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Beach Broadwalk Renovation 'Halfway Home!'

BY CARON CONWAY

The multimillion-dollar Hollywood Beach Broadwalk renovation has

reached the halfway point and is ahead of schedule.

The Broadwalk makeover is completed along a 24-block area, from New

Mexico St. to Indiana St. with Marc Kleisley, project manager for the contractor, Burkhardt Construction, attributing the success of the project to

"the efficiency of the staff and the accuracy of the plans."

KLEISLEY praised the commitment of those involved with the project, "from the City all the way through the ranks to the laborers."

Components of the project's second phase, which started a year ago, include customized pavers in the pedestrian area, a crushed-shell jogging path, tabby concrete bike path, historically themed lighting fixtures and an 18-inch-high decorative wall separating the Broadwalk from the sand. During construction, public access to the beach will remain open at every street end, with periodic closures.

Phase III began in June and consists of water and sewer line replacement along Surf Road. Kleisley said it's a three-year project, "but we put two crews on it to speed things up."

Early this month, workers started on a second 24-block area of the Broadwalk, from Indiana Street south to Georgia Street. "It all starts over again, the whole process," Kleisley said. "We're getting there."

THE CURRENT construction is part of an ongoing, \$120 million redevelopment effort taking place in the Hollywood Community Redevelopment Agency's Beach District. Other projects in the Beach Redevelopment Plan are a comprehensive streetscape design and the underground conversion of utility lines, all between State Road A1A and the Broadwalk; the complete redesign of Charnow Park; and construction of a parking garage and community center overlooking the historic Garfield Street paddleball courts.

Plans for streetscape improvements along the Broadwalk currently are in the design stage. Construction on a six-

They're Here! 'Vegas Greeting' for Gulfstream Slots!



Flanked by Las Vegas-style showgirls, Gulfstream Park president Paul Micucci (r.) and Steve Angelo of slot machine supplier Williams Gaming introduce the "first real slots in Broward County." For more details turn to our special Section (Pgs. 19-22) to keep updated on casino gambling in South Florida. Photo by Caron Conway

Former 'Fashion Center' Planned for Mixed Use

BY CARON CONWAY

The Millennium SuperMall, Hollywood's notorious white elephant that languishes at the corner of State Road 441 and Hollywood Blvd., would get a new lease on life as a major mixed-use development through a preliminary plan presented to neighboring residents last month.

The project proposed by The Millennium Group would be built in several phases on the 40-acre site currently housing a defunct indoor flea market. Tentatively called "Millennium

City," the development would be a self-contained community with a pedestrian environment.

NEIL FRITZ, city director of downtown and corridor redevelopment, called the project "perhaps the most ambitious opportunity for redevelopment in our city."

It would be a far cry from the western Hollywood site's current incarnation as a failed flea market mall that opened in late 2003 with high expectations for revitalization of the surrounding area, and quietly died in mid-2005.

Previously known as Hollywood Fashion Center, the upscale 935,140 sq. ft. mall opened in 1974, home to major retailers such as JCPenney, Burdines and Jordan Marsh. The once-thriving center of commerce ultimately was swamped by competition from the Pembroke Lakes Mall which opened in late 1992, wooing many of the Hollywood tenants, including two anchor stores. By the end of 1993, the Hollywood Fashion Center was closed and boarded up.

See **MILLENNIUM** page 2

See **BEACH** page 3

MILLENNIUM from page 1

The mall reopened a decade later as The Millennium, "Hollywood's City Place," a flea market-style discount center. Weston-based Millennium Development Enterprises, a retail developer, signed a 60-year, \$35 million lease with the mall owners, including an option to purchase the property for \$33 million after 10 years.

Millennium envisioned an operation similar to Festival Marketplace in Pompano Beach, with some 2,000 booths, kiosks and shops, a 35,000 sq. ft. farmers market, food stands and special attractions. Millennium expected to create 2,600 new jobs, spend about \$9 million in renovations over a two-year period and generate \$39 million in sales tax within five years.

It was a grand plan that never panned out. Anticipated throngs of shoppers and tenants never materialized and following a series of suspected arson fires in May, 2005, the mall closed for good.

LATEST PLANS for a mixed-use development on the property bring a promise of the long-overdue redevelopment and beautification of the entire State Road 441 corridor, which is characterized by a proliferation of pawn shops and automotive businesses.

Urban planner Bernard Zyscovich, who recently completed a citywide planning and zoning study, said the Millennium project is "part of an overall redefinition" of 441.

"When it's done, you won't recognize 441," he told the crowd of 200 residents at an Oct. 10 dinner meeting, hosted by the developer at the Orangebrook Country Club.

"It won't look like a strip mall. It'll look



Shuttered Millennium Mall may revive as residential-commercial center.

like a beautiful boulevard."

Preliminary plans call for several buildings of varying heights, from three or four stories to more than 20 stories, with condominiums and some rental units, restaurants, large anchor as well as neighborhood stores, most likely a supermarket, office space, a 300-seat community theater and extensive landscaping.

Project attorney Debbie Orshefsky said the land-use-plan amendment process started about a year ago. "And it's now time for us to focus on the real design portion," she said.

Mayor Mara Giuliani, who said she would like to see the height of the high-rises scaled down in the final plans, called the overall layout "warm and welcoming."

GIULIANTI said the convenient location and variety of shops, restaurants and offices, and their proximity to residential units, could make the development "one of the hottest spots in South Florida."

Orshefsky assured the crowd that the development's impact on traffic, schools, and water and sewer services

must be addressed as part of the local zoning application before any construction can begin.

The project, which would take six to eight years to complete, is expected to generate \$82 million for city coffers over a 20-year period. Orshefsky said the developer has not requested any incentives from the city.



Photos by Caron Conway

Gibbon's Regret: Seeing Village to Finish

BY CARON CONWAY

When newly-elected state Rep. Joe Gibbons bids farewell to Hallandale Beach city government this month, it will be with one regret: that he didn't get to see a major mixed-use project planned for the Gulfstream Park property come to fruition during his three years and eight months on the City Commission dais.

That's almost how long city officials have been waiting for the ambitious plans for the site — which include shops, restaurants, condominiums, a hotel, office space and a movie theater complex — to become a reality.

ON SEPT. 19, commissioners tentatively approved the project while negotiations between the city and developer Forest City

Enterprises continued and various concerns, including traffic, parking, drainage and affordable housing needs, were addressed.

"In my heart of hearts, I think, yes, there will be a project there. But it will require a lot of give and take," said Gibbons, who resigns his commission seat Nov. 8 to represent state House District 105.

While he leaves the commission dais with mixed feelings, Gibbons calls this "an historical time" to be elected to the state Legislature, with Las Vegas-style slot machine operations about to begin in Broward County.

The 58-year-old Democrat said his proudest accomplishments as a city commissioner include construction of a new stadium at Hallandale High School, and the creation of

job training and development programs, and a focus group to address affordable housing needs.

Gibbons, whose background includes numerous civic involvements and membership on the Broward County Planning Council, said he will take away "valuable experience and exposure" gained by serving on the Hallandale Beach City Commission.

"All politics is local, and serving in local government has allowed me the opportunity to gain a broader understanding of the concerns of citizens and the methods by which to address their concerns," he said. "I have gained hands-on knowledge on issues such as land use, affordable housing and growth management. My experience at the local level has prepared me for the next

step, serving in state government."

GIBBONS is the first African-American to represent District 105, which includes all or parts of Hallandale Beach, Hollywood, Pembroke Park, Pembroke Pines, Pembroke Pines, Miramar and West Park.

As a state representative, "I hope to influence policy decisions regarding business and regulated industries, affordable housing, insurance, healthcare, education and senior citizen issues," said Gibbons.

"Committee assignments are extremely important and I am working to be assigned to committees that represent the needs and concerns of all Floridians, but especially those in District 105 which directly affect the quality of life of residents in our community," he said.

BEACH from page 1



Completed stretch of Boardwalk shows new surfaces and themed lighting fixtures. Photo by Tory Volpi

block pilot program, between Grant and Cleveland streets, will start in about five months, said Moe Anuar, senior project manager for Hollywood's Department of Design & Construction Management. Proposed improvements include decorative pavers on streets and sidewalks, and the creation of gateways, landscaped plazas and vista points incorporating water features, sculptures and/or central focal points.

ANUAR SAID work on the streetscape project will go "hand-in-hand" with the underground conversion of FPL, BellSouth and Comcast utility lines along a 52-block area, set to begin within the next five months.

Construction on the Garfield Street Parking Garage and Community Center, a 13-month project, will begin at the end of this year. The five-story, 400-space parking facility will feature a second-story observation deck, small rooftop viewing area for sunset-watching and public restrooms. The adjacent

two-story community center will have a paddleball pro shop, a large kitchen, a balcony with an ocean view and an 1,800-square-foot space for holding meetings, weddings and other events.

The Charnow Park renovation will commence a few months after the Garfield Street facilities, with the two projects finishing at the same time. New features will include three picnic pavilions, one large group facility and an entertainment pavilion with a stage, as well as a large open entertainment plaza featuring colorful pavers, tiered seating and an interactive water feature.

THE PARK also will have two playgrounds for tots and older children. A palm tree-lined walkway will lead from the Parking Garage and Community Center complex through the park to the beach.

For more information on beach improvements, call the Hollywood Beach CRA at (954) 924-2980 or visit www.hollywoodbeachcra.org.



Construction crews lay customized pavers along Boardwalk. Photo by Tory Volpi

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Special Election Feb. 13 to Fill Wasserstrom Seat

BY CARON CONWAY

The City of Hollywood will hold a special election to fill the seat of suspended Commissioner Keith Wasserstrom, who is awaiting trial on five felony charges for his role in helping a sludge-processing company secure an \$18 million contract with the city.

Commissioners unanimously voted Oct. 18 to hold the election, which will cost the city about \$58,000 and is tentatively set for Feb. 13. The qualifying period for the race will be Jan. 3 to 9. Wasserstrom's term would have expired in 2008.

Gov. Jeb Bush removed the commissioner from office Oct. 11, one day after the Broward State Attorney's Office charged Wasserstrom with four felony counts of official misconduct and one felony count of unlawful compensation. If convicted, he faces up to 25 years in prison. Wasserstrom pleaded not guilty at his Oct. 26 arraignment.

According to prosecutors, Wasserstrom entered into an illegal agreement with a lobbying firm to persuade fellow city commissioners to choose Schwing Bioset, a sludge-processing company whose bid was almost \$6 million higher than a competing company and which was ranked lowest among three companies by a six-member committee of experts formed by the city.

As part of his deal with The Normandy Group, a consulting firm that worked for Schwing Bioset and was run by his aunt's ex-husband, Wasserstrom's law firm would profit from lobbying fees for any cities that piggybacked on the Hollywood contract, according to prosecutors. Wasserstrom also was allegedly lobbying other local governments on behalf

of Schwing Bioset nearly a year before he persuaded fellow commissioners to award the company the contract in 2004.

Commissioners voted 3-2 in favor of Schwing Bioset, a subsidiary of Minnesota-based Schwing America. Wasserstrom and Mayor Mara Giuliani, whose son was Wasserstrom's law partner at the time, abstained from vote on the sludge-processing contract, citing the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In the wake of Wasserstrom's arrest on the felony charges, South Broward cities that pay Hollywood to treat their sewage are re-examining the arrangement and at least one city, Dania Beach, is considering taking legal action to force Hollywood to establish a regional authority that would give users an official voice in operations at the plant at 1621 N. 14th Ave.

Hollywood was established as the regional waste-treatment provider by the Florida Legislature in 1978. The other cities that pay Hollywood for sewage treatment are Hallandale Beach, Miramar, Pembroke Park and Pembroke Pines.

Schwing Bioset originally wanted \$27 million for the five-year Hollywood contract, but agreed to reduce the price to \$18 before the deal was signed. The company's sludge-processing technology, its trademark Bioset process, involves adding lime and powdered acid to wastewater and sewage. The mixture is then cooked and pressurized, converting it into "biosolids" that are recycled as fertilizer pellets. The company is part of a German-based group that manufactures specialized pumps and equipment used in power plants, dredging and oil refineries, in addition to wastewater treatment plants.



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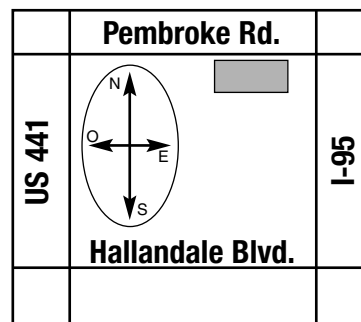
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Walter Axelson: Nears Half-Century of Service



Walter Axelson of Hallandale Beach is celebrating his 49th year of service and fellowship to the Hallandale Beach community as a Rotarian. In those 49 years, the former President (1963-1964) and official historian of club Hallandale Beach Aventura has shown a continuing commitment to community service. It's reflected in a variety of programs and initiatives which are responsive to community and social needs and puts into practice the organizations axiom "service above self" on behalf of his beloved community.

Born in Homefield, Pennsylvania, Walter moved to Hallandale in 1946 and started a small business called Walt's Wood Works, specializing in custom carpentry and woodwork. He would go on to open two more companies, the first Luxury Kitchens in 1960 and the second, Ye Olde Rock Shoppe (1987) in Hollywood before retiring.

IN 1957, he started his Rotary membership, said his daughter Audrey. "At that time he was asked by a Rotary member if he would like to join but he was reluctant because he was starting a business and didn't have the extra cash to do it fulltime.

"But my mother said 'Join, you will meet some nice people, and get the chance to meet the business people, as well as find out about the community'.

"In retrospect, it really has turned out that way for him; he has met so many people and so much of my dad's life and

friends have been through Rotary, that when I look back over the years, I can't think of many men and or their wives who were not a part of our family who were not Rotarians".

Walt's (or 'Pepaw' as his grandchildren called him) commitment to service was reflected in a variety of programs and initiatives responsive to community and social needs. He helped supply materials needed to build an inaugural Rotary Christmas sleigh in 1961, right up to the present day, providing holiday cheer, gifts and candy to kids throughout the Hallandale Beach neighborhoods.

BUT IF you asked him to name his most gratifying accomplishment, he probably would say he is especially proud of the 14 benevolent gifts he has been able to donate to the Paul Harris Fellow foundation on behalf of his family, friend and aide, Sheila, and pet, Tiger, which shows evidence of a true partnership with the community.

The Paul Harris Fellow recognition was created in memory of Paul Harris, the founder of Rotary as a way to show appreciation for contributions to the Foundation's charitable and educational program. A Paul Harris Fellow is an individual who contributes \$1,000 or in whose name that amount is contributed. Every Paul Harris Fellow receives a pin, medallion and certificate when he or she becomes a Fellow. This identifies the Paul Harris Fellow as an advocate of the Foundation's goals of world peace and international understanding.

JOE GIBBONS, President of Hallandale Beach-Aventura Rotary, states "I appreciate family and I know your family must touch your heart, your grandchildren and great grandchildren should be honored. "Walt has done an exemplary job as a member of the organization, his labor, passion, com-



Walter Axelson, center, honored with family members for community service.

mitment and appreciation for the foundation has been paramount to the success of our club's longevity."

Although now retired, Walt remains active working part-time in Ye Olde Rock Shoppe, creating decorative pieces, traveling around the country

with his pet Tiger, and of course his fellowship with the Rotarians.

Terri Dillard can be reached by email at peopleforchangeinc@yahoo.com. Mail can be addressed to Terri c/o P.O. Box 3264 Hallandale Beach, Fl. 33008



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