



Welaka Gazette

April 2023

From The Mayor's Desk

It's April in Welaka, and Spring is in the air. The clocks have turned forward; it's getting dark later in the Town, allowing us to enjoy our evenings in Welaka. On that note, I encourage everyone to visit one of our parks that you have never visited before. On the north end of 5th Avenue is our Dog Park. We are currently using the Field of Dreams while the two ball fields next to the Field of Dreams are converted into our new Dog Park. As many of you know, I have a Labrador Retriever named Tivie, and a Dachshund/Chihuahua named Scrappy. They love visiting the Dog Park and meeting other dogs in Welaka. I encourage you to visit our floating dock at the west end of Palmetto Street, at Bryant's Wharf. The views of the St. Johns River, especially at sunrise and sunset, are breathtaking. I encourage you to visit the area one evening and enjoy the sunset.

On a Spring note, I am excited to announce that Food Truck Fridays are back. Starting Friday, April 7th at 6:00 PM at Jefferson Smith Park. We are very excited about this year's Food Truck Friday season, which will run from April through August. We're bringing back DJ Doctor Doom from iHeart Radio to kick us off in style. We will be featuring lots of new food trucks and will be bringing back some of your favorites! Please invite your neighbors and friends, bring your family, and join us on April 7th.

On a grants front, the Welaka Town Council approved the engineering firm Mittauer and Associates to engineer and oversee the construction of our new, advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant. This project has been in the works for some time, and we are excited we have reached this phase. This new Plant will ensure that the Town's Infrastructure is ready for the future and that we are helping to improve and protect the water quality of the St. Johns River for future generations. We are also very excited about the \$16 Million Dollars Legislative Appropriation Request that Chief Porath has submitted to build a new Public Safety building here in Welaka. This is the first time the Town has ever made an Appropriation Request from the Florida Legislature, and we are very excited about it. I also wanted to inform you of a grant I requested from the Florida Department of Transportation to pave 4th Avenue completely. This Small County Outreach Program Grant is designed to assist small cities with significant paving projects. The Town of Welaka has never applied for this grant, so there is a good chance we will be awarded with it. I will keep you informed as we move forward in the process.

Finally, I want to touch on the visioning session the Town has recently gone through to get a sense of what the residents of the Town would like to see in the future. We had two very successful meetings with the residents, and we also had state agencies visit Welaka and give presentations on what they could offer the Town in the form of grants and planning assistance. Some have questioned the need for a visioning session or creating a plan, and talking about these matters can be scary, especially when all we want is for our small community to stay like it is. Still, the reality is that it is changing. People are moving to Florida at a rate of 1000 people a day, and with that, they are finding small communities to move into to get away from the big cities. Our goal is to update our Land Development Code, including our Zoning Code, to ensure that the Town grows as the residents envision it. Part of the visioning sessions were to solicit public input so we could make those decisions. Unfortunately, some have gotten so caught up in 'if the Town should have a roundabout on 309,' or 'if the boat ramp should be expanded,' that we have lost sight of the bigger picture. This is to create a plan that ensures the Town decides how we grow and where it grows. While items like roundabouts and boat ramps were discussed in the recent vision sessions and meetings, those projects might take years to happen if they ever

happen. Right now, please look past the shiny objects and focus on planning for the future of the Town because that is what matters the most.

I'd like to thank the Town for allowing me to serve Welaka and its residents for another 2-year Term. I'd also like to send a warm welcome to our new Councilwoman, Kimberly Dugger and share my gratitude and appreciation for the 4 years that Councilwoman Marianne Milledge served this wonderful Town of Welaka. Thank you all and welcome aboard, Councilwoman Dugger!

I hope your Spring is starting great. 2023 is shaping up to be a good year in Welaka. As always, we have many projects and events happening in the Town, and I appreciate all our Town residents who have worked so hard with us to make those projects happen. Again please get out and enjoy all Welaka has to offer this time of year, and I look forward to talking to you again next month.

Very Best Regards,

Handwritten signature of Jamie D. Watts, Mayor. The signature is in cursive and includes the word "MAYOR" in small capital letters at the end.

From The Council President

Many of you might now be familiar with the Citizens Advisory Board and its role in providing recommendations to the Town Council, to get input from the community of Welaka, and prioritizing projects that are important to residents.

Since the creation of the Board, we have made it our practice to engage the community and hold informational meetings. Recent input has made us rethink our scheduled meetings and adjust the day and time of these meetings. Instead of meeting on the Friday before the scheduled Town Council Meeting every month, we will now meet at alternating times and days. In the odd months, our meetings will continue to be held on the Friday before the Town Council meeting at 9 am. In the even months, the day of the meeting will now be held on the Thursday before the Town Council meeting and will begin at 6 pm. This change was made to allow residents who may not be able to make a 9 am meeting to attend in person.

These meetings are held in the Council room and are open to the public. As always, you can contact any one of us to make suggestions, offer input, or point out a problem. I have listed current board members and contact information below:

Jessica Finch, Chair: jfinch@welaka-fl.gov

Michael Anthony: welakalanding@gmail.com

John Karichkowsky: jwkski@gmail.com

Isaiah Mills: isaiah.mills@comcast.net

Pam Olson: pam@ddsc.biz

Scott Turnbull: robert_turnbull@aol.com

Hope to see you at a meeting soon.

In Your Service,

Jessica Finch, Welaka Town Council President



Need A Meeting With Your Mayor?

To schedule a meeting with your Mayor, please go to www.MayorWatts.com and select the date and time that works for you.



Do You Have News for the Town of Welaka? PUBLISH IT IN THE WELAKA GAZETTE!

For more information, please contact the Welaka Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon, at TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov



If you would like to recognize a Town of Welaka resident for dedicated community service to our Town, a local student with exceptional grades, or to nominate a Town resident who is celebrating a landmarked birthday such as turning 100 years old, please contact our **Welaka Town Clerk, Meghan Allmon**, at TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov. We will be happy to recognize them at our next Council Meeting by public recognition.



Eyeglass Recycling – How You Can Help

South Putnam Lion Club would like to remind you that you can drop your unused glasses by Welaka Town Hall in the drop-box in the main hallway. Donate glasses and change someone's life. Imagine if you could help a child read, an adult to succeed in their job, or a senior citizen maintaining their independence. Help to provide our community with more opportunities to grow and thrive.



Need To Report An Issue or Make A Town Code Violation Complaint?

Need to report a street or parks issue or make a Codes Enforcement Complaint?
Report online at www.TellTownHall.com



Helping Hands of Welaka Toy Drive

Helping Hands of Welaka is collecting toys to give out to the children who attend the Welaka Christmas Parade & Festival in December of this year. If you would like to donate, please contact **Harriet Vanslyke** at **(631) 764 - 2308**



Sponsor an Event

The Events Committee is seeking sponsors as they plan new events for the future. Some of the events include having a fireworks show at one of our events. Like all things, these things cost money. While the town sponsors these events, we do not have it in the budget to do everything we want to do. If you know anyone who would like to sponsor any of our events, please reach out to our Events Committee at events@welaka-fl.gov

**A \$25 REGISTRATION STICKER IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO DRIVE YOUR GOLF CART
IN WELAKA**

Valid Driver's License, Insurance (with golf cart listed) & \$25.00 (Cash, Check or Money Order)



The Welaka Town Hall is happy to announce that we now accept debit and credit cards in the office or over the telephone!



NO GREASE

POURING FOOD, OILS, AND GREASE DOWN THE DRAIN IS DESTRUCTIVE AND COSTLY!

Beware the F.O.G.

Prevent the CLOG

A yellow, blob-like creature with a face and arms, representing F.O.G. (Food, Oil, Grease). It is shown pouring liquid into a drain. A large red circle with a diagonal slash (prohibition sign) is overlaid on the creature and the drain.

HELP PREVENT SEWER OVERFLOWS IN YOUR HOME AND NEIGHBORHOOD!

NEVER FLUSH these items down the toilet:

- Tampons and other feminine hygiene products
- Baby Wipes/Wet Wipes/Cleaning Pads
- Dental Floss
- Q-tips/Cotton Balls
- Diapers
- Paper Towels/Tissues
- Hair
- Cigarette butts
- Condoms
- Kitty Litter

A collection of images showing various household items that should not be flushed: a stack of paper towels, a box of "most flushable wipes", a can of Lysol disinfectant, a box of Charmin moist wipes, a box of Baby Wipes, a box of Fresh Step Extreme cat litter, a box of Q-tips, a box of Always feminine hygiene products, a box of equate Dental Floss, and a cigarette butt.

When flushed down the toilet, these items bind together and may cause sewage backups in homes, manhole overflows and failures at sewage pumping stations, costing thousands of dollars to repair.

Only human waste and toilet paper should be flushed. **Even though some products such as wipes and baby diapers may claim to be flushable, they are not.**

Everyone can be a potential contributor to sewer problems and a potential victim of those problems.

SUNDAYS AT ANDERSEN'S



**BILLIARDS
ALL DAY**

LET'S PLAY

DRINKS • BINGO • FOOD





EVENTS

MON - WED AT ANDERSEN'S



**HAPPY
HOUR**

LET'S GET HAPPY!

DRINKS • MUSIC • FOOD



TUESDAYS AT ANDERSEN'S



**TACOS & BINGO
NIGHT**

LET'S PLAY

DRINKS • BINGO • FOOD



WEDNESDAYS AT ANDERSEN'S



**POOL NIGHT
6:00 PM**

LET'S PLAY

DRINKS • BINGO • FOOD



THURSDAYS AT ANDERSEN'S



**KARAOKE
NIGHT**

LET'S SING

DRINKS • MUSIC • FOOD



Town Of Welaka invites you to

FOOD truck



Fridays

April 7th May 5th June 2nd

July 7th August 4th

6:00 Pm - 9:00 Pm

Jefferson Smith Park, Welaka

ORGANIC

BAKED
GOODS

TASTY

COLD



**SATURDAY, APRIL 8,
12:00 Noon
at TOWN HALL.**

YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE!

**Learn the steps for Hands Only CPR.
This event is open to the community.**





**Hands-Only
CPR Training**



It's blueberry time again!
Blueberry Pancake Drive-Thru Breakfast

Saturday, April 8
8:00-10:00 a.m.
Woman's Club of Welaka
644 CR 309 Welaka

Breakfast includes:
-2 fresh blueberry pancakes
-butter/syrup
bacon or sausage
\$6 donation per plate requested

See you then!



Sunday, April 9, 7am
SUNRISE SERVICE
 Breakfast Served after the Service

He Lives! Easter Celebration

Saturday, April 8, 11am
EASTER EGG HUNT
 The Story of Easter
 Hot Dogs for lunch
 (Kids up to 11)



THE CHURCH of WELAKA
 638 CR 309 * Welaka, FL 32193
 (386) 467-3251



One Book, One Community

JOIN OUR BOOKCLUB

- 📅 April 10th - May 15th 2023
- 🕒 6:00 PM - 6:45 PM EST
- 📍 Virtual | Zoom



REGISTER FOR FREE

Register and receive your zoom login and security code*

- 🌐 Download our "CRAZY" syllabus: <https://tinyurl.com/5bnnhyud>



Visit our website: www.patientsnotprisoners.org | Contact Us: (904)834-0035



Come play



at the **Womans' Club of Welaka**
 644 CR309 in Welaka

Monday, April 10
 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Light snacks provided
 BYOB

\$5 donation per player
 Must be 21 to play

Hope you can join us!



GRAND OPENING

LIVE MUSIC
 BOUNCE
 HOUSE FOR
 KIDS
 FACE
 PAINTING



FREE COFFEE
 FREE FOOD
 FREE
 GIVEAWAYS

April 15 9am-2pm
 417 Elm Street, Welaka, FL



Makers' Market
 at the
Woman's Club of Welaka

644 CR609 in Welaka

Saturday, April 15 9:00-3:00

Crafts, food,
 vendors and fun!

Come Join Us!

Live music with
 Cam Gordon

Vendor info: 904-347-7758

Monday, April 17

Free UF/IFAS events

5:00PM – 6:00PM Plant Clinic
 6:00PM – 7:00PM Learning Workshop
Summer Vegetable Gardening

Welaka Woman's Club
 644 Co Rd 309, Welaka



TOWN OF WELAKA CONTACT LIST

WELAKA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Michael Porath - Police Chief

Direct Line: (386) 524-4015

Town Hall Extension: 107

mporath@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Meghan Allmon - Town Clerk

(386) 467-9800 Ext. 102

townclerk@welaka-fl.gov

Ellen Dickason - Assistant Town Clerk

(386) 467-9800 Ext. 104

edickason@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA UTILITY DEPARTMENT

Emma Sledge - Utility Clerk

(386) 467-9800 Ext. 103

esledge@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka AFTER HOURS Call Center

(386) 467-8677 / TDD: (800) 955-8771

WELAKA CODE DEPARTMENT

Pauline Kinney

(386) 530-0336

codes@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Mark Criswell - Universal Building Inspector

(386) 467-9800 Ext. 105 or Option 4

building@welaka-fl.gov

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor Jamie Watts

(386) 467-9800 Ext. 101

Direct: 386-524-4009

jwatts@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA TOWN COUNCIL

Council President Jessica Finch

(386) 467-9800 (Option 7, Option 2)

Town Hall Extension: 200

jfinch@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Kimberly Dugger

(386) 467-9800 (Option 7, Option 3)

Town Hall Extension: 201

kdugger@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Tonya Long

(386) 467-9800 (Option 7, Option 4)

Town Hall Extension: 202

tonyalong@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Kathy Washington

(386) 467-9800 (Option 7, Option 5)

Town Hall Extension: 203

kwashington@welaka-fl.gov

Town Attorney, Patrick Kennedy

TownAttorney@welaka-fl.gov

Events Committee: events@welaka-fl.gov

Waste Pro: (386) 328-5445

Please welcome Welaka's new Councilwoman, Kimberly Dugger!



April

[PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL THE WELAKA TOWN HALL TO
UPDATE YOUR MAILED PAPER BILLS TO E-MAILED BILLS](#)

[WE ALSO ACCEPT CREDIT & DEBIT CARDS IN THE TOWN HALL
OR OVER THE TELEPHONE](#)

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Easter Egg Hunt 11 AM – 1 PM Downtown Park Town Yard Sale 8 AM – 3 PM Town Hall Pavilion
2	3 Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup	4	5	6 Citizens Advisory Board Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	7 Town Hall Closed (In observance of Good Friday) Food Truck Friday 6 - 9 PM Jefferson Smith Park	8 Town-Wide Clean-Up 8 AM Pavilion CPR Class 12 PM Town Hall Blueberry Pancake Breakfast 8 – 10 AM Woman's Club of Welaka
9 Easter Sunday Sunrise Service 7 AM The Church of Welaka	10 Trash & Recycling Pickup Bunco 6:30 - 8:30 PM Woman's Club of Welaka	11 Welaka Town Council Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	12	13	14 Town Water Flush Day (May experience low water pressure)	15 Makers' Market 9 AM – 3 PM Woman's Club of Welaka Gem City Coffee, Inc. Grand Opening 9 AM – 2 PM 417 Elm Street, Welaka
16	17 Meter-Reading Day Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup Plant Clinic 5 PM Workshop 6 PM Woman's Club of Welaka	18	19	20 Zoning Board Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	21	22
23	24 Trash & Recycling Pickup	25 Code Enforcement Board Meeting 6:00 PM Welaka Town Hall	26	27	28 National Arbor Day	29
30						