

City will consider park smoking ban

The Charlotte County Department of Health requested the city consider making its park areas (parks, harborwalk, linear park, multi-use recreational trail) smokefree, much in the manner as the Florida communities of Largo, Port Orange, Wellington, Weston, Coral Springs, Chipley and Sarasota County (beaches).

Recently, Charlotte Regional Medical Center, Edison State College and the City of Punta Gorda (City Hall area) have taken extra measures to make their environs more smoke-free. The request from the Health Department came as a result of the city's efforts to complete a "ring around the city" that promotes a healthy lifestyle. This request will require further research on how the above communities implemented such a program and what success they have had in compliance.

Council Member Albers and I met with representatives of the Boat Club to discuss partnership opportunities for a waterfront sports activity center for non-motorized craft (sailing, kayaks, canoes) on the property leased to the Boat Club and its environs. The item has been placed on the Sept. 2 council agenda for further discussion.

In order to continue the process of identifying and implementing expenditure savings during fiscal year 2010 in preparation for fiscal year 2011 budget challenges, three additional position reductions are being recommended. These reductions will place the size of the work force four positions below 1999 staffing levels. Cost savings include salaries and benefits:

Records Clerk (Police Department) by Sept. 30, 2010, thereby saving \$53,000 in FY 2011. Implementation of the new computer aided dispatch system, to include an E-Citation program, enabling police officers to scan violators' drivers licenses and more accurately and efficiently issue warnings or citations by using printers in the vehicles allows for the position reduction.

School Resource Officer (Police Department) by July 1, 2010, thereby saving \$16,000 in FY 2010 and an estimated \$44,000 in FY 2011. The savings are net of revenues received from the school district for cost sharing of the position. Completion of the Charlotte High School campus reconstruction by that date will enable one officer to fully cover the school grounds and buildings. Current campus configuration necessitates coverage by two officers.

Equipment Operator (Public Works-Right Of Way) August 2009, thereby saving \$48,900 in FY 2010 and an estimated \$48,900 in FY 2011. The department will use other staff to supplement based on needs during the rainy season.

The city manager, police chief and captain met with representatives of the Trabue Woods community to discuss business opportunities for Martin Luther King Boulevard within existing codes.



Howard Kunik
Kunik is the Punta Gorda city manager.