



Prebble Q Ramswell

Positive Change By and For the People. Florida's Future Begins With Us!



THE RAMSWELL REVIEW

A monthly newsletter from Destin City Councilmember Prebble Q Ramswell

June 4, 2015

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▶ Open Container Brew-Haha

Lulu's is opening in about a week and promises to be an exciting new addition to the local restaurant scene. However, a request by developer Peter Bos has many folks concerned. Bos requested the county to approve open containers (alcohol) from Lulu's, down a winding trail adjacent to Destin Middle School, through Turnberry Harbor and into Destin Commons. He is asking commissioners to allow people to carry and consume alcohol throughout the Commons and the trail to Lulu's.

The primary concern for many residents is the proximity to the school and the reality that students could be out playing kickball and have beer-guzzling spring breakers only a few feet away. Another concern is law enforcement and trash; who will be paying for extra Sheriff's officers to patrol this area and who will be ensuring the area remains clean and free of illegal activities?

At our May 18th City Council meeting, we voted unanimously to oppose any open container along the trail or at the Commons. The letter was presented to Commissioner Kelly Windes to indicate how we felt as a city. Because the Commons and the entire area in question is unincorporated County, the City of Destin has no legal authority though, obviously, our citizens would be affected.

The Commission will be hearing and voting on Mr. Bos' request at the June 16th meeting. I encourage you to share your thoughts with the commissioners ahead of the meeting. Attending the meeting would perhaps be even more beneficial, as a room full of voters vocally showing support or opposition does much to influence the Commissioners' votes. The meeting will be held at the Water and Sewer Building, 3rd Floor Large Conference Room, in Fort Walton. It begins at 8:30am.

▶ City Power Bill Q's

Wouldn't we all like an extra million bucks? Well, that's exactly what happened in Crestview when Destin resident Steve Menchel discovered that the city was being overbilled by Gulf Power. Upon acknowledgment of the errors, Gulf Power refunded Crestview \$961,252. Because of this huge mistake, Mr. Menchel decided to next help out his own city. Unfortunately, the process hasn't been as straightforward as hoped. Gulf Power's bill to the City of Destin did not itemize by pole number; rather it listed only addresses, and in many cases a street name only. This makes an inspection and audit of the poles impossible. Many items were the exact same amount and many addresses appear to be private property.

It sounds as simple as requesting an itemized bill. Guess again. The City of Destin apparently requested this itemized, pole numbered list back in 2011, yet it was never sent. A new request issued last month resulted in a response from Gulf Power noting they would have one to us by August. This is unacceptable in my opinion, and I appreciate Mr. Menchel bringing the problem to the Council's attention. In order to bill, Gulf Power must have a master list. Poles have unique numbers to facilitate in their identification. Funny how these unique pole numbers are readily accessed and identified when there is a repair being made, but suddenly this list is unavailable and/or incomplete for purposes of a client checking their bill for accuracy.

Indicating a list will be ready by August gives me cause for concern. A list exists. Stall tactics lead to suspicion. I for one look forward to reviewing the list they present and comparing numbers from past bills.

▶ Pending Matters

LOCAL COASTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: At Council on June 1st, I brought up the concern that though there is an MOU based on an interlocal agreement between Destin and the County, there is no firm management plan in place that details the who, what, when, where, and how. City Manager Greg Kisela checked with Jim Trifilio at the County who informed us that they have budgeted for and plan to work on the development of this plan in FY 2016.

SHORT-TERM RENTAL OCCUPANCY LIMITS: We had a very successful workshop on the problems associated with short-term rentals. The discussion will return to Council for formalized motions probably at the July 6th meeting. Several local HOA's have or are in the process of changing their covenants and restrictions to address this issue, as well as the wedding venue rental issue.

TAXI REGULATION: The taxi regulation issue should be on the agenda for June 15th.

TDC: The TDC approved our total request at their final meeting in May. The next step is final approval by the Board of Commissioners

CODE ENFORCEMENT: The new Magistrate is now in place. The online system which will provide greater accountability and tracking should be in place by mid-June.

RESTORE ACT DOLLARS: The initial rankings by the ORAC for funding of Restore Act dollars are in. For projects greater than \$90,000, the City submitted Clement Taylor Park Restoration -- it is #7 on the initial ranking -- and Heritage Park and Plaza --- it is ranked #14. Final rankings will be determined following presentations to ORAC for each project on June 16th.

▶ News You Can Use

MEETINGS:

- Bid Committee Meeting: June 9, 9:30 AM @ City Hall
- Public Works/Public Safety Meeting: June 9, 5:30 PM @ City Hall
- Harbor CRA-AC Meeting: June 10, 5:30 PM @ City Hall
- Code Enforcement Hearing: June 11, 5:30 PM @ City Hall
- City Council Meeting: June 15, 6:00 PM @ City Hall
- Board of County Commissioners: June 16, 8:30 AM @ FWB
- Town Center CRA/AC Meeting: June 17, 5:30 PM @ City Hall
- Harbor and Waterways Board Meeting: June 22, 5:00 PM @ City Hall
- Bid Committee Meeting: June 23, 9:30 AM @ City Hall
- Environmental Tree Committee Meeting: June 23, 4:00 PM @ City Hall
- Code Enforcement Hearing: June 25, 5:30 PM @ City Hall

On a side note, I have been appointed to serve as Chair of the Growth Management and Economic Affairs Legislative Committee for the Florida League of Cities. As chair of one of five legislative committees, I was also selected to serve on the 2015 Resolutions Committee and the 2015 Legislative Committee for the League.

This is a tremendous honor, especially in light of the fact that this time last year I was thrilled just to be selected to be on the committee. There are five committees, each with a different focus. These committees play a very important role in shaping legislation in Florida. We are charged with ensuring proposed bills are representative of local and state needs and choose several as focal points and draft resolutions either in favor of or opposition. These issues form our legislative priorities and will result in committee members from all across Florida meeting with their Senators and Representatives to discuss and advocate for or against. I look forward to working with my Vice-Chair, Mayor Bill Capote of Town of Palm Bay, and committee members to select our legislative priorities for the 2016 Florida Legislative Session.

Hello Friends!

Thank you for subscribing to my monthly newsletter, *the Ramswell Review*. It is my goal to improve communication between the city and its citizens, and act as a conduit of information on issues that affect our community and future.

There are many important issues to face in the coming weeks and months and it is important that we are all as educated and informed as possible so that we can make the best decisions for Destin. I value your input and insight and am always available to you. I recognize that we each offer a unique and valuable perspective on the issues and believe everyone in this community's opinion carries weight. I believe in positive change—by and for the people. Florida's future begins with us.

I look forward to a two-way relationship with the community knowing that we all have the same goal of a beautiful, successful city centered on family values.

Best,
Prebble



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I always welcome your feedback and input. However, please be sure to direct any correspondence related to city business to my city email address pramswell@cityofdestin.com. All such correspondence shall be considered a public record pursuant to Florida's open records laws.

Any views or opinions expressed in this newsletter are my own and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Destin City Council or the views or opinions of any other Councilmember. This newsletter is not an official record nor a transcript of the matters presented to, or the decisions made by, the City Council and should not be interpreted as such.

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