

Message from the Commissioner

I am honored to be your new District 4 County Commissioner and am looking forward to working for all of you over the next four years. Since taking office on November 6, it's been non-stop meetings and briefings with senior county staff, local officials, and organizations.

As I meet with various departments over the next few months, I plan on providing updates to you through this newsletter on a variety of topics such as solid waste, airports, fire rescue, emergency operations, and much more.

In addition to unincorporated areas throughout South County, District 4 consists of 12 south county municipalities from Boca Raton north to South Palm Beach boasting over 30 miles of pristine beachfront. I plan to attend commission meetings for all the municipalities over the next few months to provide municipal officials with an opportunity to address concerns they may have with the county. Maintaining an open dialogue with the cities and towns in District 4 will be a priority with my office.

I also plan to work diligently on expanding the county's economic development efforts in recruiting and maintaining businesses that create and increase employment opportunities within our county. These initiatives are vital to the future success of our county, families and children.

Moreover, I plan to advocate for additional workforce housing which goes hand-in-hand with economic prosperity in recruiting and maintaining workers such as school teachers, health care professionals, first responders, and so many others who play integral roles in our community.

Our world-famous shoreline is one of our most beautiful natural environments enjoyed by thousands of people every day while also serving as a major economic engine for our local multi-million-dollar tourism industry. Protecting our beaches and coastal waters will be ongoing and an important commitment for me.

Just recently, the Board of County Commissioners held a strategic planning workshop to identify board priorities and provide county administration with a solid foundation on which to build the county budget for next year. With the decision by the voters to reject the state legislature's gratuitous offer of an additional homestead exemption for property taxes, counties and municipalities are heaving a sigh of relief. I will continue to keep a close eye on spending while keeping tax rates stable.

I would like to extend my sincerest thank you to Commissioner Steven Abrams for his support and help in making the transition seamless. Comm. Abrams has been a tremendous resource and friend. Most importantly, I wish him continued success in his new role as the executive director at the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority and look forward to working with him on our region's public transportation needs.

Meet the staff

Lucia Bonavita, Senior Legislative Aide (lbonavita@pbcgov.org)

Lucia has been working in the District 4 commission office for over 15 years. She has vast experience in administrative operations, constituent issues and county services. Additionally, maintaining strong working relationships with county staff, local officials and the business community remains a priority for her.

Lucia relocated to Palm Beach County about 16 years ago from New York City where she worked in administration for large corporate law firms for more than 20 years. She has a Bachelor of Science *magna cum laude* in Organizational Management from Palm Beach Atlantic University.

Alexandria Ayala, Legislative Aide (AAyala1@pbcgov.org)

Alexandria was born in Puerto Rico and has resided in Palm Beach County for 18 years. After completing her political science and journalism degree at the University of Central Florida, she went on to work for the Florida Legislature, a U.S. Senate campaign, the Florida Democratic Party and most recently as an independent campaign manager and consultant.

She has had the opportunity to acquaint herself with statewide and local elected officials and has extensive governmental affairs experience. Additionally, Alexandria is focused on bringing awareness to gender equity and youth political engagement. She is a 2018 New Leaders Council Fellow and is currently a participant in the Anti-Defamation League's Glass Leadership Institute.

Jon Carter, Legislative Aide (Jcarter3@pbcgov.org)

Jon, who has resided in Boca Raton for the past 10 years, is originally from Canada. While working as a member of the commissioner's team, he is completing his degree in public administration at Florida Atlantic University.

Over the past few years, he has worked on a number of political campaigns, served as student body president and currently serves as vice chair of the City of Boca Raton's Community Advisory Panel. Jon has worked on issues concerning school safety, youth employment and mental health.

The District 4 Commissioner has two offices:

Robert S. Weisman Palm Beach County Governmental Center
301 N. Olive Avenue, West Palm Beach, FL 33401 (12th floor)
561-355-2204

South County Complex
345 S. Congress Avenue, Delray Beach, FL 33445
561-276-1220

Please call or email us with any issues, concerns or problems you may have and we will make sure you are promptly and efficiently served.

Recently, Senior Administrative Assistant, Kate "Freddie" Scott retired after serving over 15 years. Freddie played an integral role in constituent and administrative services for the district and will be missed by all. We wish her the best in her retirement spending lots of time with family and friends.

Facts and Figures

The county's motto is "the best of everything," and it could not have been said any better! Here are some county facts and figures:

- **As of 2015, Palm Beach County had a base population of 1.42 million, making it the third largest county in Florida behind Miami-Dade (2.69 million) and Broward (1.9 million). Fifty-five percent of Palm Beach County residents (781,000) live in one of 39 municipalities. The remaining 639,000 residents live in unincorporated areas. There are 12 municipalities within District 4.**
- **The largest city in Palm Beach County by both area and population is West Palm Beach, which covers 52 square miles and has approximately 108,000 residents. Other population estimates are 96,000 residents in Boca Raton, followed by 76,000 in Boynton Beach, 67,000 in Delray Beach, and 64,000 in Wellington. The county's smallest town (by population) is Westlake with five residents. The smallest municipalities (by land area) are Briny Breezes and Cloud Lake, each with less than one square mile.**
- **The predominant industries in Palm Beach County are tourism, construction and agriculture. There are also many high-tech industries such as bioscience that contribute to our growing economy.**
- **Tourism supports more than 66,000 jobs in businesses such as hotels, restaurants, retail, attractions, and transportation services. Over seven million people visit Palm Beach County annually spending over \$4 billion while they are here. Direct visitor spending for food and beverage is approximately \$1 billion, with lodging accounting for around \$1 billion and retail purchases totaling \$1 billion. Recreation activity spending accounts for around \$600 million and transportation spending within the county is approximately \$400 million.**
- **Palm Beach County leads the nation in the production of sugar and sweet corn. Eighteen percent of all sugar in the United States is produced here. Sugar cane covers some 400,000 acres or about one-third of the county's overall land mass. The county is also Florida's leading producer of rice, bell peppers, lettuce, radishes, Chinese vegetables, specialty leaf and celery.**
- **The county's Department of Housing and Economic Sustainability (HES) administers programs for business development, affordable housing, and community initiatives that increase economic competition.**

- **The county's Office of Small Business Assistance (SBA) maintains a banking consortium with local lenders that offers millions of dollars in low-interest loans available to small businesses.**

BCC Briefs for December 4, 2018

At the December 4, 2018, Board of County Commissioners meeting, the board took the following action:

In memoriam – observed a moment of silence in honor of former President George H.W. Bush, who passed away on December 1.

Retirements – acknowledged and thanked Director of Airports Bruce Pelly and Information Systems Services Director Steve Bordelon, who are retiring.

Promotions – ratified the appointments of Laura Beebe as Director of Airports, Archie Satchell as Director of Information Systems Services, and Ramsay Bulkeley as Director of Planning, Zoning & Building.

Impact Fees – approved on first reading and to advertise for public hearing on January 15, 2019, an ordinance amending the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) regarding countywide impact fee amounts and certain benefit zones. Based on the impact fee study, fees would be increased or adjusted to the full amount allowed under the ordinance (95 percent of the amount calculated in the methodology) with the exception of general office and schools which would be phased in over a two-year period up to the 95 percent amount allowed under the ordinance. Staff was directed to work with Associated General Contractors, the Economic Council and the School District prior to the January 15 meeting to address the economic impacts of the new schedule.

Heron Estates – approved IFAHAP funding in the amount of \$153,804 for HTG Heron Estates Family, LLC (HTG). The project is located at West 17th Street Court in Riviera Beach and will have 79 rental units. All units will be rented to households with incomes no greater than 140% AMI and will be deed-restricted to remain affordable for 20 years. These funds are from interest earned by the Impact Fee Fund.

SHIP – granted consent for nine Palm Beach County employees and three relatives of county employees to receive State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) program funds under the Purchase Assistance Program, the Veteran's Homeownership and Preservation Program and the Emergency Repair Program as administered by the Department of Housing and Economic Sustainability (HES). These are state funds that will require no local match.

Opioids – directed staff to prepare a draft resolution for inclusion in the 2019 legislative agenda supporting establishment of a statewide opioids task force.

Airports – received an update on the master plan for Palm Beach International Airport intended to address the future facilities required at PBIA for a 20-year planning horizon.

Youth Services – approved a contract in the amount of \$216,667 with the Children’s Home Society through June 30, 2020, with two one-year extensions at the county’s option. The contract includes funding for a family visitation/exchange program to be housed in a remodeled former group home. Youth Services Director Tammy Fields announced that Palm Beach County was named statewide County of the Year by the Florida Guardian Ad Litem Foundation for its support of the program.

Homeless Resource Center – discussed estimated costs associated with establishing a second homeless resource center in Palm Beach County and directed staff to move forward with a detailed proposal (including suggested venues and funding sources for ongoing center operations).

Traffic Engineering – approved a license agreement with Traffic Technology Services, Inc. (TTS) to access to the County’s real-time traffic data and traffic signal timing plan data. This agreement supports the advancement of connected vehicle initiatives.

Parks & Recreation – approved on first reading and to advertise for public hearing on January 15, 2019, an ordinance amending Chapter 21 of the Palm Beach County Code (Ordinance 2011-003) pertaining to Parks and Recreation to conform to state law and provide better management of park property.