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**NO MEETING SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER. NEXT BOARD MEETING NOVEMBER 14TH.** Members may find more information at Tuscawill.org.

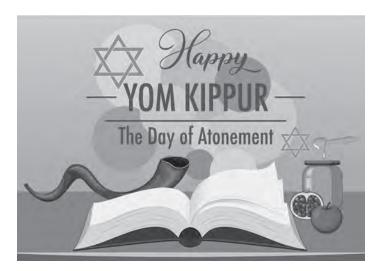
### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A couple of weeks ago you all got a letter from the city saying that your taxes were going up. The letter was very official and also confusing and somewhat harsh. The increase was for the Tuscawilla Light and Beautification Distrct. In order for it go into effect, it needed a favorable vote from the City Commissioners. The meeting was on September 9th and discussion on this issue lasted almost three hours. The following is a statement that I read to the audience and the Commissioners.

My name is Dr. Kurt Miericke. I am president of the Tuscawilla Homeowners Association. Our Board of Directors is in favor of the increased assessment for the Tuscawilla Light and Beautification District. We not only are in favor of it, but we feel that it is necessary to keep Tuscawilla one of the most beautiful, planned communities in Seminole County.

"My family moved to Tuscawilla in July of 1997. The community was developed twenty years prior. By 1997 the area was showing some wear. Numerous homes were for sale, the landscaping was in poor condition, and the Tuscawilla Country Club was in trouble. In 1998, with the help of the city, the Tuscawilla Light and Beautification District was formed. The Tuscawilla residents voted favorably to add \$120 annually to their tax bill. This amount was later increased to \$128. The money was used for upgrading and maintaining the common areas in the community. Through the years the District advisory Committee oversaw countless improvements including the streetlights, the landscaping, the fountains, and the entrances.

I would attend some of the District's meetings, and I learned that the fund established in 1998 was no longer adequate to cover expenses. An increase would soon be needed.



Twenty-seven years later the dollar value of \$120 in 1998 does not cover current expenses. With an average yearly inflation rate of three percent compounded annually, the proposed increase can only be viewed as a cost adjustment rather than a tax increase.



The proposed assessment is only to be

levied on Tuscawilla homeowners, and our Board asks that the City Commissioners vote favorably for the change."

The increase barely passed with the stipulation that the increase would be spread over four years in twenty-five percent increments. I can't tell you how important it is to keep Tuscawilla, Tuscawilla. There were so many questions at the meeting that could have been answered by our residents just coming out and attending the quarterly TLBD meetings. We can't take our neighborhood for granted. We need to be involved and keep this wonderful place one of the most beautiful, planned communities in Seminole County.

#### **Dr. Kurt Miericke**

THOA President Publisher, *Tuscawilla Today* Email: THOAws20@gmail.com

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### FIRE PREVENTION WEEK IN WINTER SPRINGS

Each year, during the week of October 9th, communities across the nation observe Fire Prevention Week, a tradition dating back more than 100 years. Established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, this week serves as a reminder of the importance of fire safety in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

Here in Winter Springs, our first responders work tirelessly to keep families safe, but fire prevention begins with all of us. This year's national theme, "Fire Won't Wait. Plan Your Escape," emphasizes the importance of creating and practicing a home escape plan. Knowing two ways out of every room, ensuring smoke alarms are working, and practicing drills with your family are simple steps that save lives.

For Tuscawilla residents, fire prevention feels especially close to home thanks to Seminole County Fire Station

#26, located near Trotwood Park. The men and women serving at Station 26 respond quickly to emergencies in our neighborhood and remind us that while their service is vital, community preparedness is just as important.

Residents are encouraged to check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, keep fire extinguishers handy, and avoid leaving cooking or candles unattended. In our tree-lined neighborhoods and homes near wooded areas, small safety steps make a big difference.

Fire Prevention Week is also a time to thank the dedicated professionals at Station 26 and across Seminole County for their service. Together, with a little awareness and preparation, we can keep Winter Springs one of the safest communities in Florida.

# PUBLIC SAFETY IN TUSCAWILLA: SAFE, SMART, AND ALERT

Living in Tuscawilla means being part of one of the safest communities in Central Florida. Our city consistently ranks among the top 10 safest cities in the entire state of Florida, and that is something we can all be proud of.

So far this year, our police department has recorded two rare incidents of home burglaries in Tuscawilla. To put that in perspective, in most years we record no burglaries at all in our neighborhood of nearly 5,000 homes. That is a remarkable record of safety, but it does not mean we can let our guard down.

The truth is, "crimes of opportunity" are far more common. These include cars left unlocked with valuables visible inside or the theft of delivered packages left at front doors. With Halloween, fall festivals, and the holiday season approaching, package deliveries and parked cars increase, making this a good time to review safe habits.

Police Chief Matt Tracht often reminds residents: "If you see something, say something." He encourages everyone to call 911 when something seems suspicious and to never hesitate out of fear of bothering the police. Our officers would rather respond early to a concern than be called too late.

It is also important to note that social media is not the place to report crime. Neither the City of Winter Springs nor our Police Department has a mechanism to monitor Facebook or other platforms for urgent safety concerns. If something happens, the right step is always to call 911 directly. Here is another fact worth remembering: Winter Springs has not had a car stolen in many years, except in the rare cases where the keys were left inside the vehicle. This is a powerful reminder to always lock your car, remove keys, and avoid leaving valuables in plain sight.

Two additional safety tips are worth keeping in mind:

- Do not post vacation photos until after you return home. Sharing travel updates while out of town can unintentionally let others know your house is empty.
- Take advantage of the free Home Check service offered by the Winter Springs Police Department. If you are traveling, you can request periodic checks of your property by calling 407-327-1000.

And one final and vital note: please never leave firearms in vehicles. Across the country, this remains the single most common source of stolen guns, and it is entirely preventable.

By taking a few simple steps such as locking vehicles, securing packages, waiting to post travel photos, using the Home Check program, reporting suspicious activity through proper channels, and practicing common sense, we can continue to keep Tuscawilla a safe and welcoming community for all. Together, residents and police make the partnership that ensures our community remains among the safest in Florida.

## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

October is a special month here in Tuscawilla. The air begins to cool, porches glow with pumpkins, and our community calendar fills with traditions both old and new. This issue of Tuscawilla Today captures that energy with a blend of history, reflection, and community spirit that makes our hometown unique.

We begin with a look at Columbus Day, tracing how this holiday has been observed across our nation and how it ties to our own Seminole County. While Columbus Day celebrates exploration and discovery, it also gives us the opportunity to recognize Indigenous Peoples and the cultural roots of our area. After all, our county is named for the Seminole people, and even the word Tuscawilla comes from Native language, a reminder that the place we call home carries a much deeper story.

Safety is also top of mind in October, which is why we highlight Fire Prevention Week and the work of Station 26, located near Trotwood Park. Their crews serve as a constant reminder that preparedness saves lives. This issue also includes important information about e-bike safety and crime prevention, two topics that continue to affect our neighborhoods and deserve attention from us all. With cooler weather and holiday gatherings ahead, these reminders are as timely as they are vital.

This month also brings one of the most anticipated traditions of the season; Halloween. Families across Tuscawilla decorate porches, carve pumpkins, and prepare costumes for a night of fun. It is always a joy to see our neighborhoods come alive with children in costumes and neighbors gathered on front lawns, reminding us that Halloween is as much about community as it is about candy.

The fall is also packed with signature events here in Winter Springs. The always popular Hometown Harvest returns to Central Winds Park, filling the evening with music, hayrides, food vendors, and fall activities that bring families together under the autumn sky. Music lovers can mark their calendars for the Central Winds Music Festival, where local talent fills the park with a wide range of performances, proving once again that art and culture thrive right here at home. And for those with a competitive streak, the Paddle Battle Pickleball Tournament is set to bring players of all

levels together on the courts. It is a great chance to showcase Winter Springs' growing pickleball scene and enjoy some friendly competition.

Looking ahead, our community will soon gather for the Veterans Day Ceremony in November. While we will share more details in the coming issue, October gives us time to reflect on the sacrifices of those



who served. Our veterans' courage and commitment are a cornerstone of the freedoms we enjoy daily here in Winter Springs.

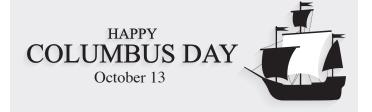
This issue also highlights stories of everyday heroes in our city staff who rushed to help when they noticed smoke rising from a home. Their quick action and teamwork saved lives and reminded us all of what it means to care for one another.

All of these pieces — history, safety, gratitude, celebration, and festivity come together in this October issue. They reflect the spirit of Tuscawilla: a community that honors its past, supports its present, and looks confidently toward the future.

From all of us at Tuscawilla Today, may your October be filled with safety, friendship, and joy.

#### **Katherine McCann**

Editor, *Tuscawilla Today* editorkathymccann@gmail.com



#### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

People who say it cannot be done, should not interrupt those who are doing it.

- George Bernard Shaw

Do you or someone you know in Tuscawilla have a special hobby, unique profession or insightful travel experience that would be interesting for our readers? Has your community completed notable improvements or planned an important event? Let me know and we will be glad to include these news items in a future issue of Tuscawilla Today. Thank you, Kathy McCann. I can be contacted at: EditorKathyMccann@gmail.com.

# GET INVOLVED: YOU'RE PART OF HOW WINTER SPRINGS RUNS

Winter Springs isn't just a place to live, it's a community built on participation. Our city relies on residents stepping forward, lending their time and talents, and helping shape decisions that affect us all. One of the most meaningful ways you can contribute is by serving on one of the City's volunteer boards or committees.

#### WHO SERVES ON THESE BOARDS?

Every board and committee is made up of volunteer residents of Winter Springs. These neighbors dedicate their time to learn the details of the issues before them, weighing options carefully, and making direct recommendations to the City Commission. While the Commission makes the final decisions, these boards play a crucial role in guiding policy and ensuring community priorities are reflected.

Serving isn't just a seat at a table; it's a chance to grow. Many boards meet only four times per year, and members often learn as they go, building their understanding over time. Others require more specialized expertise, such as the Board of Trustees, which oversees employee pension investments and requires a strong financial background. Some, like the Code Enforcement Board and Planning & Zoning Board, meet monthly and demand an even greater commitment but more than anything, they require a passion for our community and its residents.

#### **BOARDS & COMMITTEES THAT NEED YOU**

Here are some of the boards where residents are already serving and where you can get involved when openings occur:

- Police Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Residents meet monthly with police leadership to review public safety efforts and ask questions. All welcome, no appointment required.
- Code Enforcement Board A seven-member board that hears code violation cases and issues compliance orders. Meets monthly.
- Planning & Zoning Board Reviews rezoning, variances, and land use issues to ensure growth fits the city's comprehensive plan. Meets monthly.
- Veteran & Veteran Family Advisory Committee Advises on programs and events supporting local veterans and their families. Meets four times per year or as needed.
- Board of Trustees Oversees the city's employee pension investments. Requires strong financial expertise. Meets four times per year or as needed.
- Oak Forest Wall & Beautification District Advisory Committee Focuses on wall, landscaping, and beautification needs for Oak Forest residents. Meets four times per year or as needed.

- Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee Advises on parks, facilities, and recreational programming. Meets four times per year or as needed.
- Tuscawilla Lighting & Beautification District Advisory Committee Guides the upkeep of fountains, landscaping, and lighting in Tuscawilla. Oversight of budget and its priorities. Meets four times per year or as needed.

#### **TRANSPARENCY & ACCESS**

Except for the Police Citizens Advisory Committee, all of these meetings are recorded and available on YouTube or at WinterSpringsFL.org. That means you can follow along even if you can't attend in person.

#### WHY IT MATTERS

These boards don't just exist on paper, they help set priorities, solve problems, and preserve what makes Winter Springs unique. Whether it's reviewing a zoning request, ensuring pensions are invested wisely, or advising on beautification, the work done by volunteer residents has a direct impact on our safety, our quality of life, and even our property values.

Winter Springs thrives because of the residents who step forward. Whether you attend a meeting, apply to serve, or simply learn more about how our city works, your participation strengthens our community.

For more information go to winterspringsfl.org or call City Hall at 407 327-1800

# W.S.P.D. CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

REPORT FOR JULY 2025 Calls for service: 5,841

#### **RESPONSE TIMES IN MINUTES**

Emergency: 3:31 Non-Emergency: 5:45

#### **TRAFFIC**

Citations: 794 Written Warnings: 544
Accidents: 30 Injuries: 4 Fatalities: 0

#### 3

Domestic: 10 Adults: 40 Juvenile: 7 Capias Filed: 2

**ARRESTS** 

#### **CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Cases: 274 Code Board Cases: 4 Signs removed from right of way: 24





## "Treat" yourself to a new home!

The Kim Coburn and Colleen Kahl Team 407-630-0027 / 407-341-1324







231 Nandina Terr.

Stunning upgraded 4 bedroom 3 bath plus study with amazing lawn and gardens plus 3 car garage in gated Howell Creek Reserve! Community pool and Cross Seminole Trail access. Only \$675,000







Water front townhouse with 2 huge bedrooms and ensuite baths. Elevator! \$399,900 Water and golf front 3 bedroom end unit with 2 car garage. HOA Covers everything! \$475,000





912 Augusta National

Tenderly loved home on a culde-sac in sought after Country Club Village is perfect for your own improvements! Large screened porch overlooks conservation. Easy access to the golf course and Country Club! Priced to sell! \$389,900





202 Arrowhead Ct

Showcase 5 bedroom plus study, 4½ bath estate home in Arrowhead, the crown jewel of Tuscawilla! Over 4000 sq ft of magnificent architecture and elegant custom design with a magnificent pool and spa on a ½ acre manicured lot. \$1,250,000







## **COLUMBUS DAY IN WINTER SPRINGS**

On Monday, October 13th, our nation observes Columbus
Day, a federal and state holiday commemorating
Christopher Columbus' arrival in the
Americas in 1492. First celebrated in

the United States as early as the late 18th century, the holiday became more widely recognized in the 19th century, especially among Italian-American communities proud to honor Columbus as a symbol of exploration and achievement. In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared Columbus Day a national holiday, and in 1971 it was officially set as the second Monday in October.

For generations, Columbus Day has been a celebration of exploration, discovery, and the courage to venture into the unknown. It recognizes the voyage that connected Europe and the Americas, an event

that changed the course of world history. Today, the holiday remains a time to reflect on the values of perseverance and bold vision that Columbus' journey represents.

In recent years, many communities have also chosen to observe Indigenous Peoples' Day on the same date. This observance highlights the history, culture, and resilience of Native American peoples. For Winter Springs, this recognition carries particular meaning because we live in Seminole County, named after the Seminole Tribe of Florida. And right here in our own neighborhoods, the name Tuscawilla itself is of Native American origin, believed to mean "beautiful water." It serves as a daily reminder of the Indigenous roots woven into the fabric of our community.

For Winter Springs residents, Columbus Day offers an opportunity both to honor the bold spirit of discovery that helped shape the modern world and to acknowledge the enduring cultural heritage reflected in our own community. By understanding and respecting all parts of this history, from Columbus' voyage to the Indigenous names and traditions that surround us, we gain a fuller appreciation of who we are today.



# E- Bikes in Winter Springs and Tuscawilla: CLEARING UP THE CONFUSION

Across Florida, and especially here in Winter Springs and the Tuscawilla Country Club community, electric bicycles or "E- bikes" have become a common sight. But many residents remain confused about the rules of operation and what qualifies as an E- bike. Know before you ride or purchase for yourself or a family member. Our Chief of Police, Matt Tracht, recommends that anyone interested in E- bikes take time to learn about the different types, understand the laws that regulate them, and be aware of the safety hazards that come with their higher speeds.

Not every bike with an electric motor is legally an E- bike. Understanding these differences is essential for both safety and compliance.

# THE THREE CLASSES OF E- BIKES (FL ORIDA STANDARD)

Florida recognizes three distinct classes of E- bikes, all capped at 750 watts:

- Class 1: Pedal assist only, motor cuts off at 20 mph
- Class 2: Throttle assisted, meaning you can ride without pedaling, but limited to 20 mph
- Class 3: Pedal assist only, but faster, with the motor cutting off at 28 mph

Manufacturers are required to attach a permanent label showing the bike's class, top assisted speed, and motor wattage. Altering a bike's speed without updating that label is illegal.

Anything beyond these classes, such as higher wattage or a bike operated only by a throttle or with modified speed controls, is not considered an E- bike. These vehicles are subject to entirely different regulations. They are not

allowed on sidewalks or shared use paths such as the Cross Seminole Trail. They are intended for roadway use and require a license plate and all other requirements of a regular motorcycle.

# WHERE YOU CAN RIDE IN WINTER SPRINGS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

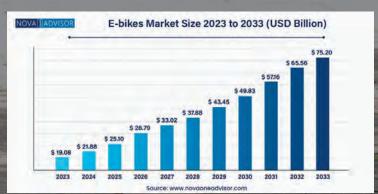
For riders in Tuscawilla and throughout Winter Springs, Class 1, 2, and 3 E- bikes are generally allowed anywhere bicycles are permitted: neighborhood streets, bike lanes, and multi use paths such as the Cross Seminole Trail. On sidewalks, crosswalks, and the Cross Seminole Trail, riders have the same rights of use as pedestrians, but must yield to pedestrians and provide an audible signal before passing.

Riders are required to avoid traditional car lanes on roads when bike paths are marked and available such as on Winter Springs Blvd, Tuskawilla Rd, and S.R. 434. They must stop at traffic lights and stop signs on all roadways including the Cross Seminole Trail. Many complaints have been made by pedestrians and drivers, and the Winter Springs Police Department has and will continue to issue citations as a result.

#### **HELMETS, AGE, AND LICENSING**

No license, registration, or insurance is required for E-bikes in Winter Springs or Florida in general. No statewide age limit exists, but local governments may set their own requirements in the future. Helmets are mandatory for riders and passengers under 16. Adults are strongly encouraged to wear them for safety.



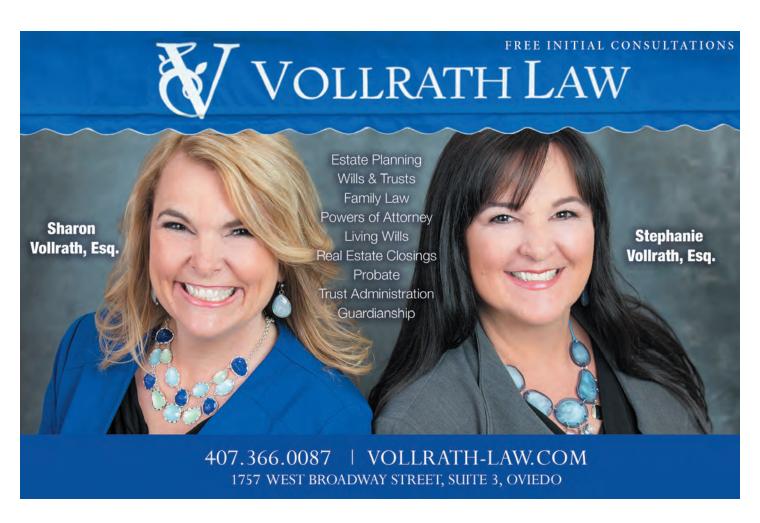


#### **SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT RULES** the laws that regulate them. Accidents and injuries are becoming more common, so use proper safety equipment Florida law requires that all bicycles, including E- bikes, such as a helmet each time you ride. Be courteous to have: others and respect property including in our community. Brakes capable of stopping within 25 feet from 10 mph Lights for night riding: a white headlight visible from 500 feet and a red rear light or reflector visible from 600 feet Proper lane use: use bike lanes when available, or keep to the right side of the road. Riding two abreast is allowed if traffic is not blocked **COURTESY AND ETIOUETTE IN** TUSCAWILLA Our trails and streets are shared spaces. To keep them safe and enjoyable for all: Slow down near pedestrians, especially on neighborhood paths Respect speed limits; just because your E- bike can reach higher speeds does not mean it is safe in every setting · Signal "on your left" when passing walkers or other cyclists THE BOTTOM LINE FOR WINTER SPRINGS RIDERS E- bikes are a welcome addition to our community, offering a clean, efficient, and accessible way to get around. But it is critical to know Data shows a concerning rise in bone Why are they and joint injuries tracking with the dangerous? surging popularity of electric bikes. These high-powered vehicles, capable of 28 mph speeds, are causing injuries across all age groups-not just novice · Lack of protective equipment

3 Congestion

4 Lack of Contro

American Assoication of Orthopaedic Surgeons











# Dorothy Boyd's garden shows pride of ownership!

She is the original owner, loves her garden & her family is always with her there at her house.

Dorothy's favorite spot is next to her roses.

For Yard of the Month submissions of our Tuscawilla neighbors, please email their name/s address & contact info to: TuscawillaGardenClub@gmail.com.



L to Rt: Kurt, Pres of the THOA, Dorothy Boyd, & Laura Leigh Wood, VP of the Sunshine Garden Club of Tuscawilla.

### **VETERANS DAY IN WINTER SPRINGS**



On Monday, November 11th, the City of Winter Springs will proudly host its annual Veterans Day Ceremony at 6:00 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial, located at the corner of Tuskawilla Road and Blumberg Boulevard.

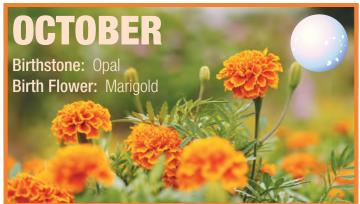
This meaningful tradition brings our community

together to honor the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Each year, Winter Springs recognizes a "Hometown Hero", a veteran from our community whose service and dedication embody the very best of our nation's values.

The ceremony is a time for reflection, gratitude, and unity. Residents gather alongside neighbors, friends, and local leaders to pay tribute to those who have sacrificed to protect our freedoms. With the Veterans Memorial as the backdrop, the evening offers a moving reminder of the service and courage that define America's veterans.

We encourage all residents to join us on November 11th for this special event. Whether you are a veteran, a family member, or simply a grateful neighbor, your presence helps make this ceremony a true community tradition; one that reflects Winter Springs' enduring respect for those who have served.







Halloween in Tuscawilla is one of the highlights of the year — our streets come alive with costumes, laughter, and plenty of candy. With so many families in our neighborhood, Halloween here is unlike most other communities. The streets become crowded with children, parents, and neighbors all celebrating together, turning the night into a true block-party atmosphere.

While our community is known for being safe and welcoming, here are a few simple reminders to keep the evening fun for everyone:

#### FOR TRICK-OR-TREATERS

- Shine Bright Add glow sticks, flashlights, or reflective accents so everyone can see your creative costumes.
- Walk with Friends Trick-or-treating is even more fun in groups, and younger kids should have an adult nearby.
- Cross with Care Always look both ways and take your time when crossing neighborhood streets.
- Be Courteous Stick to sidewalks and driveways, and remember to say "thank you" at every door.

 Lights On = Welcome - Homes with porch lights on are inviting trick-or-treaters; a dark home means the residents may be away or not participating.

#### FOR PARENTS & NEIGHBORS

- Costume Comfort Make sure little ones can walk easily and see clearly in their outfits.
- Front Porch Ready Keep walkways lit and free of obstacles to welcome trick-or-treaters safely.
- Enjoy the Spirit Step outside, greet your neighbors, and soak in the unique family atmosphere that makes Halloween in Tuscawilla so special.

#### FOR DRIVERS

- Take It Slow Expect heavy foot traffic, especially in the early evening hours when the neighborhood is busiest.
- Stay Alert Watch for excited kids who may cross the street in unexpected places.

Halloween in Tuscawilla isn't just about costumes and candy — it's about neighbors coming together. Let's keep it cheerful, safe, and memorable for all.





#### **UPDATE ON TUSCAWILLA ASSESSMENT INCREASE**

More than 25 years ago, the residents of Tuscawilla requested that the City of Winter Springs take on the responsibility of maintaining our community's common areas, such as the medians along Winter Springs Boulevard. At the same time, residents supported the City issuing long-term bonds to build the iconic fountains on Tuscawilla Road.

This arrangement: a self-imposed tax approved by residents and managed through the City, was created in lieu of HOA dues to cover these costs. One of the major benefits of this decision was that the City, with its greater financial resources, was able to secure far better bond interest rates, maintenance contracts, and insurance rates than an HOA could have negotiated on its own. This was a big win for Tuscawilla. However, under state law and basic fairness, the City is not permitted to spread these costs across residents outside of Tuscawilla. Only Tuscawilla residents pay into this special district for the benefits it provides.

To manage these responsibilities, several separate assessments were established:

- TLBD Maint Covers the ongoing maintenance of common areas. In 2007, the City Commission set a cap of \$128 per household. Importantly, however, the actual rate charged to residents averaged \$120 from 2007 through 2024. Only in 2024 did the City raise the TLBD Maint rate to the full cap of \$128.
- Phase II Covered repayment of the bonds used to build the grand fountains, at roughly \$50 per household annually. These bonds were fully paid off in 2017, lowering the assessment.
- Phase III Applied to certain parts of the community, adding sidewalks and other infrastructure, with some households still paying about \$38 per year until the loan is retired.

Thanks to the payoff of the bonds, the historic overall rate per household has gone down over time. In the early years, the combined assessments averaged over \$180 per household per year. Today, with Phase II retired and Phase III limited, the average cost has dropped to roughly \$128 per household.

#### The September 23rd Commission Meeting

On Tuesday, September 23rd, the City Commission held a special meeting to address the financial shortfall in the TLBD Maintenance fund, which no longer has the reserves necessary to maintain the fountains or common areas. The Tuscawilla Homeowners Association and the Tuscawilla Lighting and Beautification District Advisory Committee (TLBD) requested raising both the Phase I cap and the actual rate charged in order to:

- Fund a four-year restoration project for the fountains.
- · Repaint streetlights, stop signs, and other fixtures.
- · Replace aging plantings and lighting at neighborhood entrance monuments.

The request included raising the Phase I cap to

The meeting was well attended, with nearly three and a half hours of discussion. Many residents voiced support for improvements, while others expressed concern about the size of the increase.

#### Understanding the "Cap" vs. the "Rate"

One key point of discussion was the difference between the cap and the rate actually charged:

- In 2007, the City raised the Phase I cap to \$128, but the actual rate charged averaged only \$120 until 2024, when it was raised to the maximum of \$128.
- At the September 23rd meeting, the Commission voted to raise the Phase I cap to \$225, but the actual fee charged for this year only increased by about \$32 per household or about \$2.67 per

This system follows state statutes governing how municipalities establish self-imposed "taxes" such as Tuscawilla's assessments. Each time the cap is raised, the City must conduct a formal financial study at a cost this year of \$18,000. which is borne by Tuscawilla residents. The next time the cap is raised, another study will be required.

#### The Outcome

The Commission's action provides a path forward, but with a slower timeline:

- The Cap was raised to \$225 instead of the proposed \$255.
- Actual rate increase of about \$32 per household this year instead of the proposed \$128.
- Future increases are expected each year until the fund is stable and improvements can be made.

While this increase will restore some reserves, it is not enough to fund the four-year restoration plan. Instead, that plan will now stretch closer to ten years. The first years increases will likely not make enough of an impact to see improvements in the first year.

#### Why Your Voice Matters

The City Commission has made clear that it will respond to residents' concerns. If many residents wish to maintain a lower standard of beautification, the Commission will vote accordingly. But if you believe that Tuscawilla's fountains, landscaping, and entrances are worth preserving, your voice is equally important.

These amenities not only enhance daily life but also help protect home values and encourage significant reinvestment in our community. We need only look at nearby communities such as The Highlands and Deer Run, which scaled back on their maintenance budgets and even closed their golf courses. Once-grand neighborhoods, they no longer enjoy the same reputation or property values as the Tuscawilla Country Club Community.

The choice is ours. With thoughtful participation, Tuscawilla can continue to stand apart as a community that invests, values its history, and protects its future.

### **TUSCAWILLA ASSESSMENT FAQ**

**Q:** What's the difference between the cap and the rate I pay? A: The cap is the maximum amount the City Commission is authorized to charge. The rate is what is actually billed to households. For example:

- In 2007 the cap was raised to \$128, but the average rate charged stayed at \$120 until 2024, when it reached the full \$128.
- In September 2025 the cap was raised from \$128 to \$225, but the actual rate increase this year is only about \$32 per household.
- **Q:** Why does the City have to raise the cap separately from the rate? A: State law requires a formal financial study every time the cap is increased. The most recent study cost \$18,000, which was paid for by Tuscawilla residents. Future cap increases will require new studies

Q: Haven't assessments always been this high?

A: No. The overall average has actually gone down over time. In the early years, the combined assessments (Phases I-III) averaged more than \$180 per household annually. Today, with Phase II bonds retired and Phase III limited, the average cost is about \$128 per household.

**Q:** Why doesn't the City just spread these costs across all Winter Springs residents?

A: When Tuscawilla residents voted to create this arrangement more than 25 years ago, it was in lieu of HOA dues. One of the benefits was that the City could secure better bond rates, contracts, and insurance than an HOA could. However, under state law and fairness, these costs can only be charged to the residents who directly benefit — those who live in Tuscawilla.

**O:** What happens next? A: The Commission plans to raise the actual rate gradually in the coming years. The original 4-year plan to restore fountains, lighting, and landscaping will now take closer to 10 years under the slower

funding schedule.

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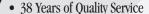
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Deadline is Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> for the Nov. issue. Don't delay, save your spot today!

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### News At A Glance

#### ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR:

The St. Stephen Annual Arts and Crafts Holiday Sale will be held in EC-1 on the campus of St. Stephen Catholic Community, 575 Tuskawilla Road, Winter Springs on Friday and Saturday, October 24 and 25, from 9-3, and on Sunday, October 26, from 9-1. Most sale items are handcrafted by members of the Arts and Crafts Ministry and include floral and holiday decor, kitchen items, a quilt boutique, teacher gifts, plants, collegiate items, baby and children's items, yarn items, Florida and beach décor, a group of gifts priced \$5 and under, and many other unique gifts. There are no commercial vendors. All proceeds go to St. Vincent de Paul Outreach. Admission is FREE. Additionally, the Christmas Craft Shoppe will be open in EC-1 every Sunday and Tuesday in November from 9:30 -1:30.

#### **SMOKE ALARM PROGRAM**

Seminole County Fire Department (SCFD) offers the following smoke alarm programs:

### SEMINOLE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT CITIZEN REQUEST PROGRAM

Residents in unincorporated Seminole County or in the Cities of Altamonte Springs, Casselberry and Winter Springs can request a smoke alarm installation in their home **if they are unable to afford an alarm**. Alarm(s) must be installed by the Seminole County Fire Department. SCFD also has a long-term partnership with the American Red Cross for education and installations as well. **To request an alarm, please call 407-665-5100.** 

### SMOKE ALARMS FOR THE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

Are you deaf or hard of hearing? Do you take your hearing aids out at night?

Would you hear you r smoke alarms if it went off while you were sleeping?

A pillow or bed shaker can wake you up so that you can escape a fire. The shake is activated by the sound of the smoke alarm. Smoke alarms and alert devices are available

**FREE** to Seminole County residents. Email SCFDPIO@ SEMINOLECOUNTYFL.GOV

**SCFD** partners with **American Red Cross** to do several smoke alarm blitzes each year to install smoke alarms in atrisk communities. Visit the American Red Cross to learn more

#### **TUSCAWILLA WOMEN'S CLUB**

"Where you are among friends"

October is the first full month of autumn and has a rich history of harvest celebrations and festivals. It's also Florida's peak of hurricane season and we all stay focused on preparedness.

Our September "Meet and Greet" brought valued members back together from busy summer adventures. We also met new friends that we are looking forward to adding as new members.

We want to express positive thoughts and well wishes to our valued member and great friend, Anne O'Connell, for a quick and successful recovery.

Our next meeting is Thursday October 9, starting at 1:00 pm in the Wedgewood Tennis Villas Clubhouse. The guest speaker is Kevin McCann, Winter Springs Mayor. All are Welcome. Come and check us out. Looking forward to seeing you there.

For more information and questions, please contact Anne Combs at (407)761-5779

#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Yom Kippur

	• •
Oct 7	WSPD National Night Out & Open House 5-8pm Police Station
Oct 9	Veterans Advisory Board 5:30, City Hall
Oct 9	Take Your Teddy Bear To Work Day
Oct 11	"Paddle Battle" pickleball tournament, Central Winds Park
Oct 13	Columbus Day
Oct 13	City Commission 6:30, City Hall
Oct 27	City Commission 6:30, City Hall
Oct 25	Hometown Harvest $4:30-8:30$ , Central Winds Park
Oct 28	Code Enforcement Board 5:30, City Hall
Oct 31	Halloween

#### October 2025 - Central Florida Fall Events

Oct 1

Date	Event	Location
All October	Painted Oaks Academy Pumpkin Patch	Orlando
Aug 29 - Nov 2	Universal Orlando's Halloween Horror Nights	Universal Studios Orlando
Sept 5 - Nov 1	Howl-O-Scream at SeaWorld Orlando	SeaWorld Orlando
Select nights through Oct 31	Mickey's Not-So-Scary Halloween Party	Magic Kingdom, Walt Disney World
Oct 25, 2025	Hometown Harvest (Winter Springs)	Central Winds Park, Winter Springs
Oct 25, 2025	Central Florida Veg Fest	Orlando Festival Park
Oct 25, 2025	Avalon Park Spooktacular	Avalon Park, Orlando
Oct 31, 2025	Nightmare at the Pointe	Pointe Orlando
Oct 4 & Oct 25, 2025	German American Society Oktoberfest	Casselberry

#### THOA BOARD MEMBERS

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Chris Waguespack 407-365-453
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Roger Monroe 407-366-7593
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#### **TUSCAWILLA TODAY**

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Carlos Luengo ............ 786-201-2822 Stephen Francis....... 407-310-1668

#### COMMITTEES

#### Membership Chairman/Committee

Cindy Guiles ...... 407-462-6061

#### LIAISONS

Kurt Miericke with SR 417 issues.

Boards and committees are comprised of both Board Members and volunteers from the Community. If you wish to volunteer, please contact Kurt Miericke at 407-359-4077.

#### **CLUB PRESIDENTS**

**Sunshine Garden Club:** 

Tace Crouse......407-222-4336

#### Tuscawilla Women's Club:

Ronnie Balmat..... jebalmat@gmail.com

#### ADDITIONS OR UPDATES TO **PRIVATE HOAS AND CLUBS**

You are responsible for providing updates/additions to your listing by the 15th of the month for the following months issue. E-mail them to Lisa@cpponline.com. Please mark in the subject "THOA NL". We cannot take changes over the phone.

"Tuscawilla Today" is the official publication of the Tuscawilla Homeowners' Association, P.O. Box 195666, Winter Springs, FL 32719-5666. Publisher is the Association President.

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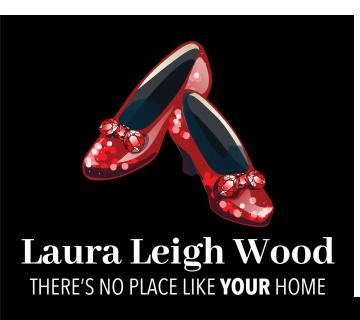


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