

WATERS: SEMINOLE IS STILL BOOMING

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Seminole Mayor Leslie Waters recently gave her state of the city address. *TB Reporter* has printed it here.

By LESLIE WATERS, Mayor of Seminole

You only have to look around to see all of the positive residential and commercial development that is occurring throughout our community.

The city's 2017 budget is \$16,967,819, and our millage rate has not increased in 11 years. Approximately 143 employees work for the [city of Seminole](#), and provide services through city Administration, Public Works, Library, Recreation, Fire-Rescue, Human Resources, and Community Development.

The city council continues to focus on fiscally responsible spending while providing for infrastructure improvements, an exciting and diverse schedule of special events and programs and public safety. The fire pension is funded at 89 percent, which is one of the best funding levels in Florida.

Our law enforcement is provided, under contract, by the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, which is responsible for assuring the safety and security of our citizens in our neighborhoods, parks, shops and streets.

The city of Seminole continues to experience unprecedented development and redevelopment throughout the community. The Seminole City Center [shopping mall] and new residential developments not only provide our citizens with quality commercial and residential opportunities, they also diversify our tax base by adding over \$49 million of taxable value to our city which has resulted in \$185,000 in annual property tax receipts.



Leslie Waters

Our grand opening celebration and ribbon cutting ceremony for the 40 acre Seminole City Center was on Nov. 18. There are now over 30 store-fronts open with more to come this year! It is expected that the Seminole City Center will bring in 755 direct permanent jobs and 244 indirect permanent jobs.

PDQ restaurant has replaced a long abandoned gas station at the corner of Park and Seminole Boulevard. Also, Sea Hags Bar & Grill has added its second Pinellas County location in our Twin Oaks Shopping Center, occupying a space that was vacant for about nine years. Crunch Fitness, with its first Pinellas County location, will replace LA Fitness center that relocated to Seminole city center.

In addition to commercial development, several residential developments were completed or are currently under construction. The Addison on Long Bayou is the largest with 247 apartment units, followed by Seminole Groves on Seminole Boulevard, and Arabella Cove, Pinecrest Villas, and Artisan Preserve.

On Sept. 11, Hurricane Irma impacted Seminole with 90 mph winds. Numerous trees, fences and roofs were damaged, thousands of citizens were without power, but thanks to the excellent hurricane preparedness efforts of Seminole Fire-Rescue and CERT volunteers, there were no major injuries or deaths. All city staff helped with a smooth Post-Irma recovery. FEMA reimbursements will be received hopefully within the year.

On April 21, 2017, we had our ribbon cutting and hose uncoupling ceremony for the new Seminole Fire Station #32. The new fire station was built in partnership with Pinellas County, which paid 70 percent of the \$2.1 million cost. The station boasts modern safety features more conducive to firefighting, includes solar powered components, and is able to withstand a Category 5 hurricane.

On Nov. 4, 2017, the city hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of Phase 1 of Waterfront Park on Park Boulevard. Phase I includes a kayak/canoe launch, picnic facilities, ornamental fencing along Park Boulevard with an automated entrance gate, and a spectacular playground climbing globe, the first of its kind in the Southeast U.S.

The city of Seminole has two outstanding grants that we are waiting for final contract approval. The Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) Grant will provide assistance with another picnic facility, a kayak staging and wash down area, and landscaping. The Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant will provide assistance with the construction of the ADA floating kayak system, nature observation boardwalk, picnic facility, additional kayak parking, and trails. These grants total \$300,000.

On behalf of council, we give thanks to the dedication, positive approach, energy and enthusiasm of city staff and scores of city volunteers. Together, we will continue to make Seminole even a better place to live, work, play and raise families.