

Spring Lake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Board Update

Bill Lawens, Chairman

As this issue of The Breeze will point out, there has been a tremendous amount of activity in our District. The recently completed Storm Water Treatment Area (STA) is one of the largest in Central Florida and will benefit Spring Lake for generations to come. After several months of delay, the Board was finally able to approve an ECO Park in the STA that will provide recreation activities for everyone. The pump station is going thru major renovation, and when three of our pumps had to be removed for repairs we were fortunate to receive \$194,000 from our insurance carrier, Preferred Government Insurance Trust, in spite of the fact the pumps were over 40 years old! The Legislature has also appropriated \$500,000 towards the pump station repairs, which are now in progress.

The District staff has been very aggressive in seeking grants and no interest loans towards the projects we are working on. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has given us \$1,248,000; the Florida Legislature has provided \$916,000; South Florida Water Management District has a \$200,000 grant pending; and the State Revolving Fund has provided a \$1.8 million 30 year no interest loan. Without these grants and loans our residents would have been burdened with excessive tax increases.

Another opportunity that we are currently working on is a \$750,000 Legislative Appropriation to extend sewer lines down Rt. 98 to foster development. Along with the new sewer plant, our District is positioned to be a prime area for future growth and development. The County Commissioners and staff have been very supportive in this and other endeavors in our community. They know that improvements in Spring Lake benefit the entire County.

Spring Lake has come a very long way in the last several years and it is an honor to be the Chairman of the Board and I am proud of the accomplishments we have achieved. During the ECO Park controversy many residents came to our Board meetings to voice their opinions. It would be nice to have more residents attend our meetings not only when there is controversy, but at other times as well. Your thoughts and opinions are valued and needed.



Pictured left to right: Brian Acker, Leon Van, Tim McKenna, Bill Lawens, Gary Behrendt

Assessments

One of the most frequently asked questions we get at the District relates to assessments. Unlike the taxes you pay to the County, which are based on the value of your house (ad valorem taxes), the District has non ad-valorem taxes. Simply put, the cost to operate and provide services to the District thru our General Fund is divided by the number of taxable units, which for fiscal year 2017 are 3,730. The General Fund consists of general government expenses, drainage, parks, street lights, and mosquito control. The General Fund budget for FY 2017 is \$1,229,893, a slight decrease from the previous year.

The water department, waste water department, and lot mowing are in what are called Enterprise Funds. Only users of these services pay fees. The total budgets for these funds are approximately \$1.2 million. Again, only users pay for these services.

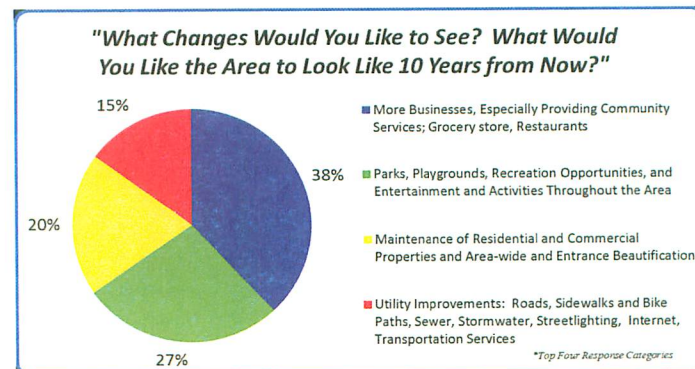
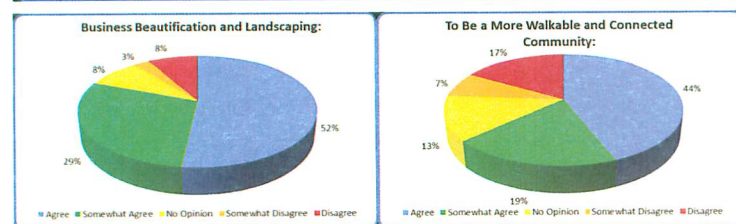
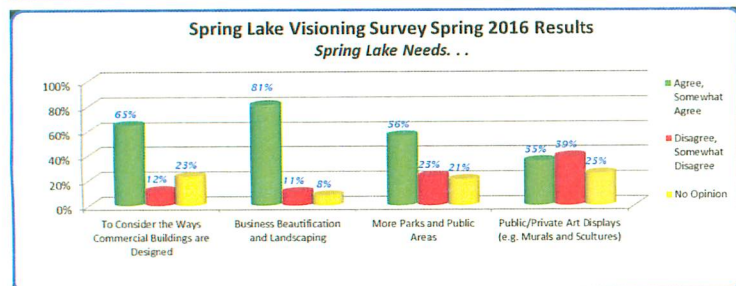
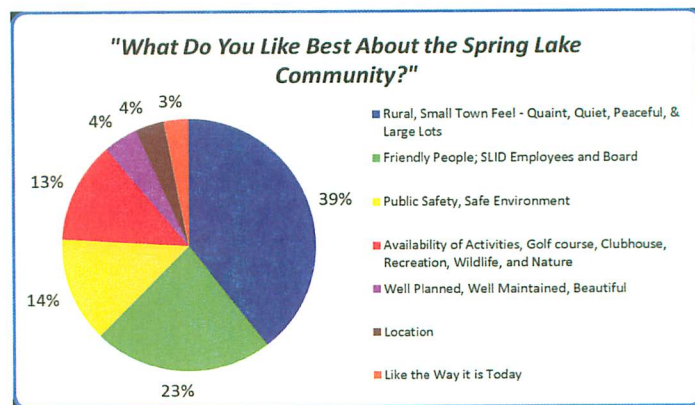
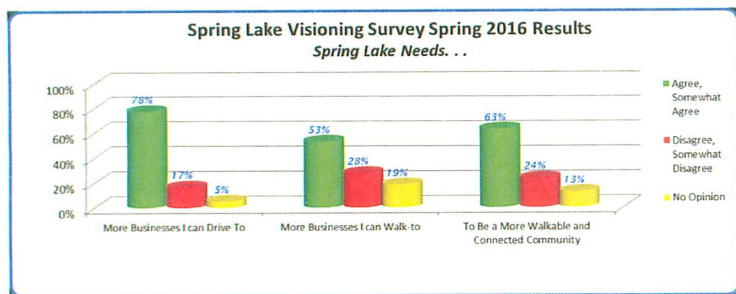
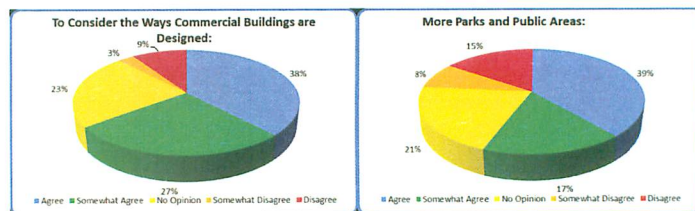
The District Board approves the annual budget and District staff is diligent in making sure we stay within budget and maintain Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness. This assessment history of taxes you pay to the District clearly shows our system works:

• 2010	\$303.91	• 2013	312.27	• 2016	299.52
• 2011	302.83	• 2014	291.86	• 2017	299.78
• 2012	302.76	• 2015	299.78		

Bits and Pieces

- Congratulations to Field Foreman Randy Nelson for 25 years of service to the District. Randy came to Spring Lake right out of High School and has performed just about every Field function the District has. Randy can often be seen on our heavy equipment cleaning out the ponds, lakes, and drainage ditches throughout the District. He is a most valued employee with numerous certificates and licenses including storm water, aquatics, mosquito, and water distribution. Randy and his wife Aimee, who is a nurse, have three children. He loves his fishing and hunting and raises chickens and other animals on his home site.
- Duke Energy has gone mobile and will send out text alerts to customers of a power outage and, if necessary, remind customers to pay their bill. Customers can sign up and manage contact information online at duke-energy.com/outagealerts, or can text "REG" to the number 57801 to receive outage alerts by text message.
- Highlands County has announced the new Waste and Recyclable schedule. According to Choice, Spring Lake pick-up will be on Fridays. For a complete description of the program you can go to HighlandsTransition.com
- Be sure to visit the District's web site at SpringLakeFL.com and register for the e-mail list so that you can receive important notices from the District. E-mail blasts are infrequent and contain only information that is important to you as a resident. There are currently 867 residents registered on our e-mail program. You can opt out at any time.
- The Little Free Libraries are working quite well; a big thanks to Sam Heede and her volunteers who oversee and manage the convenient book depositories.

Working in partnership with the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Highlands County Planning Department, our District is planning for the future development and growth of our community. The ECO Park that is being constructed at the Storm Water Treatment Area in the back of Duane Palmer Blvd. is an example of a positive response to our residents' needs and wants. Over the course of this year the District Board will be looking at a number of projects that will impact all of us. You are urged to attend District meetings or share your thoughts and opinions by writing or e-mailing the District.





*Gene Schriner, President,
Craig A. Smith & Associates,
Boca Raton, Florida*

Engineer's Report

District's Order to provide the balance of water quality treatment to the District storm water management system as planned and permitted. The facility was constructed on lands that were purchased over several years by the Board, and are located adjacent to the levee and Arbuckle Creek. In spite of many obstacles, complexities, and challenges, this project was constructed within budget, ahead of schedule, and accomplished needed goals and objectives:

- The project, as constructed and completed, satisfied SFWMD compliance concerns regarding the deficiencies of the original storm water system as planned and permitted by the original developer, Westinghouse Corporation. Continued non-compliance would have resulted in fines to the District and disruption in future development plans. The completed STA now ensures compliance protection for generations to come.
- The project provides needed water quality treatment and nutrient reduction while creating an environmentally sound ecological system to enhance the wildlife in the area.
- The project mitigates and re-establishes lost flood plain and provides greater flood protection to all within the pumped area as a result of increased water storage up to 56 million gallons.
- The project provides for economic development opportunities by providing more efficient use of lands north of US 98, including airport property.

A much more detailed description of this project and other District Engineering projects are available for your review on the District Web Site at www.SpringLakeFL.com. Look for the reports on the left hand side of the home page.



District Management

The District Manager is the chief administrative officer of the District, appointed by the Board of Supervisors and responsible for the execution of policies, directives and legislative action of the District as stipulated by the Florida Statutes. The District Manager is responsible for the direction, control and coordination of all activities of the District. The District Manager works in coordination with the District Administrator in the preparation of the annual operating and capital budgets, supervises the expenditure of appropriated funds, is responsible for the employment and discharge of personnel, and ensures that the affairs of the District are conducted in the most efficient and effective manner possible to benefit the property owners of the District. The District Administrators office conducts continuous evaluations of the District's financial operations to help ensure the integrity of the District's financial records through the annual external audit by certified public accountants. The District Manager and the District Administrator also work with other government representatives and staff to achieve the District's objectives and promote constructive relationships for the benefit of the District and its property owners.

General Fund Budget

	FY 2016	Increase Decrease	FY 2017
Income			
Tax Assessments	11,31,441	-6,990	1,124,451
Billing	97,235	-2,497	94,738
Other Revenue Sources	<u>31,190</u>	<u>-23,000</u>	<u>8,190</u>
Total Income	<u>1,259,866</u>	<u>-32,487</u>	<u>1,227,379</u>
Expenses			
Personnel	426,157	-7,828	418,329
Management	135,830	-16,850	118,980
Fees	62,600	-500	62,100
Operating	272,280	-14,175	258,105
Maintenance	36,900	-1,500	35,400
Capital Outlay	38,000	-20,000	18,000
Debt Service	112,000	-26,777	85,223
Other	<u>176,100</u>	<u>55,142</u>	<u>231,242</u>
Total Expenses	<u>1,259,867</u>	<u>-32,488</u>	<u>1,227,379</u>

SPRING LAKE

IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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Project Updates

PUMP STATION: Thanks to the \$500,000 Legislative Appropriation spearheaded by Senator Grimsley and Representative Pigman we are making headway in upgrading our 40 year old pump station. All pumps and motors have been repaired and renovated and the District is still securing bids for the new electrical system and repairing the intake and outlet pipes. All work should be completed by the summer.



WASTE WATER PLANT: The Board has approved the scope of work for the Engineer, and design of the plant is in process. The State Revolving Fund has allocated \$215,000 for this Engineering phase, and we anticipate an allocation up to \$2.5 million for the actual construction of the plant and infrastructure. The new facility should come on line by the fall of 2018 with no delays.

SEWER LINES ON RT. 98: We are seeking a Legislative Appropriation in the amount of \$750,000 to extend sewer lines from the new plant location west on Rt. 98. As of this writing the Senate Appropriations Committee approved our request unanimously and it is now on the way to the House Committees. Staff members from Senator Grimsley's office and Representative Pigman's office are working with our District Lobbyists to help secure the funding.

ECO PARK: With District Board approval of the Inter-Local Agreement with the County in the amount of \$75,950 District staff can now begin to develop the park. The 1.3 mile walking and biking path is already installed, and plans call for: restrooms; pavilion; picnic tables; benches; grilles; plantings; signage and fencing. This will be a work in progress and we anticipate the path will be open prior to construction beginning on the other items. Fishing in the STA has yet to be discussed by the Board.

STA SPILLWAY: To enhance the Storm Water Treatment Area with an improved method for water quality, the South Florida Water Management District is working with the District to build a spillway in the area of the golf course club house. This spillway would force the water in the canals to go north, into the STA, instead of going east and towards the pump station. The STA is a water retention and storage facility, with some water quality, but this project would ensure all water is treated. The SFWMD has offered the District \$200,000 towards construction.