



Board of County Commissioners

Ken Keech

Commissioner – District 4

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July/August Newsletter,

"Making Campaign Promises A Reality"

After 8 months in office, I am absolutely convinced that there have never been so many important issues facing our County. I ran for this office promising you a change from the status quo. You agreed that a change in direction was necessary. As you will read below, we are making progress. I would like to use my summer newsletter to briefly advise you of four important votes recently taken by the County Commission, each which reflects our shared vision of an environmentally sensitive, fiscally conservative, Broward County.

*By a 6-3 vote, the County Commission has voted to extend the southern runway at Ft. Lauderdale/Hollywood Intl. Airport. As I discussed extensively in my June newsletter, this was a difficult decision for the County Commission. After much deliberation, and after listening extensively to the proponents and opponents of any extension, I voted in favor of the extension. Based on the FAA's draft report, I am convinced that the failure to extend the southern runway would lead to unacceptable arrival and departure delays. These inevitable delays would have eroded our quality of life; would have negatively impacted our business community; and would have had negative environmental consequences for all of us.

*The County Commission is lowering your property taxes. In furtherance of my campaign promise to you, since my election I have led the charge on the County Commission to lower property taxes. With the help of the Florida legislature, I have been successful. All of my colleagues and I have approved, in concept, budget cuts of almost \$100,000,000.00. It wasn't easy, and we are not done, but collectively we have instituted a hiring freeze; agreed to eliminate unnecessary expenditures; and re-evaluated the need for each and every program offered by the County. While we have not officially agreed on each cut, we have reached a consensus on the vast majority of the reductions. If I have my way, this is only the beginning. My philosophy is simple. I recognize that this is your money, not ours. With each proposed expenditure, I ask myself the following question: Is this item truly necessary? If not, I have, and will continue, to vote against it.

*By a 9-0 vote, the County Commission has adopted a Boat Facility Siting Plan with an incorporated Manatee Protection Plan. One of Broward's most unique attributes is our abundance of waterways. Broward currently has 30, 739 legal boat slips. The commercial and residential communities have repeatedly requested more. While these requests are reasonable, there is no doubt that along with an increase in boat usage, comes a corresponding and devastating impact on our manatee population. The County Commission, working closely with all marine and environmental stakeholders, has now adopted a Boat Facility Siting Plan that allows for an additional 4,392 boat slips in Broward, while simultaneously creating a workable plan to ensure that manatee deaths are minimized. Importantly, the manatee protection element will be funded by user fees and not by property taxes. I am also proud that the Plan reserves 513 boat slips for future public use. This successful endeavor clearly shows that when the business community and the environmental community work together, everyone benefits. I am convinced that we can be an environmentally sensitive, pro-business county if we only try.

*Lastly, by a 9-0 vote, the County Commission has directed staff to amend Broward's Comprehensive Land Use Plan to strongly discourage golf course conversions and to require environmental contamination inspections The protection of our dwindling green spaces was a campaign promise I made to each of you. As a result, I have led the charge to protect our few remaining golf courses from residential conversions. I am thrilled to advise that my colleagues agree and we have unanimously voted to forward these important policy mandates to the appropriate entities for comment and eventual approval. When final, it will be the official policy of Broward County to "strongly discourage" the conversion of these few remaining open spaces. Moreover, any applicant who nevertheless decides to seek such a land use change will be required to provide a Phase I and Phase II environmental report showing the absence of environmental contamination, a difficult endeavor due to the traditional use and build up of pesticides and arsenic-laden herbicides on golf courses.

Clearly, in eight months, we have made substantial progress in furthering our shared vision for District 4 and Broward County. Of course, many important issues have yet to be addressed. I look forward to being your advocate. Together, we can, and will, make Broward County a better place for our families.

As usual, if you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at kkeechl@broward.org or 954 357 7004. Remember, I work for you.

Until next month.....