



WILDWOOD CONNECTION



Above: Wildwood's five-member city commission.

Below: Commissioner Joe Elliott, who will host the first Community Chat with a Commissioner on October 16 at Warfield Auditorium.



CHAT WITH A CITY COMMISSIONER BEGINS ON OCTOBER 16

In conjunction with Florida City Government Week, the City of Wildwood will launch Community Chat with a Commissioner, a new brown-bag lunch series on the third Monday of each month.

Commissioner Joe Elliott will be the first city commissioner featured, and will be on hand to visit with attendees from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. on Monday, October 16, 2023, at the Warfield Auditorium, 98 North Warfield Avenue.

The public is invited to stop by for informal conversation with Commissioner Elliott. There is no specific agenda and reservations are not needed or accepted. Attendees are welcome to bring their own lunch or other refreshments.

"I ran as a leader who listens, and I remain committed to that promise," Elliott said. "This is an additional way to learn more about our community and hear what constituents have to say."

Each monthly session will feature one of the city's five elected officials. Locations will vary to enhance accessibility.

There is no set schedule within the hour, and attendees will be greeted on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event of a large turnout, specific one-on-one time slots with the host may be provided.

While the public is encouraged to bring questions or suggestions, topics of conversation are not limited to official city business. The series is designed to provide an opportunity to engage with commissioners in a relaxed environment.

"Whether you have an elaborate idea for future growth, want to know why we are building a new parking garage, or just feel like talking about last night's football game, I want to hear from you," Elliott explained.

"Even if you don't have anything to discuss, I encourage you to come meet your neighbors and enjoy the conversation."

CITY GOVERNMENT WEEK ENCOURAGES CITIZENS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The City of Wildwood will celebrate Florida City Government Week October 16-22, 2023.

An initiative of the Florida League of Cities, Florida City Government Week celebrates the role local government plays in the lives of its residents, and it emphasizes citizens' opportunity to engage and help shape the direction and future of their municipalities.

Wildwood is a member of the Florida League of Cities, an organization formed in 1922 to promote local self-government and serve the state's diverse municipalities, large and small.

The league provides training for local officials in areas such as ethics, risk management, state legislation, Home Rule powers of the state constitution, and provides resources to its members to help each local government best serve its own unique community. It also provides materials for educators to assist in teaching students about government and active citizenship.

The City of Wildwood will kick off Florida City Government Week with its inaugural session of Community Chat with a Commissioner, giving residents a chance to interact with local elected officials in a relaxed, informal setting.

"Public engagement is essential to good governance, and is something we prioritize," said City Manager Jason McHugh. "It is identified first and foremost in Wildwood's strategic plan, and is something we work to enhance in everything we do."

In April, the city hosted its first Welcome to Wildwood event for residents, geared to those who recently moved to the city, as well as those who wanted to learn more about its workings. Directors from each of the city's departments explained what their teams do and the services they provide. Another session is planned for 2024.

Public forum sessions are included in every city commission meeting, McHugh explained, and offer an opportunity for attendees to address the commission, uninterrupted, for up to four minutes. Public hearings provide an opportunity to weigh in on the specific project or action item under consideration.

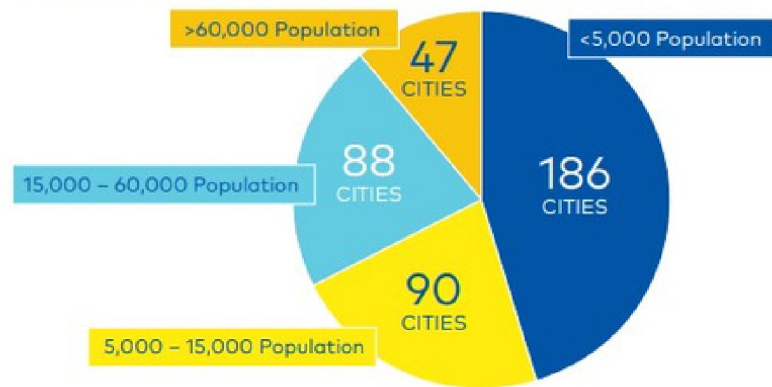
"We continue to seek out ways for the public to participate in the process," McHugh continued. "We encourage all residents to visit our website, subscribe to notifications, and follow our social media to learn what is happening in the city. Wildwood is growing quickly. We want residents to be involved and help drive that growth in the direction they feel is best."

Additional information about Florida City Government Week will be shared at wildwood-fl.gov and Facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida.



Florida City Government Week

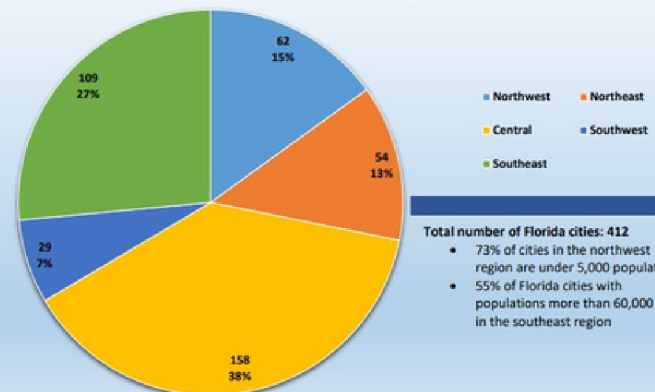
> A BREAKDOWN OF FLORIDA CITIES BY POPULATION



WANT TO LEARN MORE? flcities.com

Graphics from the Florida League of Cities

Number of municipalities within each geographic region



- Total number of Florida cities: 412**
- 73% of cities in the northwest region are under 5,000 population
 - 55% of Florida cities with populations more than 60,000 are in the southeast region

Population Source: University of Florida, Bureau of Economic and Business Research, April 2018.

OCTOBER TO BE PROCLAIMED MONARCH AWARENESS MONTH IN WILDWOOD

The city commission will proclaim October as Monarch Awareness Month at its October 9, 2023, meeting.

The proclamation will be issued as one component of Wildwood's signing the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, an initiative of the National Wildlife Federation that encourages local governments to take steps to provide larval food and nectar resources for the iconic butterfly. Monarch populations have declined drastically over the past several decades.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a monarch butterfly can travel up to 3,000 miles during fall migration. The country's eastern populations overwinter in Mexico, while the western populations overwinter in California. A small population does not migrate and resides year round in southern Florida. Loss of habitat in both overwintering and migration areas is believed to have led to the dramatic decline in populations.

The federal agency conducted an extensive study in 2020 that determined that "listing the monarch under the Endangered Species Act is warranted but precluded at this time by higher priority listing actions." As a result, monarch conservation has been a voluntary effort by agencies, organizations, and individuals.

Wildwood is one of 14 municipalities in Florida that have signed the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, joining Atlantic Beach, Cooper City, Fort Lauderdale, Lakeland, Miami, Oakland, Orlando, Pembroke Pines, Sanford, Satellite Beach, Southwest Ranches, St. Augustine, and Weston.

In doing so, Wildwood committed to five action items, including engaging relevant city departments and staff to identify opportunities, engaging with gardening leaders and partners to support conservation, planting and maintaining a monarch- and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden, adding native milkweed and nectar producing plants, and issuing a proclamation.

The city applied for and was selected to receive a donation of native plants through Gardens for Wildlife. The organization supplied 14 native species, including two types of milkweed specifically for monarch caterpillars, which eat only milkweed.

The 12 other native species will provide a variety of nectar and seeds throughout the year for monarchs and other butterflies, bees, and birds, all of which help pollinate many other plants and food crops. Some will serve as host plants for the caterpillars of other butterflies, such as the common buckeye, gray hairstreak, painted lady, phaon crescent, and white peacock.

In September, a large group of volunteers from the Florida Native Plant Society, Villages Butterfly Garden Club, VyStar Credit Union, the Wildwood Street Sweepers, and others assembled early one Thursday morning at Lake Deaton Park to help plant the city's first monarch and pollinator garden.

Wildwood Mayor Ed Wolf, who arrived on the scene before dawn, thanked the volunteers, spoke about his background in agriculture and his passion for farming, and explained the importance of Lake Deaton as a longtime favorite spot for locals to enjoy abundant fish and wildlife that inhabits the area.

Master gardeners worked alongside novices to skillfully space and place the 448 plants in record time. An hour after the group began digging, the garden was planted. Plants were watered in and given the chance to spread their roots.

While it will take time for the plants to become established and grow into full blooming size, the city expects the new garden to be ready for demonstration and educational sessions in the coming year. Even while the volunteers were still planting, butterflies were flying low over the site, checking out the upcoming menu options.

Find Wildwood's pledge and learn more about monarchs at nwf.org/mayorsmonarchpledge.



Above: Volunteers on planting day.

*Below: Buds on aquatic milkweed, *Asclepias perennis*, planted in the garden to feed monarch caterpillars.*





ANNUAL HYDRANT FLUSHING WORK SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN MID-NOVEMBER

Sumter County's fire department will be conducting annual fire hydrant maintenance in the City of Wildwood this fall.

Originally scheduled to begin in October, the work is now expected to begin in mid-November.

While this maintenance is taking place, lower-than-normal water pressure and/or rusty or discolored water may occur. These issues should clear up within a few hours.

If you experience any water issues that do not resolve quickly, during hydrant flushing or otherwise, please call 352-330-1336 and a water technician will be dispatched to your area.

WILDWOOD PD COLLECTING DONATIONS FOR SECOND ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

Wildwood's police department will host its second annual food drive this fall to help local families enjoy holiday meals they might otherwise not be able to afford.

"We still have families making minimum wage," said Officer Crystal Acevedo, who coordinates the event with Crime Scene Investigator Jessica Farley, "and trying to make ends meet, whether they have kids or not, is hard."

Last year, thanks to the generous individual donations and sponsorships from companies and organizations, the drive provided Thanksgiving meals for 80 Wildwood families.

Nonperishable items, as well as cash or check donations, can be dropped off from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Wildwood police department, 3939 County Rd 462E, through November 1.

This year, a registration and ticketing system is being implemented to assist families with applying for and receiving a free meal.

For more information, to apply for a meal, or to learn about sponsorship opportunities, please call 352-330-1355 or email cacevedo@wildwood-fl.gov.

WILDWOOD POLICE EST. 1877

The 2nd Annual **WILDWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT'S Thanksgiving FOOD DRIVE**

Accepting cash donations or canned foods
09/25/23 - 11/01/23

Drop Off Location: Wildwood Police Department
3939 County Road 462 East, Wildwood, FL 34785
8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. until November 1st.

Thanksgiving Meal Box should include:

- Box Potatoes & Gravy
- Stuffing
- Mac 'n Cheese
- Yams
- Marshmallows
- Brown Sugar
- + \$20 voucher for meat of choice
- Canned Veggies
- Baked Bean
- Cranberry Sauce
- Jiffy Cornbread
- Desserts

If your family needs a Thanksgiving Meal Box please register starting October 1st
Call: (352) 931-1866

Sponsors: mercy pointe church, ROBERTO'S, American House, THE WILLOWS, Select, HarborChase, GALAXY HOME, Caring Hands, THE BAKED Ham, Anspiritas, A BANANA RESIDENCE, THE FIRST FISH COACH, Wildwood.

NEW FISCAL YEAR BEGINS

At its September 25, 2023, meeting, Wildwood's city commission adopted the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget, effective October 1. Two public hearings were held on the budget in September, providing residents an opportunity to ask questions and weigh in on the subject.

The commission also adopted the rollback millage rate of 2.8287, upon which the budget is based, representing a 5.7 percent decrease from last year's millage rate of 3.000. The new rate is the lowest in the city's history.

The budget provides the financial framework for the Wildwood's staffing, programs, and initiatives, centering around the city's award-winning downtown master plan and 2023-2027 strategic plan.

As explained in the budget's transmittal letter to commissioners, The Villages® development continues to be the main economic driver for Wildwood, having added an average of 134 new homes per month from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023, with additional residential and commercial development outside The Villages® supporting and complementing this growth.

The entire budget book is available at www.wildwood-fl.gov/finance, and is broken down into sections that include a budget overview, fund summaries, fund sources, departments, capital improvements, and debt.

THE HISTORIC BAKER HOUSE

Historical House Tours

THURSDAYS
 OCTOBER: 12TH, 19TH, 26TH
 NOVEMBER: 2ND, 9TH

TOUR TIMES:
 10:30A & 12:00P
 CALL 352-461-0134 FOR
 TICKETS AND AVAILABILITY!

CITY OF WILDWOOD PRESENTS

Fright Nights
HAUNTED HOUSE

MULTI-DAY
 OCT. 27, 28, 31

WARFIELD AUDITORIUM
 98 S. WARFIELD AVE.

\$5.00/PERSON
 CASH ONLY AT THE DOOR NOT RECOMMENDED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN!

8:00PM - 11:00PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
 CALL 352-461-0134

2023

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Find more activities and events on the city's community calendar at www.wildwood-fl.gov/calendar

City of Wildwood Parks & Recreation

SPIRITED LADIES

A personally guided house tour by the first three generations of the Baker Ladies dating back to 1890! Mary, Lorena and Gladys will lovingly share "in spirited fun" some of the Baker legacy and haunted history. This is NOT scary NOR a typical haunted house or paranormal investigation.

This entertaining historic reenactment is based upon ghost stories and impressions shared by many folk including the Baker family, psychics, docents, volunteers and other guests, just like you!

10/27 & 10/28 | 4:00P & 6:00P
\$20/PERSON
THE HISTORIC BAKER HOUSE

To purchase tickets, visit www.wildwood-fl.gov or call 352-461-0134 6106 C.R. 44A Wildwood, FL

CITY OF WILDWOOD

SPOOKTACULAR

FREE!

KIDS EVENT

OCT 28 2023

- Costume Contest
- Face Painting
- Candy and Games

10AM - 1PM

WILDWOOD COMMUNITY CENTER
 6500 POWELL ROAD, WILDWOOD, FL 34785

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Code Compliance

October 3, 2023
1:00 p.m.

Local Planning Agency

October 3, 2023
2:00 p.m.

Planning and Zoning

October 3, 2023
2:15 p.m.

City Commission

October 9, 2023
9:00 a.m.

October 23, 2023
7:00 p.m.

Project Review Committee

October 10, 2023
10:00 a.m.

General Information

Unless otherwise specified, all meetings are held at City Hall, 100 N. Main St.

Agendas and minutes are posted on the city's website. Go to www.wildwood-fl.gov and click on [Agenda](#).

Meetings are open to the public. Attend in person or remotely by going to the city website and clicking on [Government > Attend a Meeting Virtually](#).

Anyone wishing to speak during Public Forum should submit a comment card before the meeting begins.

GROW WITH US: CITY CAREERS

Working for Wildwood is more than just a job. The city offers long-term career opportunities along with a great benefits package.

Leadership regularly reviews compensation plans to ensure they remain competitive and recognize strong performance.

Employees work hard and have fun doing it, in an environment that focuses on superior, friendly service with a strong sense of community.

See current openings and submit a streamlined application at www.wildwood-fl.gov/hr.

STAY UP TO DATE ON CITY HAPPENINGS

You can keep up with Wildwood news and happenings in a variety of ways:

1. Check wildwood-fl.gov for general information.
2. Sign up for **notifications** at wildwood-fl.gov to have news delivered directly to your inbox.
3. Follow us on **Facebook** and get news in your feed:
 - City of Wildwood page: facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida
 - Parks and Recreation Special Events page: facebook.com/WildwoodParksRecEvents
 - Police Department page: facebook.com/WildwoodPoliceFL



A LOOK AT WILDWOOD HISTORY

This photo by Zip Starnes shows members from Future Farmers of America's Wildwood chapter. Students and instructors are not identified, and the year is unknown.

CITY INFORMATION

Commission

Ed Wolf
Mayor
ewolf@wildwood-fl.gov

Pamala Harrison-Bivins
Mayor Pro Tem
pbivins@wildwood-fl.gov

Joe Elliott
Commissioner
jelliott@wildwood-fl.gov

Marcos Flores
Commissioner
mflores@wildwood-fl.gov

Julian Green
Commissioner
jgreen@wildwood-fl.gov

City Hall

100 N. Main St.
Wildwood, FL 34785
352-330-1330
www.wildwood-fl.gov
facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida

Directory

City Manager
Jason McHugh
352-330-1332
jmchugh@wildwood-fl.gov

Development Services
352-330-1334

Human Resources
352-330-1340

Parks and Recreation
352-461-0134

Police (Non-Emergency)
352-330-1355

Police (Emergency)
911

Public Works
352-330-1343

Utilities
352-330-1336