

# LEESBURG CURRENT

A publication by the City of Leesburg for residents of Leesburg, Fruitland Park and unincorporated areas served by municipal utilities.



Office of the City Manager October - December 2019

## Residential Home Improvement Grant Program

A point of emphasis for our City Commission is redevelopment and improvements in Leesburg. As part of this effort, the Commission recently approved a new Residential Home Improvement Grant program. This grant seeks to encourage our residents to improve the facades of their homes.

This program is an extension of our commercial grant that helps businesses with improvements to their buildings and signage. However, in this instance, the Commission wants to assist private homeowners by providing a 50% grant match up to \$5,000 for qualifying home exterior improvements. Projects that may be eligible for the grant include painting, siding and window upgrades.

For information on this program, please call our Community Development Department at 352-728-9786 ext. 1719 or visit the Facade, Sign and Landscaping Grant programs section of the Planning and Zoning page of the City website at [www.leesburgflorida.gov](http://www.leesburgflorida.gov).

## Work Continues on Downtown Master Plan

In an effort to continue redevelopment activities in downtown Leesburg, the City is developing a Master Plan for the area to create a unified community vision for improvements in the this corridor. The plan will identify infrastructure improvements, public policies and on-going programs to reinforce downtown's role as the heart of the City.



GAI Consultants was selected by the City Commission to help create this important planning document. Community workshops have been held and work is ongoing to incorporate input and ideas from various stakeholders. It is anticipated that the Master Plan will be completed by the end of the year.

For more information on the Downtown Master Plan, please feel free to contact the City Manager's office.

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## Budget Highlights for Fiscal Year 2020

The City Commission and staff have worked diligently to establish the annual operating budget for Fiscal Year 2020, which begins on October 1, 2019. This year's total budget will be approximately \$180 million.

Of the total budget, the General Fund comprises about \$30 million or 17% of all the services provided by the City. It is most recognized for governmental services which include police, fire, library, streets maintenance, parks and recreational programs.

To provide these services, the FY 20 Budget proposes to maintain the current millage rate of 4.2678 mills. While this is a very slight tax increase, the General Fund highlights fire services modifications by adding 3 new additional fire fighter positions and several capital improvement projects such as allocating funds for a new aquatic facility, a Teen Center to benefit our youth and additional slips at Venetian Cove Marina. The budget also includes a provision to partner with Lake County in addressing the issue of homelessness.

In our enterprise funds, which are made up of water, sewer, solid waste, gas and electric services, the budget totals nearly \$112 million. Providing utility services to the Leesburg region makes up the lion share of the City's operations. In fact, the single biggest annual expense is the purchase of energy from the Florida Municipal Power Agency which is \$42 million - almost 25% of the entire budget.

This year's utility allocations seek to keep competitive rates for our customers and improve our utility systems by planning the replacement of four transmission transformers, making improvements to our wastewater treatment plants and expanding the natural gas system.

The City Commission's progressive goals and fiscal responsibility have earned the City recognition from the Florida Government Finance Officers Association with award winning budgets and financial statements for the past 21 years.

## Holiday Happenings

- **November 29<sup>th</sup> - Main Street Christmas Stroll** presented by the Leesburg Partnership. Make this experience part of your family's holiday traditions – enjoy Christmas lights, quaint shops, Dickens Carolers, children's activities, dancers, pictures with Santa and REAL snow. Towne Square 5pm – 9pm
- **December 6<sup>th</sup> - Christmas Shop, Hop and Wine Walk** presented by the Downtown Leesburg Business Association and Leesburg Partnership. Stroll the downtown shops, try a variety of featured wines and grab a bite at a local restaurant. This is a ticketed event. Downtown Leesburg 5pm – 9pm
- **December 7<sup>th</sup> - Main Street Christmas Parade** presented by the Leesburg Partnership. Enjoy this great family friendly event in historic downtown Leesburg with performances by local groups, dazzling Christmas lights, festive food and more. The lighted holiday parade steps off at 6pm.
- **December 8<sup>th</sup> - Light up Festival & Boat Parade** presented by the City of Leesburg and Leesburg Boat Club. A dazzling holiday display of lights awaits you at Venetian Gardens. For details, contact the Recreation Department at 352-728-9885.
- **December 14<sup>th</sup> - Leesburg Food Truck-n-Flick Night and Classic Car Cruise In** presented by the Leesburg Partnership. Towne Square at 5pm



## Leesburg Public Library Programs

The *Haunted Library* takes place on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup> from 12:00pm - 4:00pm. This event is free and open to the public. Come dressed up in your Halloween best. *Disclaimer: This event is designed for children and definitely family-friendly. Most children enjoy it greatly. Some children and teens get scared. Some adults get scared. It's Halloween!*

Along with the Library's regular technology classes, there will be a few new ones this fall. The classes are free and registration is required. One of the new classes is *Digital Photos: Snap and Share*. The class is offered two times, with the choice of either Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> or Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> both from 9:30am – 11:30am. This class will teach you the main camera settings for your smartphone and how to adjust them for beautiful photos. Then, learn how to share your photo as an attachment to a text or an email message.

The Library also offers Windows 10 workshops, Introduction to Microsoft Word and a full four class series for the beginners in the computer world and more. Laptops are provided but you are welcome to bring your own.

All programs and classes are free but the technology classes require registration as they fill up fast. Call the library at (352) 728-9790, option 3 or email [librarian@leesburgflorida.gov](mailto:librarian@leesburgflorida.gov) to reserve your spot.

For more information about programs and library news, check out our website at [www.leesburgflorida.gov/library](http://www.leesburgflorida.gov/library) and Facebook page - Leesburg Public Library.

## Leesburg Recreation Department News



Registration for Bitty Ball Basketball (ages 5-6) is September 1<sup>st</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup>. Junior Basketball (ages 7-9) and Hot Shots (ages 10-12) registration is open October 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup>.

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual FREE holiday baseball and softball clinic will be held on December 26-27 from 9am-12pm. It is open to boys and girls ages 5 to 16.

Get creative and Create ART each Wednesday during school months, from 3pm to 5pm at the Leesburg Recreation Complex Gymnasium with the Mobile Art Studio. The Leesburg Center for the Arts will lead participants in art related projects. Learn fun facts about famous artists and the how to in art techniques while creating your very own piece of art.

### REC'N SATURDAY EVENTS

Haunted House: October 26<sup>th</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>, 7pm-10pm the Leesburg Recreation Complex Gymnasium on Griffin Road. Cost is \$5.00 at the door.

Open Mic: November 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. Come share your talent with the community. All genres welcome including comedy, spoken word, music and singing. Registration is required and the fee is \$5.00.

Breakfast with Santa: December 21<sup>st</sup>, 9am-11am. Registration opens November 4<sup>th</sup> and space is limited to the first 100 participants. Deadline for pre-sale tickets is December 18<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$7.00 for pre-sale or \$10.00 at the door.

For more information and to register for activities, please contact the Recreation Department at 352-728-9885 or visit [www.leesburgflorida.gov/recreation](http://www.leesburgflorida.gov/recreation).

## Plans Move Forward for New Aquatic Center

The City Commission has approved two big steps in the process to construct a new aquatic center to replace the aging Dabney pool and recently demolished Venetian Gardens pool.

Canal Street was chosen as the location for the new center. The 2.75 acre site was selected for a number of reasons. It conforms with the Commission's goal to use redevelopment as a tool to help revitalize the city. The central location provides a link between several marquee areas of the community. The location is convenient to SR 44 giving it the ability to host events and be a regional attraction.

CPH, Inc. was selected to design the new facility. The initial plans include a lap pool, zero entry pool with a slide and a bath house. Although still in the preliminary stage, the design phase is progressing.

It is anticipated that construction will begin in Spring 2020.