

# Kathleen Beckman

## YOUR

### Clearwater Councilmember

## Monthly Newsletter

March 2024



## Happy March!

The March calendar is chockfull of activities and events with options to please nearly everyone. From spring training baseball to outdoor markets and concerts galore, check out the list of offerings under “Mark Your Calendar” below. The first day of Spring is on Tuesday, March 19. This is also the date of our city elections. Three of the five City Council seats will be on the ballot, including the Mayor’s seat. Voters will also see a referendum question to change our election

date and format. You can learn more at the City’s webpage: [2024 Clearwater Election](#).

For the last four years it has been a privilege and honor to serve the residents of Clearwater. I’ve learned so much from everyone I’ve worked with and I’m proud of the positive changes we’ve seen. Thank you! And thank you for reading my newsletter, for being an engaged resident, and for all you do to make Clearwater a beautiful and welcoming place to live.

## Update on Drew Street Crashes Will be Reduced by 57%



Last year the State Legislature required the Florida Department of Transportation to conduct additional analysis on the improved safety design for Drew Street. **That study has been completed and it confirms significant safety improvements and minimal change in traffic flow or travel time.** Here are the highlights of the study:

- **The total number of crashes are expected to decrease by 57%.**
- **The build alternative will provide dedicated bike and safer pedestrian facilities.**
- **Updated 2045 forecasts show that Drew Street will operate at the same level of service.**
- **Travel demand model volumes estimate that parallel routes will experience a 4% increase in traffic on average. This means that on the busiest parallel street (SR60) you would see two additional cars per minute. On average parallel streets would see on additional car every 1.5 minutes.**
- **The travel time from Downtown Clearwater (Osceola Ave.) to Keene Road (2.2 miles) is only expected to increase by 30 seconds.**

**Remember** – This project will be paid for by \$12 million in FDOT and Federal Grant money. If this project does not move forward, the money will most likely go to a project in St. Pete, and Clearwater residents would have to fund any proposed safety improvements, of which there have been no alternative plans suggested. The average 100+ crashes per year on Drew Street would likely continue.

*Six Clearwater Construction Projects Set to  
Break Ground in 2024*



The City of Clearwater is about to enter a period of great change in our downtown. Four key projects are slated to break ground for construction during 2024. We will soon begin construction of our new low-cost and energy efficient **City Hall**. The city has contracted with an architect, a construction manager, and an owner's representative who will ensure the project is delivered on time and on budget.

The **DeNunzio** group has said they expect to break ground this fall on their **158 key hotel located on our Bluff**, that includes retail on the ground floor and a bier garden rooftop bar.

Right across the street, behind **Peace Memorial Church**, the city will soon begin construction on a **550 space parking garage** that will help serve the parking needs of Coachman Park, our downtown, and the Main Library.

**Fire Station 47**, located at 1460 Lakeview Rd. was built in the early 70's and is in need of replacement. **A new Fire Station 47 will be constructed on property the City owns across from Clearwater High School on S. Hercules Ave.** Biltmore Construction Company has proposed a new fully code compliant and energy efficient four apparatus bay, ten dorm room, four-bathroom fire station. Construction is expected to begin this spring and be complete in the summer of 2025.

**Archway Partners** should begin construction later this year on 81 units of much needed affordable and workforce housing at **1250 Cleveland St.** The plan calls for 30 one-bedroom units and 51 two-bedroom units. Communal amenities include co-working stations, a fitness center, a community garden, and a children's play area.

Finally, **Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)** will break ground at the corner of Myrtle and Court St. for their new **Multi-modal Transit Center** that will feature more bus bays, an enclosed rider terminal, ride share connections for services such as Uber and Lyft. Construction is expected to take 18-24 months. PSTA received a \$20 million grant from the US Dept. of Transportation for this project.

Clearwater is Saving Money  
and Reducing Pollution

**Greenprint 2.0** is Clearwater's Sustainability Plan that identifies common-sense approaches and policies that our local government is uniquely positioned to implement – actions that can reduce energy use and waste (thereby saving taxpayer dollars), create local jobs, improve air quality, and benefit Clearwater for years to come. Our Sustainability Coordinator, Cassie Cordova, recently gave an update on the progress we've made and the money we've saved. You can access the entire presentation here: [Sustainability Report](#). But the following images highlight the money saved and the positive impact we're making on our environment. Measurable goals are key, and Clearwater is determined to be a leader in sustainability in our region.

- 1<sup>st</sup> year:
  - ↓ 9% electricity
  - ↓ 27% natural gas
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year (partial):
  - ↓ 12% electricity
  - ↓ 39% natural gas
  - ↓ 6% water/irrigation
- Cost avoidance = \$1,153,460
- Cost savings = \$375,760



## Clearwater Celebrates Trailblazing Women during National Women's History Month

The **Clearwater Historical Society's Museum 'Women's History Month'** exhibit, the 5th Anniversary celebration of "Trailblazers" will officially open to the public from March 7 - May 31, 2024. This year's honorees, and **Trailblazing Women 2024** are incredibly impressive:

- 1) **Karleen F. DeBlaker.** (deceased). Politician, advocate & community leader
- 2) **Sylvia Earle.** Oceanographer, teacher, and environmentalist
- 3) **Anne McKay Garris.** Publisher of Beach Views, author editor, author, and advocate
- 4) **Kellis Jean Milner Glenn.** Trailblazing Teacher in Pinellas County Schools
- 5) **Jeannie Shapiro.** Executive Director, Clearwater Free Clinic, and community leader
- 6) **Barbara Sorey-Love.** Publisher, Long Beach Times & St. Pete Bulletin, and community advocate
- 7) **Margaret Word-Burnside.** Publisher and writer, Tampa Bay Magazine, and community leader

I've been privileged to know, learn from, and work with **Ms. Barbara Sorey-Love** (below left) and **Ms. Kellis Glenn** (right). I can't wait to see the exhibit, celebrate the work they have done, and to learn more about the phenomenal women who are being recognized alongside my two friends. You can learn more about the exhibit and the museum's hours here: [Clearwater Historical Society.](#)



## Clearwater Welcomes the Phillies



Again this year, Clearwater welcomes the **Philadelphia Phillies** for spring training. This is the 77th straight season the Phillies call Clearwater their home for February and March. We also welcome the thousands of Phillies fans from Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware who follow their beloved team to Florida.

The first game at BayCare Ballpark was played on Feb. 24; the Phillies beat the Yankees 4-0. The day before, the Phillies beat their crosstown rivals, the Toronto Blue Jays in the Spring Training opener 14-13. Games will continue until Monday, March 25.

To see a schedule, visit the Phillies website at: [www.mlb.com/phillies/spring-training](http://www.mlb.com/phillies/spring-training). You can also watch practice sessions for free at Carpenter Complex next to the stadium on Old Coachman Road.

## Are You Registered to Vote in Our Upcoming Election?



At our next election, on **Tuesday, March 19, 2024** voters will elect three members to the City Council – mayor and seats 2 and 3. Voters will also vote on a referendum to change our elections from March to August, including a change from a plurality to a majority, which is expected to impact the cost of city elections and turnout. You can read about the candidates and the referendum language here: [Clearwater Election 2024](#). Additionally, the **March 19, 2024** election will also serve as the presidential preference primary in Florida.

Additionally, it's important to know that throughout Clearwater, 17 precincts have new locations and 10 locations have been added. Please confirm your polling location here: <https://www.votepinellas.com/Election-Information/Find-Your-Precinct-Polling-Place>

**Early Voting Begins Saturday, March 9, 2024**  
**Early Voting Ends Sunday, March 17, 2024**  
**Election Day is Tuesday, March 19, 2024**

If you're not sure whether you're registered to vote, visit the Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections at: [VotePinellas.com](http://VotePinellas.com). You can request a mail ballot, too.

## People You Should Know... Making a Difference in Clearwater



Clearwater is fortunate to be the home of dozens of places of worship for our diverse population of nearly 117,000 residents. I've really enjoyed interacting with a number of religious leaders over the last four years. Two

congregations, **First United Methodist Church** located on Turner St. in downtown Clearwater, and **Trinity Presbyterian Church**, located near the corner of Gulf to Bay and Hercules, have played an important role in helping vulnerable populations and in opening their doors to community partnerships.

In this month's "People You Should Know" the Q&A highlights the work of the leaders of these two congregations, **Pastor Dawn Conti, from Trinity Presbyterian Church**, and **Pastor Matt Wallis from First United Methodist Church**. Read their individual interviews to learn more about how they were called to the ministry, the role their congregation plays in our community, and what they see as some of our most pressing needs. [Here is my interview with Pastor Dawn Conti](#). And [here is my interview with Pastor Matt Wallis](#). Thank you both for sharing your stories.

## Liv-Up is Helping Pinellas Seniors "Age in Place" in Their Homes



Our senior population in Pinellas County is one of the fastest growing demographics that are facing homelessness. The Village Movement is a grassroots effort to help seniors "age in-place" in their homes. In Pinellas County, it's known as **LIV-UP** (pronounced "live" up), or **Lutheran Intentional Village, Upper Pinellas**.

LIV-UP is comprised mainly of volunteers from the following Clearwater Lutheran churches – St. Paul's on Gulf-to-Bay, First Lutheran on Nursery and Grace Lutheran on North Highland.

LIV-UP's service area for 2024 is between Ulmerton Road on the south and Tampa Road on the north. However, the group hopes to include additional churches so they can reach more 55+adults.

Specific services (**Free!**) include coordinating access to services such as transportation; home repairs; computer assistance; and social, educational and wellness activities.

I really like LIV-UP's philosophy and goals. It's a program relevant and needed in our community. If you'd like to learn more, become a volunteer, or take advantage of services, visit the Upper Pinellas LIV-UP website at: [LIV-Up Pinellas](#).

## Mark Your Calendar



**March 7 and 8 - Summer Camp Registration** March 7 for Clearwater residents and March 8 for open registration. Summer camp runs from June 3 to Aug. 9.

**March 9-17: Clearwater Elections - Early Voting.** Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**March 9 - Market Marie in Coachman Park** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

**March 11 – 15 - Spring Break for Pinellas County Schools**

**March 14 - "Wag into Spring"** at Enterprise Dog Park - 3-6 p.m. Bring your pups to meet city staff, and receive free sustainable and dog-themed giveaways.

**March 16 - Art in the Park** -Free Vendor Spots at Coachman Park for Local Artists 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Click here for more information: [Art in the Park](#)

**March 17 - St. Patrick's Day!**

**March 19 – Election Day in Clearwater.** Polls open 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

**March 29- April 14, Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival,** Clearwater Beach, Take free sand sculpting classes, enjoy live music and fireworks, sample food from local vendors. This year's theme is "Sands of Time" Dive into a decade of memories and marvel at what's to come! **You can get tickets now** for the **Sand Walk** at: [Pier 60 Sugar Sand Festival.](#)

Check **The Sound** for upcoming concerts at **The Sound Amphitheater in Coachman Park** (Joe Bonamassa, Alabama, Air Supply, Bad Religion and Social Distortion, and more!)

**Ruth Eckerd Hall** also has a variety of entertainment lined up at both **Ruth Eckerd Hall** and the **Nancy and David Bilheimer Capitol Theater** in downtown Clearwater.

Clearwater is Hiring! Come Work with Us!

**We're Hiring!**



The City of Clearwater has job openings in a number of areas, including human resources, parks and recreation, communications, procurement and public utilities. Check out all the openings at: [City of Clearwater Jobs.](#)

Thank You for Your Interest and Support



One of the reasons I send out a newsletter is to receive feedback from you. However, please be aware that any communication with me related to the newsletter is public record.

**Important Links:**

[My Clearwater Magazine](#)

[Upcoming City Meetings](#)

[City of Clearwater Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[PSTA Veterans Ride Free on Public Transportation](#)

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