)	unknown
State Senators	
Geraldine Thompson (Dist.11)	407-297-2045
Orange County Commissioner	
Christine Moore	407-836-7350
Orange County Public Schools	
Pupil assignment	407-317-3233
Bus routes	407-317-3800
Superintendent	407-317-3200
School Board	407-317-3200
Miscellaneous	
The Apopka Chief	407-886-2777
Museum of the Apopkans	407-703-1707
Chamber of Commerce	407-886-1441