

Civic Awareness Committee Report December 6, 2018

City of Edgewater Election Wrap-Up & Personnel Changes

Mike Thomas beat out Mike Ignasiak in the Mayoral Race. Mr. Thomas previously served 8 years as Edgewater Mayor and stepped down in December 2014 due to term limits.

In Council District 1, incumbent Councilwoman Christine Power narrowly won over her challenger to serve another 4-year term.

In Council District 3, incumbent Councilwoman Megan O'Keefe ran unopposed. Mrs. O'Keefe was appointed to the council in August to complete Dan Blazi's term. Mr. Blazi had to move out of Edgewater due to his outside job.

Mrs. Brenda Dewees is currently serving as Interim-City Manager following the termination of City Manager Tracy Barlow in October. Mrs. Dewees previously served as Edgewater's Director of Environmental Services and has stated that she does not want to serve as City Manager any longer than necessary. As a result the city has started a search for a new Interim City Manager and will begin searching for a permanent manager after the interim slot is filled.

By a vote of 4-1 at Monday's council meeting, Councilman Gary Conroy was named Vice-Mayor. This position was previously held by Councilwoman Christine Power.

Code Enforcement Update – Yearly Rental Inspections

In September, the City Council voted to update Chapter 11 of the Edgewater City Ordinances to add a requirement that all rental properties within Edgewater be inspected on a yearly bases by a Code Enforcement Officer.

The new rule takes effect in January 2019 but residents will still be able to rent out properties while waiting for the Code Enforcement inspection.

A copy of the inspection checklist that Code Enforcement will be following appears on the City of Edgewater website and also on the Civic Awareness page on the E/L website (under the MANAGEMENT menu).

The inspection checklist consists primarily of basic sanitary and safety steps that most responsible owners would take anyway. The current cost for the first inspection is \$75, subsequent yearly inspections will be \$65.

New Smyrna Beach Traffic Study to Close Magnolia Ave. Northbound

Representatives from New Smyrna Beach discussed a proposal to close Northbound traffic on Magnolia Avenue in NSB for up to 6 months to study the impact on surrounding streets. The representative indicated residents on the street were upset about the high traffic volume (up to 1,500 cars per day) especially since 70% of the traffic is just passing through to other streets.

NSB does not require Edgewater Council approval to do this study – the presentation was a “courtesy” to get input. Several Edgewater council members said they would be agreeable to a 2-month study but felt 6 months was excessive. There was some concern about possible rear-end collisions on Route 1 when drivers learned they could no longer access Magnolia. No date was given on when this might begin.

Non-Ad Valorem Assessments for Solid Waste & Stormwater Fees

Previously the Edgewater Council had voted to move some utility fees over to the property taxes effective November 2017. When a large contingent of Edgewater residents showed up at the September 2017 council meeting to object, the council voted to postpone the change for a year.

This item was back on the agenda for Monday night’s council meeting to take effect in November 2019. The Mayor asked for a show of hands from the residents in attendance to see how many people still objected to this change. After the show of hands, none of the council members would make the motion to bring this issue to a vote. As a result, this change will not take place any time soon. One council member suggested future changes should be limited to only the storm water charge as currently handled by NSB and Port Orange.

Water Usage Fees

There are continuing concerns regarding high water bills. Mayor Thomas requested a special work-shop meeting in January to discuss water usage fees.