



# WILDWOOD CONNECTION

## COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: JULIAN GREEN

This month we talk with Commissioner Julian Green to gain insight into his role as one of Wildwood's five elected officials.

### ***How long have you lived in Wildwood?***

I've been here most of my life, and attended elementary, middle, and high school in Wildwood. After graduating Florida A&M University, I moved back to Rochester, NY, where I was born, but quickly realized I missed Wildwood and came back. It's my home.

### ***How long have you served on the city commission?***

I was first elected in 2012, more than a decade ago. I've learned a great deal in that time and feel I've grown in the role.

### ***What motivated you to run for the position, and what were the key issues of your campaign?***

When I was a kid growing up here, we had to get out of town to see a movie, go shopping, enjoy a nice restaurant, see a concert, or visit a museum. It was virtually a given that you'd move away when you finished school because there were few, if any, opportunities to start a career or earn a living in Wildwood.

I always wondered why we didn't have the things other cities did, and wanted to bring them to our residents so kids didn't feel they had to leave.

My campaign centered on five issues still important to me today: sensible, smart growth; our aging population; our youth; affordable housing; and beautification of our city.

### ***What experience and perspective do you bring to the commission, and how does that guide your decision-making?***

First and foremost is my love of helping others and wanting always to do the best thing for the city and its people. I truly enjoy listening to residents and hearing their stories, concerns, and dreams, and then finding ways to address those concerns and help make the dreams reality.

My love of history and civics also steers my work as a commissioner. We learn from our past and from the mistakes of others who led before us. If we can avoid making the same mistakes, we are already way ahead as we look for more successful solutions to similar challenges.

### ***You also serve on the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council. What does your work with that organization involve, and how does it relate to your work on the city commission?***

Currently I serve as vice chair of the executive board. I've also served as treasurer. The council covers eight counties and includes 78 member municipalities, so it's a big group. Its six major program areas are community development, economic development, emergency management, health and food systems, resiliency, and brownfields.

Serving in this role has raised my awareness of state laws and proposed policy changes that have the potential to significantly affect what we do and how we do it, and it has given Wildwood a voice in the discussion. I hear and learn from other city leaders and bring back information about what they have found effective and what they've tried that hasn't worked.

Making these contacts has greatly increased Wildwood's visibility on a regional and state level. When I started with the council, many members had never heard of Wildwood. Now everyone knows where we are and has an appreciation of the great things happening here.



*(continued on Page 3)*

### TWO BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER

Wildwood's city commission will hold two public hearings in September focused on the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget.

The first will be Monday, Sept. 11, 2023, followed by the second on Sept. 25, 2023. Both will begin at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Citizens are invited to participate in the hearings before the commission votes on adopting the budget. Each person is provided four minutes to address the commission during each public hearing. There is no limit to the number of people who may speak.

Included in the proposed budget are new rates for ad valorem (property) taxes and for utilities, including water, reuse water, wastewater, and solid waste collection.

In workshops over the summer, the commission agreed to include the rollback rate of \$2.8287 per \$1,000 of assessed value as the ad valorem tax.

Commissioners also agreed to include a recommended increase in water and reuse rates based on the Consumer Price Index along with a 20 percent increase on wastewater, resulting in an overall bill increase of 15.3 percent for a typical water and sewer customer.

The proposed budget includes new solid waste collection rates based on increases of 3.2 percent for residential customers and 17.4 percent for commercial customers, with a new once-per-week option to help mitigate the higher unit fees for businesses that do not need the current minimum twice-per-week collection.

To support the city's strategic goal of improving employee recruitment and retainment, the budget includes adjustments to classifications and salaries for city employees resulting from studies by a contracted analyst, and an increase to the city manager's salary based on extensive research by Commissioner Joe Elliott. Also included are additional positions to meet increasing demand for services as the city grows.

In addition to the above, fund summaries, proposed capital improvements, debt details, and more have been incorporated into the proposed budget, effective October 1, 2023, if adopted. Until the budget is passed by the five-person commission, however, these changes are not final.

Public input is a critical component of the process, and citizens are encouraged to attend and provide feedback at the two hearings this month.

To find the agendas and supporting documentation, go to wildwood-fl.gov and click on the Agenda icon.

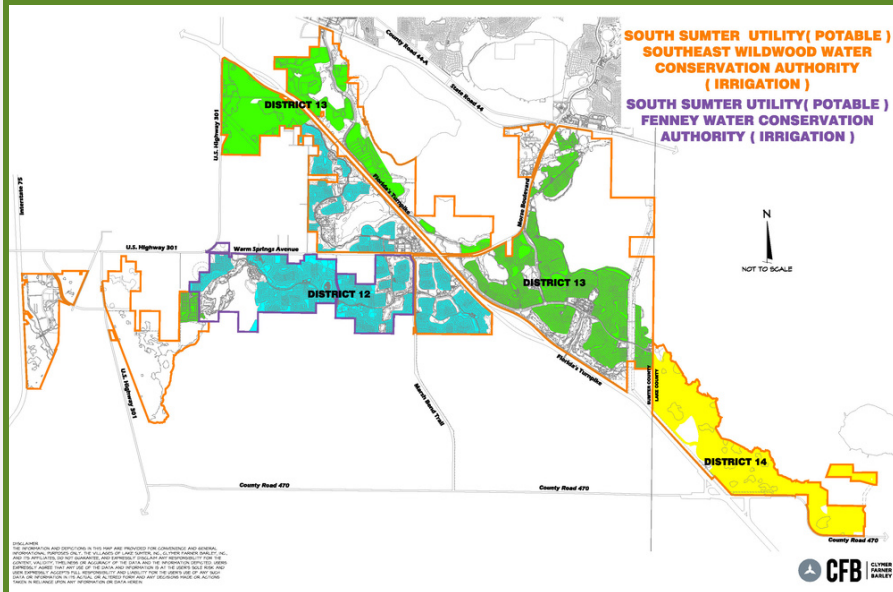
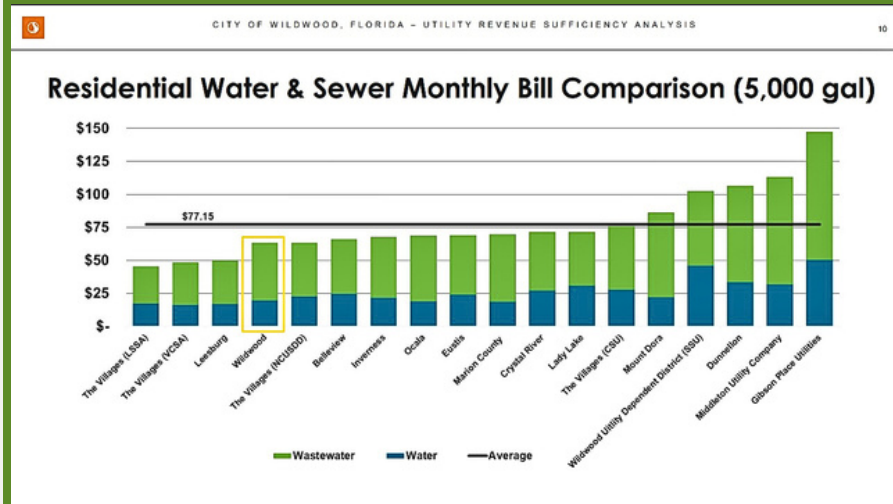


# BUDGET HEARINGS:

## September 11, 2023

## September 25, 2023

### 7:00 p.m.



The chart above shows Wildwood's water and wastewater rates in comparison to those of other nearby districts, some of which are detailed in the above maps. The City of Wildwood does not provide utility services to The Villages®.

**COMMISSIONER'S CORNER: JULIAN GREEN***(continued from Page 1)****Is there something unexpected you have learned or had an opportunity to do as an elected official?***

While not necessarily unexpected, I am always grateful for the opportunities to meet so many different people in so many different places. In addition to meeting many residents, I've also had a chance to speak with governors, presidential candidates, and other elected officials. I enjoy learning more about them, their viewpoints, and how they put their thoughts into action.

***What leaders have served as role models or inspiration in your life, and how does their influence shape your work?***

My parents, especially my mother, who raised me with all the challenges of being a single mom, and her brother, James H. Lowe, who was my mentor from an early age. He is the executive director of Lake Community Action Agency, where he has served for more than 50 years. I have always done my best to emulate him.

President Obama also has had a great influence on me. I served on his local campaign and witnessed the evolution of his career, which continues to provide great inspiration as I work to be the best leader I can be.

***Tell us about one of your favorite places in Wildwood.***

At this stage of life, it's my home, where I planted my roots and share time with my family. Growing up, it was Odell's Pond, where we spent countless hours playing, catching crawdaddies, and discovering everything that inhabited it, including frogs, snakes, fish, and an occasional alligator. It was a great place for a kid to explore the outdoors.

***What do you see as the city's greatest challenge, and how is the commission working to overcome it?***

Having a highway—US 301—bisect our downtown and city. It's a huge challenge, but our Downtown Master Plan includes projects that will help us link the areas on either side of the highway and beautify our city.

The new parking garage, as one example, will make it easier for people to shop and dine at the businesses on that side without having to cross the street on foot, which deters a lot of folks from even coming downtown. The linear park will help connect residential development north of the overpass to the downtown area and provide green space, shade, and places for people to walk and ride their bikes. The Railyard project will provide new dining and entertainment venues and add even more green space and gathering areas.

These are just the first few projects in the plan. When we're able to implement later projects, including safe access over 301 for both pedestrians and vehicles, we will see a whole new Wildwood, with more opportunities for residents and entrepreneurs. I'd love to see more mom and pop restaurants, shops, and services open up for our community.

Another of our big challenges is affordable housing. If you look at our new data dashboard ([data.wildwood-fl.gov](http://data.wildwood-fl.gov)), you will see that average household income is still below the state average. Compared to a couple of years ago, we have made big strides. Unfortunately, we still have many residents who are getting priced out of the home market.

As I think about smart, sensible growth, I am constantly asking myself how much is enough, and are we growing in the right ways? Are we providing the right opportunities for our citizens? How do we make sure we are helping them and not setting ourselves up for unintended consequences?

***What current projects do you believe are most important to Wildwood's community, and why?***

Our new wastewater treatment facility is paramount. As we continue to grow, we need to expand our infrastructure to stay ahead of the growth. The last thing we want is to get into a situation where our capacity to handle our wastewater is inadequate. Again, it's about smart, sensible growth.

The new community and outreach center planned for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park is another extremely important project. It serves both our aging population and our youth, providing a safe, productive place to learn, exercise, socialize, and relax. When I was a kid, many of my classmates and neighbors would hang out in nearby vacant lots. It wasn't necessarily productive, and thankfully, wasn't something I found appealing, so I ventured out of Wildwood for enrichment. Now that I'm a commissioner, I want to give our residents opportunities for enrichment right here at home.

***What would you like to see in Wildwood's future that isn't currently being addressed?***

A botanical garden, with plants, flowers, topiary, water features, butterflies, educational information, and event venue. I've visited many, including the Alfred B. Maclay Gardens in Tallahassee and the Harry P. Leu Gardens in Orlando, and wondered, "Why we can't have that in Wildwood?"

The city has done a great job providing recreational facilities and events for our residents, and I'm proud of what we've accomplished, but I want to do more. I'm excited about the new pollinator garden we're adding, and I want to expand those efforts to create a destination to attract people from all over to visit Wildwood and experience just how beautiful it is.

***What else you would like residents to know?***

The single-most important message I can convey is that residents have the power for change. Come to public meetings, voice your opinions, and vote.

The job of an elected official is to serve constituents. If you don't like something we are doing, let us know. If there is something we aren't doing that you want done, tell us. We do our best to make decisions based on what we think is best for residents, but if we don't hear from residents, we're not making the most informed decisions.





**RONI WOOD RECEIVES TEAM IMPACT AWARD**

Wildwood Police Chief Randy Parmer presented Roni Wood with the Team Impact Award at the city commission’s August 23, 2023, meeting. She was also presented with a Certificate of Commendation by Andy Smith of the American Legion Tri-City Post 18.

As part of her extensive community outreach work, Roni has implemented several new programs and initiatives, including scam and fraud prevention, youth bicycle safety, car seat fittings, and numerous special events.

In addition, she has secured more than \$30,000 in grants, sponsorships, and donations to support these efforts and distribute safety equipment to the community at no cost.

Later in the same meeting, the commission approved an employment contract for Umar Magee, who will receive the A.J. Johnson Police Scholarship.

According to contract and scholarship terms, he will attend the police academy and become an officer with the Wildwood Police Department.



**STORM DEBRIS CLEAN-UP**

City trucks have begun to collect vegetative debris from Hurricane Idalia. Residents on city-maintained streets should pile it, unbagged, at the curb.

Vegetative storm debris includes cut limbs, branches, fronds, twigs, and shrubs. It does not include trees or limbs that were cut or collected before the storm, leaves, construction debris, household garbage, trash bags, furniture, or normal bulk pick-up items. Vegetative debris piles should be no more than four cubic yards in size and must not block sidewalks, driveways, or fire hydrants.

Residents who live on privately owned and/or maintained roads should contact their property management or homeowners’ association for information on how to prepare and dispose of vegetative storm debris.



**WILDWOOD RECEIVES SAFETY GRANT**

Mike Marinan from Public Risk Underwriters of Florida, above left, recently awarded Wildwood Human Resources Director Melissa Tuck with a matching grant to provide supplies and equipment to help city employees stay safe on the job while serving the Wildwood community.

Among the items purchased with the funds:

- Raincoats and rain boots
- Safety vests
- Safety glasses
- Hard hats
- Gloves
- High-visibility survey tape
- Road flares
- First-aid kits





**WILDWOOD POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESENTS ANOTHER "OUTSMARTING SCAMMERS" SCAMS AND FRAUD PRESENTATION**

*This free session is at:*  
**Ezell Recreation Center The Villages**  
 769 Marilee Place, Wildwood/The Villages

**FREE event!** **Wednesday, 9/6/23**  
 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Register for this event by text (352) 910-6012

*Together we can STOP crooks!*

**Agenda:**

- 10:00-10:15 a.m. - Welcome & introductions
- 10:15-10:45 a.m. - Seniors vs. Crime
- 10:45-11:15 a.m. - State of FL CFO's Office
- 11:15 am-12:15 p.m. 1-Hour Lunch Break- Lunch will be provided
- 12:15 -12:50 p.m.- Wildwood PD, Lady Lake PD, CenterWell/Humana
- 12:50 p.m. - Q & A

**Topics covered:**

- Credit Card Scam
- Grandparent Scam
- IRS Scam
- Tax Identity Theft Scam
- Utility Company Scam
- Fake Debt Collector Call Scam
- Identity Theft Scam
- Social Security Imposter Scam
- Fake Amazon Email Scam & more!

Logos: Wildwood Police, Jimmy Patronis, CenterWell, Humana, Seniors vs Crime, Lady Lake Police

Wildwood Police Department  
 3939 County Road 462 East, Wildwood, FL 34785

**CITY OF WILDWOOD PRESENTS**

**NANA & POP POP SOCK HOP**

**CELEBRATING GRANDPARENTS DAY**

SWING DANCING, PHOTO BOOTH, DINNER, & ROCK AND ROLL!



**\$10**

**OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTER**  
 4027 CR 106

**SEPTEMBER 9TH, 2023**  
 5:00P - 8:00P

Logos: Wildwood Florida

**UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS**

Find more activities and events on the city's community calendar at [www.wildwood-fl.gov/calendar](http://www.wildwood-fl.gov/calendar)

**WE WILL NEVER FORGET 9/11**



We remember that day. The day when our country was changed forever in just 102 minutes. We lost 343 Firefighters & 71 Police Officers. A total of 2,996 lives were lost on 9/11/2001.

*Please join*  
**Wildwood Police Department**  
 as we  
**CLIMB THE STAIRS**

**Monday, 9/11/23**  
**Arrive by 8:30 a.m.**

**Stair Climb begins at 8:46 a.m.**  
 and will continue for the one hour and forty-two minutes of the 9/11 tragedies until 10:23 a.m.

Held at:



**The Iron Village Gym**  
 4069 Thomas St  
 Oxford, FL 34484

For more info or to sign up to climb email: [communityoutreach@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto:communityoutreach@wildwood-fl.gov)

Each Stair Climb will climb for 5 mins. We have 40 spaces available. Sign up today!

Wildwood Police Department  
 3939 County Road 462 East  
 Wildwood, FL 34785  
 (352) 330-1355




**CITY OF WILDWOOD**

**STAND-UP COMEDY SHOW**

**TICKETS \$10**

**WARFIELD AUDITORIUM**  
 98 S. WARFIELD AVE., WILDWOOD, FL

18+ ONLY | FOOD TRUCKS | ADULT-FRIENDLY FUN

**STAND-UP COMEDY TOUR**  
 6:30pm | Friday, September 22nd, 2023

**OPENING LINEUPS**  
 TBD

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.WILDWOOD-FL.GOV](http://WWW.WILDWOOD-FL.GOV) OR EMAIL [PARKSANDREC@WILDWOOD-FL.GOV](mailto:PARKSANDREC@WILDWOOD-FL.GOV)

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

### Code Compliance

September 5, 2023  
1:00 p.m.

### Local Planning Agency

September 5, 2023  
2:00 p.m.

### Planning and Zoning

September 5, 2023  
2:15 p.m.

### City Commission

September 11, 2023  
7:00 p.m.

September 25, 2023  
7:00 p.m.

### Project Review Committee

September 12, 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](http://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.



### A LOOK AT WILDWOOD HISTORY

This photo by Zip Starnes shows Wildwood High Vocational School teachers Millie Mizell and Dot Melin, along with J.Z. Welch, Whit Smith, and others unidentified. The year is unknown.

## 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](http://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](http://wildwood-fl.gov) for general information.
2. Sign up for **notifications** at [wildwood-fl.gov](http://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](https://facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida)
  - Parks and Recreation Special Events page: [facebook.com/WildwoodParksRecEvents](https://facebook.com/WildwoodParksRecEvents)
  - Police Department page: [facebook.com/WildwoodPoliceFL](https://facebook.com/WildwoodPoliceFL)

## CITY INFORMATION

### Commission

Ed Wolf  
Mayor  
[ewolf@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto:ewolf@wildwood-fl.gov)

Pamala Harrison-Bivins  
Mayor Pro Tem  
[pbivins@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto:pbivins@wildwood-fl.gov)

Joe Elliott  
Commissioner  
[jelliott@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto:jelliott@wildwood-fl.gov)

Marcos Flores  
Commissioner  
[mflores@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto:mflores@wildwood-fl.gov)

Julian Green  
Commissioner  
[jgreen@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto:jgreen@wildwood-fl.gov)

### City Hall

100 N. Main St.  
Wildwood, FL 34785  
352-330-1330  
[www.wildwood-fl.gov](http://www.wildwood-fl.gov)  
[facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida](https://facebook.com/WildwoodFlorida)

### Directory

City Manager  
Jason McHugh  
352-330-1332  
[jmchugh@wildwood-fl.gov](mailto: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