

# The Abrams Agenda



October 2016

## Palm Beach County Commissioner Steven Abrams

301 S. Olive Avenue, 12th Floor  
West Palm Beach, FL 33401  
345 N. Congress Avenue, Delray Beach, FL 33445  
561-355-2204 (WPB)  
561-276-1220 (DRB)

sabrams@pbcgov.org  
www.pbcgov.org/abrams  
Facebook: Steven L. Abrams  
Twitter: @CommAbrams



Sea turtles have been swimming the oceans for more than 100 million years and have been using our beaches, reefs and estuaries long before people settled in Florida. Our area has some of the most important nesting beaches for loggerhead sea turtles in the world, plus a large quantity of green and leatherback sea turtles.

Nesting on our beaches begins as early as March. Early nesters are usually leatherbacks with the more numerous loggerheads arriving in significant numbers in May. Nesting continues into August and tapers off in early September.

The arduous journey for the female sea turtle is evident when she crawls ashore to dig a nest, deposit her eggs, cover the nest, and return to the water. It takes between one to three hours for the female turtle to lay approximately 110 ping pong ball-sized eggs.

The nests are located approximately 18 inches below the surface, and are generally found above the high tide line on the dry beach and sometimes up into the dune vegetation.

### 2016 Turtle Season

Based on reports from the county's Environmental Resources Management Department, 2016 will be a near record year for loggerhead sea turtles in Palm Beach County with more than 30,000 nests county-wide. Additionally, green and leatherback turtles are predicated to have an average year, with approximately 1,000 and 250 nests, respectively.

A number of researchers, volunteer groups and agencies monitor sea turtle nesting in Palm Beach County. These surveys are conducted during nesting season by trained staff/volunteers permitted by the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#). The turtle species are identified by the tracks and the size and shape of the nests.

In recent years, sea turtle populations have declined, and they are now endangered and threatened species. This means that steps must be taken to stop their decline or they may become extinct.

Those of us who live and play in Palm Beach County have a special opportunity and responsibility to protect these creatures and their vulnerable nesting and feeding grounds. A number of researchers, volunteer groups and agencies are at work monitoring nesting beaches and conducting research to learn more about sea turtles. For more information, visit the county's [Environmental Resource Department and/or Florida Fish Wildlife Conservation Commission](#).



Adult loggerhead



Loggerhead hatchling

## No Increase on Property Tax Rate

The County's overall property tax rate will drop slightly for the upcoming fiscal year. At a recent county commission meeting, the Board approved the budget and the 2017 tax rate for operations and debt at \$4.9142 per \$1000 of taxable property value. This marks the sixth straight year that the property tax rate has remained steady.

The County will collect \$787 million in property taxes in 2017. This is above what was collected in 2016 because of new construction and property values continuing their post-recession climb. At the current tax rate, the owners of a \$250,000 house with a homestead exemption would pay about \$991 in property taxes as compared to \$986 in 2015. At the same time the value of their home would increase to \$251,750.

## BCC Briefs for September 13, 2016

At the September 13, 2016, Board of County Commissioners meeting, the board took the following action:

**Westlake** – received a staff presentation on potential impacts from proposed development within the city of Westlake, formerly known as Minto West, a 3,800-acre mixed-use residential and commercial project on Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road in west-central Palm Beach County.

**Westlake Fire Station** – approved a contract with Stephen L. Boruff, AIA Architects & Planners, Inc. in the amount of \$375,398 to provide architectural/engineering design services associated with construction of Fire Rescue Station 22 at the Minto/Westlake project site. A 10,000-square-foot, four-bay fire station is planned on Seminole Pratt-Whitney Road at an estimated cost of \$3.8 million.

**RPB Fire Stations** – approved an interlocal agreement to purchase two fire stations owned by the village of Royal Palm Beach for approximately \$1.746 million. The county currently provides fire-rescue services to the village through the Fire Rescue MSTU. Fire Rescue rents the buildings for \$225,000 per year and expects to continue providing service to the village for at least the next 10 years, making it more cost effective to purchase the stations.

**Lifeguards** – approved an agreement with Symphony Workplaces of Palm Beach, LLC for the use of one executive office suite for \$809 per month. County lifeguards at Kreusler Park do not have office, break room and changing area space that meets county standards. Construction of a new restroom building with office space for lifeguards has been delayed. In the interim, the office suite will be leased through January 2017 and may be extended on a month-to-month basis thereafter.

**Vehicles for hire** – approved on preliminary reading and to advertise for public hearing on September 27 an amendment to the county's vehicle-for-hire ordinance with regard to reciprocity for vehicle-for-hire companies operating in neighboring counties.

**Lake Delray Apartments** – adopted a resolution for the issuance of up to \$38 million in Housing Finance Authority government lending notes to acquire, rehab and equip 404 rental units at Lake Delray Apartments in Delray Beach to be rented to elderly persons and families at 60 percent of area median income. No county funds, its taxing power, faith or credit are involved.

**Animal Care & Control** – approved on preliminary reading and to advertise for public hearing on September 27 a series of amendments to the county's Animal Care & Control ordinance. Proposed changes include not issuing new pet shop and pet dealer commercial operating licenses and grandfathering in of existing licenses in good standing, and requiring pet shops and pet dealers to obtain dogs and cats from USDA licensed breeders, dealers and transporters that have no record of animal cruelty.