



Welaka Gazette

August 2023

From The Mayor's Desk

As the calendar flips to August and we feel the first hints of an approaching fall in Welaka, a spark of enthusiasm kindles within me. It's not merely the prospect of a mild weather break that stirs my heart, but the dawning of a much-cherished time – the holiday season. And what could be a more fitting start than our beloved Food Truck Fridays season finale? This year's event is set to scale new heights, crowned with a mesmerizing fireworks spectacle guaranteed to leave a mark on your memories. Block your schedule for August 4th, from 6 PM to 8:30 PM; the food trucks will be doling out amazing food as always. This will be followed by a breathtaking performance at 9 PM by the river's edge. Being part of the vibrant Welaka community during this exciting period fills my heart with joy and anticipation.

On a more personal note, I would like to share a decision that has required much thought and reflection. Running for State Representative was not a choice I made lightly. Over the past year, this decision has weighed heavily on me. As your Mayor, we have together achieved remarkable feats, and it occurred to me that we could do even more if I were to represent you at the state level. You might have come across my announcement in the newspaper, but I wanted to have this heart-to-heart with you. Rest assured; this decision doesn't distance me from our community. I will continue to reside in Welaka, participate in Town Council meetings, and contribute to our community's leadership. Even better, I will be your voice in Tallahassee, championing our causes at the state level. I believe this is the right step forward. Still, I am acutely aware that this journey would be impossible without your backing. United, we can achieve extraordinary things for our community. I am eager to safeguard and shape Welaka's future with you.

Returning to town matters, August marks the onset of the budget season. I am delighted to announce that the Welaka Town Council has agreed with my suggestion of not raising our tax rate. This decision is a significant victory for our residents, and I appreciate the Town Council's cooperative spirit. We understand that life has its challenges, and the last thing we wanted was to increase your financial burden. As we gear up for the budget presentation in September, we commit to maintaining fiscal discipline while ensuring our budget is balanced. Your unwavering support and trust are pivotal in our endeavor to make Welaka the best it can possibly be.

As we wait anxiously for the outcomes of our grant applications, a feeling of optimism fills my thoughts for the incredible projects we've planned. The possibility of paving 4th Ave through the Florida Department of Transportation grant has been a big project on my mind for months. Moreover, with the forthcoming legislative session in Tallahassee, it's time to gear up for our appropriation request for the emergency operations building. The prospect of providing round-the-clock police, fire, and EMS services are humbling. It highlights our deep commitment to our community's safety and welfare. Initiatives like these fill me with a profound sense of pride and remind me of our town's tremendous potential.

As we keep refining our land development code and ordinances, we pledge our commitment to safeguarding the quaint charm of Welaka. It's gratifying to observe the interest from developers keen on building in our town. Still, we understand the crucial role of managing growth to maintain the very essence of Welaka that we so dearly love. Our efforts to establish a framework that harmonizes development with preservation echoes our profound love for our unique community. These revisions are more than just regulations – they signify a community standing together for our town's long-term welfare and vibrancy. We are confident about the future; knowing that the steps we're taking will keep Welaka beautiful and vibrant for many generations to come gives us great hope and confidence.

As I pen down these final lines for this month's newsletter, my heart swells with gratitude for the chance to serve you as your Mayor. Every day, it is an honor to work tirelessly to improve our town, striving to live up to your faith and expectations. I look forward to the upcoming community events and hope to see many of you there,

reveling in our town's rich culture and dynamic spirit. Let's weave a bright future for ourselves and the generations yet to come.

Very Best Regards,



From The Council President

The dog days of summer are here. I have lived in Florida since the age of two when my dad got out of the army and my parents moved back to Florida. I can honestly say that I can never remember a summer quite like this. What to make of it? It is hard to say but some are predicting an extremely active and possibly intense hurricane season. If you were here in 2022, I'm sure you remember Ian and Nicole. In 2016 and 2017, Matthew and Irma came and left us with weeks of unprecedented flooding. The names Frances and Jeanne might ring a bell if you were here in 2004. Needless to say, that was a summer to remember for sure. Since peak hurricane season runs from August 15th until October 15th, now is the time to pray for the best but also prepare!

How can we prepare? · Know Your Risk · Gather Emergency Supplies · Evacuating? Sheltering in Place? Have a Plan? · Plan to Stay Connected · Take Steps to Protect your Home from Wind and Flood

Use these sites for more information:

Find your evacuation zone: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/knowyourzone/>

See if you are at risk of inundation in case of dam failure: <https://wuft--dam-project.herokuapp.com/>

Find local shelters and evacuation routes: https://main.putnam-fl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/RedCross_and_SpecialNeeds_Map_2.pdf

You must pre register for special needs assistance and shelters; forms are also available at Town Hall: <https://snr.flhealthresponse.com/>

Safety guidelines for gas generators: <https://ahca.myflorida.com/content/download/5083/file/GeneratorSafetyBrochure.pdf>

Sign up for emergency alerts: <http://putnamalert.com>

For additional, extremely useful information visit the Red Cross's site:

<https://www.redcross.org/get-help/how-to-prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/hurricane.html>

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? Report online at www.TellTownHall.com
Or make a Codes Enforcement Complaint? Email codes@welaka-fl.gov



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



TOWN OF WELAKA BOARD & COMMITTEE MEMBER VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS

If interested, please inquire with the Town Clerk or visit the Town's website main page to apply for the Welaka Code Board, Zoning Board, Charter, Events or the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Website: www.Welaka-fl.gov
E-Mail: TownClerk@welaka-fl.gov

Plant a Live Oak Challenge for Welaka, FL

With so many trees being cut down, we need to plant now! If Welaka comes together, future generations will have the beautiful Live Oaks and the canopies that we all love!

If every resident and business will plant 1 live oak tree, together we will ensure that generations to come will be able to see those beautiful moss-covered trees throughout our town!

Thank You,
Councilwoman Tonya Long

How to Plant a Live Oak ~ Please see the link below:
<https://treerewal.com/how-to-plant-a-live-oak-tree-the-ultimate-guide/>

JOIN US FOR THE
Going Beyond
SIMULCAST
PRISCILLA SHIRER
Worship with Anthony Evans

AUGUST 26, 2023
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

THE CHURCH of WELAKA
638 CR 309
WELAKA, FL 32193
386-467-3251

TICKETS ARE \$10 EACH
Spaghetti Lunch will be provided.

WE RECOMMEND GETTING TICKETS EARLY AS SEATING IS LIMITED

Lifeway women

Monday, August 21

Free UF/IFAS and Master Gardener events

5:00PM – 6:00PM Plant Clinic
6:00PM – 7:00PM Learning Workshop
Tree Pruning Basics

Welaka Woman's Club
644 Co Rd 309, Welaka

An Equal Opportunity Institution.
UF IFAS Extension
FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER



Tree Pruning Basics

Pruning is a major necessity in the life and health of a tree and palm. In this Learning workshop, we will discuss the effects of pruning on trees, proper pruning, structural flaws to watch out for, and ideal credentials to look for in a tree trimmer.

MASTER GARDENER PLANT CLINIC

All Learning Workshops (except Crescent City), will be preceded by a plant clinic from 5:00 to 6:00 pm, so bring your plant questions and problems with you. Need help identifying a disease or pest? Bring photos or plant specimens and let one of our Master Gardeners help.

The Presentation on August 17 will be available via Zoom to attend virtually. Zoom registration is required & can be found at <https://bit.ly/Treebasics>

DATES:

ALL EVENTS ARE RAIN OR SHINE

Thursday, August 03 | 6pm-7pm
Interlachen Community Center
135 S County Rd 315 Interlachen, FL 32148

Tuesday, August 15 | 6pm-7pm
Bostwick Community Center
1252 Tillman St, Palatka, FL 32177

***Thursday, August 17 | 6pm-7pm**
UF/IFAS Extension Putnam Auditorium
111 Yelvington Rd, East Palatka, FL 32131

Monday, August 21 | 6pm-7pm
Welaka Woman's Club
644 Co Rd 309, Welaka, FL 32193

For more information:

pjulio@ufl.edu or call 386-329-0318

An Equal Opportunity Institution.

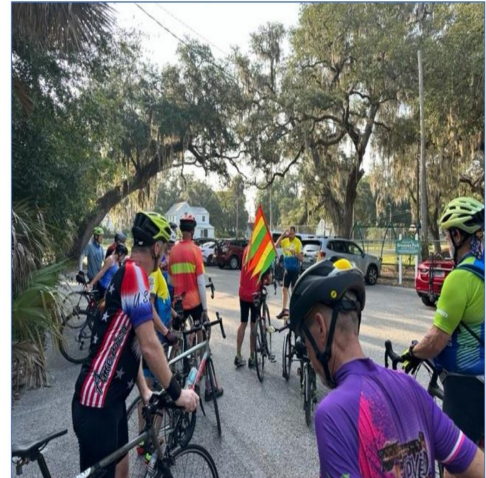
The University of Florida is committed to providing universal access to all our events. For disability accommodations such as sign language interpreters and listening devices, please contact pjulio@ufl.edu at least 2 weeks in advance. Advance notice is necessary to arrange for some accessibility needs.

sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/putnam/

On July 1, 2023, we were privileged to have 16 intrepid riders from the North Florida Bicycle Club come together for an inaugural ride in Putnam County. Leading the ride were Welaka residents and avid bikers, Bruce and Janet Smith. The first five miles from Welaka's Downtown Park on CR 308-B provided a good warmup with a few hills and plenty of sunshine. Arriving in Pomona Park, we turned south and rode to the shores of Lake Stella in Crescent City where the first formal rest break occurred. The lovely lake water was tempting but only one rider bravely splashed in for a much-welcomed cooldown. A quick stop at Winn Dixie gave everyone the opportunity to fill their water bottles at the bulk water vending machine. For only \$2.50 five glorious gallons of cool filtered water flowed, and it was enough for the whole group and more. Rested and refreshed, we headed back north to the shores of Crescent Lake along the aptly named Paradise Shores Drive. Another short break to admire the view of the lake at "The Bear" on Pomona Landing Road, we continued the ride circumnavigating Lake Broward. Local horses, Hawk and Dutchess, were waiting at their fence on Sisco Road and we dutifully provided carrots for their enjoyment. Once we returned to Pomona Park, the ice cream at 12 Below Zero Ice Cream Bar was awaiting us. Most of the riders indulged in a cold treat on a hot day. The last five miles were on the slightly hilly Old Welaka Road, and before long we were back to our starting point in Welaka, hot and sweaty, but happy. It was a good day!

2 minute 30 second video with music is at this link:
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/cypii8xg5lyhozl/NFBC>

To join in on the FUN, please feel free to contact us:
Bruce Smith (904) 424-3855
Janet Smith (904) 705-6856



A REGISTRATION STICKER IS REQUIRED IN ORDER TO DRIVE YOUR GOLF CART IN WELAKA

Please bring your driver's license, proof of insurance
(with golf cart listed) and \$25.00 to the Town Hall
New registration stickers will be available starting August 15, 2023

Fireworks Donations



Food Truck Friday River-Front Fireworks Show

August 4, 2023

★ Platinum Sponsors: \$2,500 ★

★ Gold Sponsors: \$1,000 ★

★ Silver Sponsors: \$500 ★

★ Bronze Sponsorship: Less Than \$500 ★

Resident & Non-Resident Sponsors/Donations Welcome!

If anyone wishes to contribute, the Welaka Town Hall will be taking donations anytime!

THANK YOU!

AUGUST 4
5:30-8:30PM

FOOD TRUCKS DJ DR DOOM
FOAM PARTY
FIREWORKS @ 9 PM
OVER THE RIVER

WELAKA, FL
River of Lakes

Jefferson Smith Park
1050 Elm St | Welaka, FL

TOWN OF WELAKA CONTACT LIST

WELAKA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Michael Porath - Police Chief

Direct Line: (386) 524-4015

(386) 467-9800 ext. 107

mporath@welaka-fl.gov

MAYOR'S OFFICE

Mayor Jamie Watts

(386) 467-9800 ext. 101

Direct: 386-524-4009

jwatts@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Meghan Allmon - Town Clerk

(386) 467-9800 ext. 102

townclerk@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA TOWN COUNCIL

Council President Jessica Finch

(386) 467-9800, ext. 200

jfinch@welaka-fl.gov

Ellen Dickason - Assistant Town Clerk

(386) 467-9800 ext. 104

edickason@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Kimberly Dugger

(386) 467-9800, ext. 201

kdugger@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA UTILITY DEPARTMENT

Emma Sledge - Utility Clerk

(386) 467-9800 ext. 103

esledge@welaka-fl.gov

Councilwoman Tonya Long

(386) 467-9800, ext. 202

tonyalong@welaka-fl.gov

Welaka AFTER HOURS Call Center

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

Councilwoman Kathy Washington

(386) 467-9800, ext. 203

kashington@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA CODE DEPARTMENT

Pauline Kinney

(386) 530-0336

codes@welaka-fl.gov

Town Attorney, Patrick Kennedy

TownAttorney@welaka-fl.gov

WELAKA BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Mark Criswell - Universal Building Inspector

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

building@welaka-fl.gov

Events Committee: events@welaka-fl.gov

Waste Pro: (386) 328-5445

It is our pleasure to serve the Town of Welaka!



August

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
					Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting 9 AM - Town Hall Food Truck Friday 6 - 9 PM Jefferson Smith Park Fireworks Show 9 PM Welaka Riverfront	
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup	Welaka Town Council Meeting 6 PM Welaka Town Hall		Welaka Fire Board Meeting 6 PM Welaka Fire Station		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	Trash & Recycling Pickup Town Water Flush Day (May experience low water pressure)	Meter-Reading Day		Zoning Board Meeting 6 PM Welaka Town Hall		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	Trash, Recycling & Yard Debris Pickup	Code Enforcement Board Meeting 6 PM Welaka Town Hall	Charter Review Committee Meeting 5 PM Welaka Town Hall			
27	28	29	30	31		
	Trash & Recycling Pickup					