

**GULF BREEZE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

MARCH 15, 2010
WEDNESDAY 6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

REMINDER: WORKSHOP - 6:00 P.M. TO REVIEW AUDIT REPORT

1. Roll Call
2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance
3. Approval of Minutes of March 1, 2010 (Regular Meeting)
4. Resolution No. 08-10: Supporting House Bill 325, Cameras at Red Lights
5. **CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:***
 - A. Discussion and Action Regarding Development Review board Referral
Santa Rosa Yacht Club
Requesting to add an uncovered boat lift to an existing boat slip
 - B. Discussion and Action Regarding Special Event Request for Annual Elementary School Run, April 22, 2010, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.
 - C. Discussion and Action Regarding New Neighborhood Park at York and Norwich Streets
 - D. Discussion and Action Regarding Replacement of Irrigation Well at Intersection of South Sunset and Shoreline Drive
 - E. Discussion and Action Regarding Waiver of Late Penalties for Senior and Disabled Hardship Customers
 - F. Discussion and Action Regarding Payment of Consulting Fees to Ms. Wilson of Indeever, LLC, in the amount of \$5,078.80 for Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process
 - G. Discussion and Action Regarding Nomination for Development Review Board Alternate

* These are items considered routine in nature and will be considered by one (1) motion. If any citizen wishes to voice an opinion on one of these items you should advise the Council immediately.

6. ACTION AGENDA ITEMS:

- A. Discussion and Action Regarding Quarterly Beautification Awards
 - B. Discussion and Action Regarding Evaluation and Appraisal Report for Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process
 - C. Discussion and Action Regarding Presentation of Annual Audit by O'Sullivan Creel
 - D. Discussion and Action Regarding Fencing Along U. S 98
 - E. Discussion and Action Regarding Gulf Breeze Economic Development
 - F. Discussion and Action Regarding Proposed House Bill 325, Cameras at Red Lights
COVERED UNDER RESOLUTION SECTION ABOVE
 - G. Information Items
7. New Business:
8. Open Forum
9. Adjournment

If any person decides to appeal any decisions made with respect to any matter considered at this meeting or public hearing, such person may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and any evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

The public is invited to comment on matters before the City Council upon seeking and receiving recognition from the Chair.

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA**

The 1,147th regular meeting of the Gulf Breeze City Council, Gulf Breeze, Florida, was held at the Gulf Breeze City Hall on Monday, March 1, 2010, at 6:30 p.m.

Upon call of the roll the following Councilmen were present: Dana Morris, J. B. Schluter, Richard Fulford, Joseph Henderson and Mayor Beverly Zimmern.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilman Morris moved for approval of the minutes for the regular meeting held on Monday, February 16, 2010. Councilman Schluter seconded. The vote for approval was 5 - 0.

**RESOLUTION NO. 07-10: OPPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE FLORIDA
CONSTITUTION THAT WOULD FORCE VOTERS TO
DECIDE ALL CHANGES TO A CITY OR COUNTY'S
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

The Resolution was read by title only by the City Clerk. Councilman Fulford moved for approval of the Resolution. Councilman Morris seconded. The vote for approval was 5 - 0.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

RECOMMENDATION:

**That the City Council approve the following Consent Agenda Items:
A, B, C, and D:**

- A. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING CONCEPTUAL
APPROVAL REQUEST BY BRITTON STAMPS FOR A
PROPOSED SUBDIVISION THAT IS ADJACENT TO THE
DRIFTWOOD SUBDIVISION LOCATED ON THE NORTH
END OF LIVE OAK STREET**

Reference: Community Services Director memo dated February 17, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council conceptually approve the project with the following four variances and direct staff to schedule and advertise a public hearing on April 28, 2010, to formally approve the variances: (1) For a 20 foot front and rear setback instead of a 30 foot as required by the Land Development Code (LDC); (2) For a 5.5 foot side street setback on the lot immediately adjacent to Live Oak Street, the

Land Development Code requires a 15 foot side street setback; and (3) For minimum lot sizes ranging from 4,441 square feet to 5,224 square feet, the Land Development Code requires a minimum lot size of 9,000 square feet and (4) For a variance from Section 21-85 allowing a generator or HVAC equipment to be located within the 5 foot setback to be worded in such a way that only a generator or HVAC equipment could be located within the setback.

- B. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST FOR THE ST. ANN CATHOLIC CHURCH ANNUAL 5K RUN SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2010, 8:00 A.M.**

Reference: Deputy Police Chief memo dated February 19, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the special event request for St. Ann Catholic Church to conduct the annual 5K run Saturday, April 17, 2010, 8:00 a.m.

- C. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING TRANSIENT RENTAL**

Reference: City Manager memo dated February 19, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That this item be tabled indefinitely.

- D. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM LETTER OF SUPPORT**

Reference: Assistant City Manager memo dated February 19, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council direct staff to draft a letter of support for an intelligent transportation system proposed by the City of Pensacola and authorize the Mayor to execute the letter.

Councilman Morris moved for approval of Consent Agenda Items A, B, C, and D. Councilman Schluter seconded. The vote for approval was 5 - 0.

A. SUBJECT: **DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING PROPOSED
RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO AMENDMENT FOUR**

COVERED UNDER RESOLUTION SECTION ABOVE.

B. SUBJECT: **DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF
ALTERNATES TO VARIOUS BOARDS**

Reference: City Clerk memo dated February 19, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council appoint Mr. Bill Clark and Mr. Lee Brown to serve as alternates on the Board of Adjustment, term to expire 2014.

Councilman Schluter moved for approval. Councilman Morris seconded. The vote for approval was 4 - 0 - 1, with Councilman Fulford abstaining due to a conflict of interest. (Conflict of Interest form attached to minutes.)

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Zimmern adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

CITY CLERK

MAYOR

RESOLUTION 08-10

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA IN SUPPORT OF
CS/HB 325 AND SB 294 RELATIVE TO CAMERAS AT INTERSECTIONS**

WHEREAS, The City of Gulf Breeze is bisected by U.S. 98 which conveys an estimated 50,000 vehicles per day through the City; and,

WHEREAS, The City's Traffic Accident Task Force identified technology as a means to help identify vehicles which violate traffic laws as a way to reduce accidents; and,

WHEREAS, Following the installation of cameras at the intersection of U.S. 98 and Daniel Drive, the number of accidents in the City was reduced; and,

WHEREAS, The use of cameras has become an integral part of our overall accident control program; and,

WHEREAS, The Florida State Legislature is considering several bills regarding camera enforcement and CS/HB 325 and SB 294 appears to be the best of the various proposed bills,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA IN REGULAR SESSION AS FOLLOWS:

The City Council of the City of Gulf Breeze supports the passage of CS/HB 325 and SB 294 as they are currently drafted. We urge our residents to communicate this message to our legislators in the interest of public safety.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
GULF BREEZE, SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA** on this ____ day of
March, 2010.

Mayor

ATTEST

City Clerk

Councilmen Present: Dana Morris, J. B. Schluter, Richard C. Fulford, Joseph Henderson
And Mayor Zimmern

ACTION AGENDA ITEMS:

**A. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING QUARTERLY
BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS**

Reference: City Manager memo dated March 5, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

**No Council action to be taken. Beautification awards to be presented Monday,
March 15, 2010.**

**B. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING DEVELOPMENT
REVIEW BOARD REFERRAL OF MARCH 2, 2010**

Reference: Development Review Board Minutes of March 2, 2010

- I. Santa Rosa Yacht Club
Requests to add an uncovered
boat lift To an existing boat slip

RECOMMENDATION:

**That the City Council approve the project as presented contingent upon receipt
of proper permits.**

**C. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING SPECIAL EVENT
REQUEST FOR ANNUAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL RUN,
THURSDAY, APRIL 22ND, 4:30 - 5:30 P.M.**

Reference: Deputy Police Chief memo dated March 4, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

**That the City Council approve the request for the annual elementary school run
to be held on Thursday, April 22, 2010, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m.**

D. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING NEW NEIGHBORHOOD PARK AT YORK AND NORWICH STREETS

Reference: Parks and Recreation Director memo dated March 4, 2010

RECOMMENDATION # 1:

That the City Council direct staff to: (1) proceed with the creation of a neighborhood park on City owned property at the intersection of York and Norwich; (2) assist Mrs. Tammy Hodges with the equipment purchase and installation, per the approved plan; and (3) solicit competitive bids for the installation of sidewalks, fencing, landscaping and fall attenuating ground cover, for a sum not to exceed \$20,000.00.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

That upon completion, the park shall be know as York park and shall be ceremonially dedicated to the memory of Mr. Greg Hodges.

E. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING REPLACEMENT OF IRRIGATION WELL AT INTERSECTION OF SOUTH SUNSET AND SHORELINE DRIVE

Reference: Parks and Recreation Director memo dated March 3, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council direct staff to solicit competitive bids for replacement of the Sunset/Shoreline well, utilizing capital funds allocated for the stabilization of the Shoreline Drive right-of-way, not to exceed \$9,500.00

F. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING WAIVER OF LATE PENALTIES FOR SENIOR AND DISABLED HARDSHIP CUSTOMERS

Reference: Finance Director memo dated March 3, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council allow waiver of utility late payment penalties in cases determined to be hardship where the waiver is requested in writing and which agree to abide by the terms of that waiver as may be established by the City Manager.

G. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL REPORT FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Reference: Assistant City Manager memo dated March 5, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council set March 15, 2010, as the first public hearing date to entertain public comments on the amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan (which implement the 2010 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)) and set April 5, 2010 as the second public hearing to consider transmitting draft Ordinance No. 03-10 amending the Comprehensive Plan to the Florida State Department of Community Affairs for review.

H. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING PAYMENT OF CONSULTING FEES TO MS. WILSON OF INDEVER, LLC IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,078.80 FOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Reference: Assistant City Manager memo dated March 3, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve payment of invoices in the amount of \$5,078.80 to Ms. Wilson of Indever, LLC for Phase IV work of the City's Evaluation & Appraisal and Amendment Process.

I. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL AUDIT

Reference: City Manager memo dated March 5, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council meet with the City's audit firm, O'Sullivan Creel in a workshop on Monday, March 15 at 6:00 p.m. and that the Council accept the firm's audit for fiscal year 2009.

J. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING FENCING ALONG U. S. HIGHWAY 98

Reference: City Manager memo dated March 5, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council accept the alternate pricing submitted for steel fence by Biggs-Green for 1,920 linear feet of fence with columns 32 feet apart on center for a total price of \$279,556.

K. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING GULF BREEZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Reference: City Manager memo dated March 5, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council table this item until further notice.

L. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING PROPOSED HOUSE BILL 325, CAMERAS AT RED LIGHTS

Reference: City Manager memo dated March 5, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council direct staff to draft a resolution urging the Legislature to approve HB 325 for adoption on Monday, March 15, 2010.

M. SUBJECT: DISCUSSION AND ACTION REGARDING NOMINATION FOR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD ALTERNATE

Reference: City Clerk memo dated March 3, 2010

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council appoint Ms. Samantha Rine, 203 North Sunset Boulevard, to be alternate on the Development Review Board, term to expire in 2012.

N. INFORMATION ITEMS

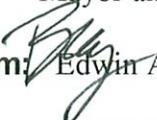


City of Gulf Breeze

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

From:  Edwin A. Eddy, City Manager

Date: 3/11/2010

Subject: Follow-up, Questions from Executive Session

1. The ground cover (fall zone) at York Park will be mostly sand similar to Sunset Kids Park. In addition, there will be a track installed for wheelchairs from the park perimeter to the equipment.
2. The reason the well project is estimated at close to \$10,000 is that the well will be relocated from the Sunset Kids Park area. There is considerable trenching and piping involved to convey water along the area to be served by the well.
3. The steel fence will be powder coated. If nicks develop, they will be "spot repaired" with paint. If after 10 years or so, the spot repairs are noticeable or there is enough rust developing, some panels may need to be removed and taken away for recoating.
4. The fence will be set back from the sidewalk where possible to achieve a more pleasing appearance rather than a straight, non varying appearance. This will allow more space for landscaping.



City of Gulf Breeze

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

Cc: Dave Szymanski, Assistant City Manager

From:  Edwin A. Eddy, City Manager

Date: 3/12/2010

Subject: Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process

A few comments on the Comp Plan amendment process:

1. We were way past due on the Evaluation and Appraisal process (EAR.) This effort is designed to tell the community how the City has done in implementation of its Comprehensive Plan.
2. In order to "catch up," we decided to move ahead quickly with preparing amendments to the City's Comprehensive Plan to meet state requirements and to complete the process.
3. Once we completed the EAR and developed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to stay current with state mandates, along with any adjustments the City wants to make, two public hearings are required before the amended plan can be sent to the Department of Community Affairs. (DCA)
4. We advertised for public hearings on March 15th and April 5th. Adjustments to the draft language can be made up until the plan is submitted to DCA which will be after April 5th.
5. Once we have comments from DCA, we will make the necessary adjustments, ask for Council approval of same, and then prepare an Ordinance to approve the Comprehensive Plan. Two more public hearings will be held on the Ordinance.

In order to fulfill the Council's direction that we notify the public of the changes we have drafted to the plan, I would suggest we mail an invitation to each household prior to the April 5th public hearing. We will also post the draft changes on the web site.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DIRECT STAFF TO MAIL NOTICE OF THE APRIL 5TH PUBLIC HEARING ON THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO EACH WATER METER ACCOUNT ADDRESS IN THE CITY.



City of Gulf Breeze

MEMORANDUM

TO: Edwin A. Eddy, City Manager

FROM:  Craig S. Carmichael, Director of Community Services

DATE: March 11, 2010

SUBJECT: EVANS CORRESPONDENCE UPDATE

I just wanted to pass along that Marita and I met with Evans on March 10, 2010 concerning her letter. I was correct in the fact that the area she was referencing was not part of the Benson Building Project and not subject to the same level of scrutiny as the buffer area behind her house. She is referring to the area highlighted on the attached map. After meeting with her on site, it does appear that she has a valid concern. According to the LDC, when an off street parking area abuts a ROW, there should be a landscaped yard at least five feet in width containing an opaque screen of landscaping at least three feet in height. While the church does have the landscaped yard, the plantings do not form the opaque barrier. I also looked at the situation regarding the lighting and found that they have installed two acorn lights in front of the Little Chapel.

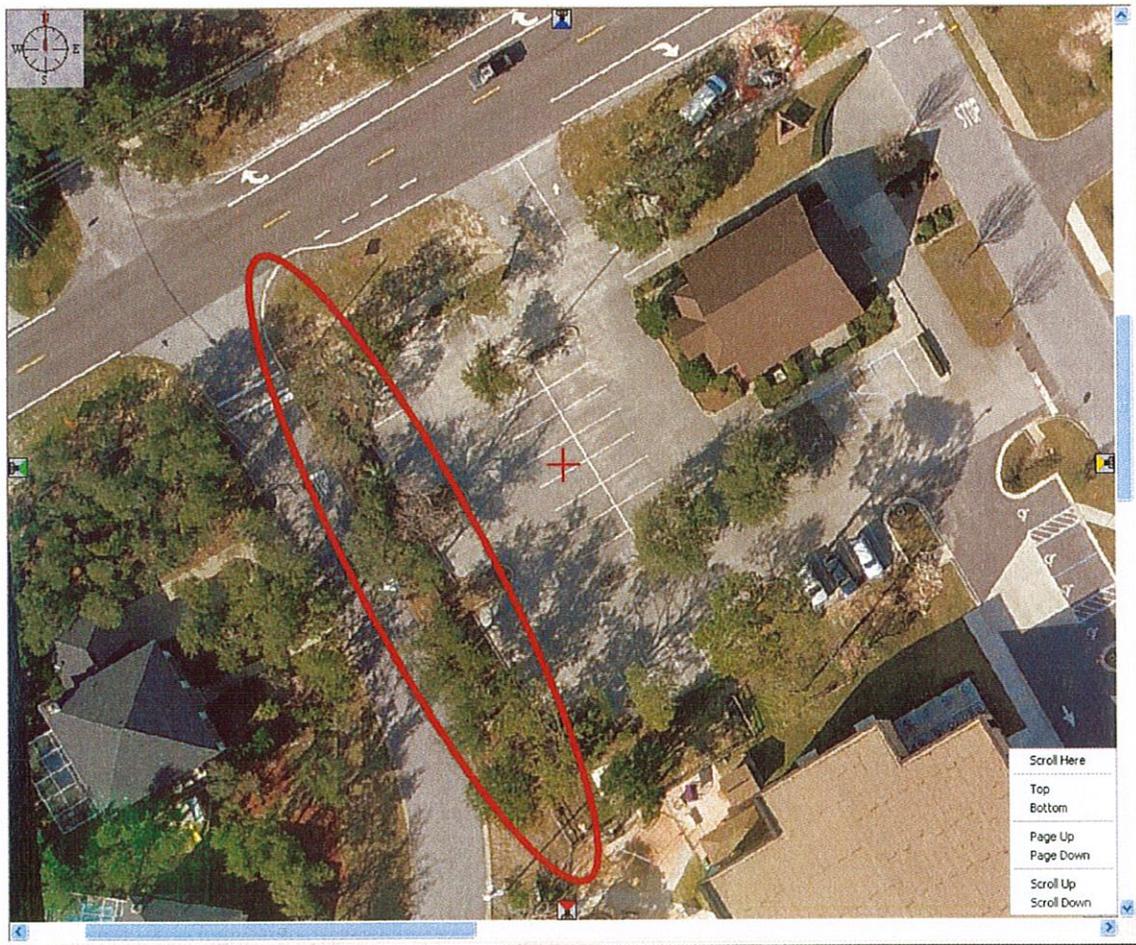
I meet with Paula Reid, who is the Methodist Church's Administrator, on March 11, 2010. She agreed that the plantings had not achieved the opaqueness that is required in the LDC. She agreed that they would plant three gallon Viburnums three feet on center in between the existing hedge row and the parking lot and along the entire Fairpoint Place ROW.

Concerning the lights, she stated that when they were initially installed, they were not on a timer. However, a timer was added within the last two weeks and they go off at 11:00 pm.

City staff will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that the shrubs are planted in accordance with our agreement.

RECOMMENDATION: NONE, PROVIDED FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES.

LOCATION MAP





City of Gulf Breeze

MEMORANDUM

TO: Edwin A. Eddy, City Manager

FROM:  Craig S. Carmichael, Director of Community Services

DATE: March 4, 2010

SUBJECT: **Correspondence from Elise Evans concerning Landscaping at the Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church**

As per your request, I reviewed the correspondence received from Mrs. Elise Evans regarding the landscaping at the Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church. I am not exactly sure what area she is referring to; however, I believe it is the area between the small chapel parking lot and the Fairpoint Place Right-of-Way (please see the attached aerial photograph). Mrs. Evans' letter infers that the area was planted as part of the Benson Building Addition. After reviewing the construction plans for the project, the area which she is referencing is outside the limits of the original construction project and would not be subject to scrutiny.

Since her letter is unclear as to the exact location, Marita and I will setup an onsite meeting with her next week so that we can pinpoint the location and hopefully address her concerns. At the same time, we will also address the concerns regarding the lighting.

If we can arrange a meeting with her prior to the Executive Session, we can provide the City Council an update Wednesday night. If not we include it in the agenda packet for Monday night's City Council meeting.

CSC
Attachment

Memo

TO: Vernon L. Prather, Director of Public Services
FROM: Mina Lanzetta, NG/SD Supervisor *mua*
DATE: March 10, 2010
RE: Natural Gas Special Rebate Update

Our continuing efforts to keep our natural gas system expanding and our existing/new customers interested in converting their electric appliances to natural gas has again proven to be a success by offering our special rebate program.

The City Council approved the program to begin on February 1st and to end on April 30, 2010. As of March 10, 2010 we have processed the following requests:

- 12 applications submitted
- 7 water heaters converted from electric
- 2 stoves converted from electric
- 1 pool heater
- 1 generator
- 3 water heaters replaced gas to gas
- 1 furnace replaced gas to gas
- 1 stove replaced gas to gas

We offered a similar program January 15, 2008 thru April 30, 2008 with the following results:

- 11 applications submitted
- 11 water heaters converted from electric
- 4 stoves converted from electric
- 1 dryer converted from electric
- 1 furnace converted from electric
- 4 generators
- 1 water heater replaced gas to gas
- 1 furnace replaced gas to gas

Based on the strong customer response for 2010 we believe that we will experience greater participation in the rebate program as compared to 2008. The higher rebates increase our market visibility and helps retain existing customers. We will provide final numbers once the special rebate is concluded.



City of Gulf Breeze

Memorandum

To: Edwin A. Eddy, City Manager

From: Vernon L. Prather, Director of Public Services *VLP*

Date: 3/10/2010

Subject: Electrical Consumption Update

Staff has continued to review electrical consumption in all departments. Part of this review includes the task of organizing and enhancing our existing data base. This allows staff to evaluate trends and opportunities for savings and also provides for reconciliation between energy consumption and the actual location.

Number of Active Electric Accounts by Fund:

General	3	Police	2	City Sewer	17
Streets	5	Fire	2	Gas	1
CRA	29	Rec Center	1	Storm Water	6
Parks	14	City Water	1		
SSRUS Sewer	55	SSRUS WWTP	9	SSRUS Water	4

The City's 149 electric service accounts represented an expenditure in Fiscal Year 2009 of \$633,705. In order to reduce this cost in the future we have initiated the following:

- Shoreline Park South: lowered the wattage rating from 20,000 watts of parking lot lighting to 4,700 watts and reduced the yearly electrical costs by approximately \$6,000.
- Currently working with Gulf Power to remove \$65.00 of outdoor lighting cost at the old WWTP. (We believe we are paying for lights that don't exist.) Yearly savings of \$780.00.

- SSRUS Spray Fields: remove electrical meters from spray fields as individual pump stations are no longer needed due to pump upgrades @WWTP. Yearly savings \$2,400.
- Little Red School House: estimated yearly cost \$2,500 - \$4,000.

Items for further review:

- Evaluate operating cost of radio room and climate control located in old Fire Dept Building: Annual cost is \$2,560 (room size 12x14)
- Review \$39,000 annual cost at Recreation Center. A large portion is due to Air Conditioning in the summer months. Investigating using Natural Gas Desiccant System to reduce humidity levels and save energy by reducing A/C demand.
- Review \$40,412 annual cost of Ball Field lighting: Updated timer functions and hours of operation, reduced wattage for sleep mode.
- Monitor major wastewater pump stations for efficient operation and energy consumption trends.
- Evaluate options at WWTP to modify the electrical system and upgrade our generating capacity using natural gas. We would produce our own power during peak demand periods.
- During this review, we have identified three Lift Stations that we are not receiving the bills on, as we can not identify the electric meter numbers in our data. We will be working with Gulf Power to resolve these issues.
- Evaluate combining electric services where practical to eliminate redundant base fees.
- Staff will continue to review and audit the electric bills for Street and Park lighting to ensure better accuracy.



City of Gulf Breeze

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council

From:  Edwin A. Eddy, City Manager

Date: 3/8/2010

Subject: Wellness Update

We had about 50 employees stop by to have blood samples drawn. Results will be in this week. Counseling sessions will be scheduled for each person regarding their lab results. In some cases, some folks may need to regulate diet and/or get more exercise.

Attached are some articles we have distributed to staff.

[Print](#)

10 Foods That Lower Cholesterol

By Tanya Reynolds

These delicious superfoods can help to lower your levels

If you have high cholesterol, that doesn't mean you have to resign yourself to a bland diet. In fact, a tasty salmon entree, a handful of sweet berries, or even a glass of red wine can all help to lower your levels and improve your heart health. The next time you go grocery shopping, look for these cholesterol-lowering treats recommended by the American Heart Association.

1. Extra virgin olive oil:

Studies have shown that this type of olive oil increases the body's levels of HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol), which helps to reduce plaque buildup in the arteries

2. Salmon and omega-3 fats:

Omega-3s, found in fatty fish, like salmon, sardines, and anchovies, and in fortified eggs and soybeans, reduce nearly every risk factor for heart disease. They reduce inflammation, reduce high blood pressure, decrease triglycerides, help to make blood thinner and less likely to clot, and raise HDL cholesterol. And recent research suggests that omega-3s may also keep your brain sharp and possibly ward off dementia.

3. Oatmeal and oat bran:

Also high in fiber, oats contain beta-glucan, which helps to lower LDL levels. Oats also help regulate blood glucose levels, a benefit to those with diabetes.

4. Nuts:

Almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts contain monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which are both known to lower cholesterol. Limit your daily intake to one and a half ounces (which is about one and a half handfuls), since nuts are high in calories.

5. Plant sterols and stenols:

These are natural substances found in small amounts in the cell membrane of plants, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and seeds. You can get the recommended two grams per day by eating fortified foods such as margarine spread, orange juice, and salad dressings, but these should only be eaten by people with high levels of LDL cholesterol.

6. Beans:

Kidney, lima, black, navy, and pinto beans are rich in the fiber your body needs to help lower cholesterol. Research has shown eating 5 to 10 grams of fiber per day helps to lower LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) by 3 to 5 percent.

7. Alcohol:

All alcohol in moderation (no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men) can be beneficial to the heart, but red wine in particular provides antioxidants that offer an extra nutritional boost.

8. Blueberries:

These antioxidant-rich berries also contain a compound that may help lower LDL cholesterol as effectively as some drugs do and with fewer side effects.

9. Cranberry-grape juice:

Antioxidants found in grape juice can help slow the oxidation of LDL cholesterol, and cranberry juice raises HDL cholesterol. Just be sure to purchase 100 percent juice; you don't need all the sugar of a juice cocktail.

10. Yogurt with live active cultures (probiotics):

Several studies have shown that probiotics help lower LDL cholesterol by preventing the reabsorption of cholesterol back into the bloodstream.

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The Heart Benefits of Walking

By Danielle Dowling

If heart health is your concern, take a hike--literally.

To find the fountain of youth is a task that has captivated humans for millennia. Although eternal youth is an impossibility--for now--recent studies seem to point to at least one thing that can turn back the hands of your heart's clock at least: exercise.

Last year, a group of researchers at the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis revealed that the health benefits of endurance exercise include metabolically younger hearts. The study's participants doubled their glucose uptake, which helps prevent the heart from becoming oxygen deprived and prone to heart attack.[1]

How to Get Started

The phrase "endurance exercise training" may appear daunting--conveying the mental images of drill sergeants, endless drudgery, and a post-workout recovery involving tons of BenGay. Fear not, however, hour-long walks were among the activities the study's participants took part in three to five times a week.

In order to reap the health benefits that walking bestows on the cardiovascular system, you needn't complete the entire hour in one go; you can carve it up into two 30-minute, three 20-minute, or four 15-minute stints--whatever suits your daily schedule.

A brisk daily walk will not only boost your heart's glucose uptake, it will also make your arteries more flexible according to a study presented at the Experimental Biology 2002 meeting. Researchers at the University of Colorado at Boulder found that a group of postmenopausal women who walked 40 to 45 minutes five times a week increased the elasticity of their carotid artery nearly 50 percent.[2] Here are two more studies hot off the presses concerning the heart health benefits of walking.

Take a hike or a bike to work. After reviewing data from the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) study, researchers from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill published an article in the July 13 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine* reporting that active commuters--people who walk or bike to work--reap heart health benefits such as a low body weight, a good triglyceride level, and normal blood pressure. Of the 2,364 adults who took part in the study, nearly 17 percent used a form of active commuting to get to work.

Heart patients should walk long, hard, and often. A study conducted at the University of Vermont College of Medicine in Burlington found that the overweight cardiac rehabilitation patients who were required to burn 3,000 to 3,500 calories weekly rather than the standard 700 to 800 enjoyed heart health benefits like greater weight loss and markedly decreased their cardiac risk factors. To achieve this high-calorie-burning workout, participants walked 45 to 60 minutes five to six days a week at a moderate pace.

[1] Soto et al. Exercise training impacts myocardial metabolism of older individuals in a gender-specific manner. *AJP Heart and Circulatory Physiology*, 2008; DOI: 10.1152/ajpheart.91426.2007, <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/07/080723134431.htm>

[2] Kerrie Moreau et al. CU-Boulder Study Shows How Heart Disease Risk Is Lessened In Young, Old Women. *Experimental Biology*, May 2002, <http://www.colorado.edu/news/releases/2002/255.html>

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The 5 Smartest Midnight Snacks

By Susan McQuillan

If you're going to do some late-night nibbling, your best bet is to eat light. Here, we've got some suggestions.

Like any type of snacking, late night nibbling may or may not be good for you, depending on what you choose to eat. Your best bet under any circumstances is to eat light: Stick to a 100-calorie snack pack or, better yet, choose a midnight munchie that combines just enough protein and carbs to satisfy your hunger and soothe you back to sleep. We have some suggestions.

But first, a myth buster: There may be some good reasons to avoid midnight snacks, but weight gain isn't necessarily one of them. Eating late at night will not cause you to gain more weight than eating earlier in the evening. A calorie is a calorie, regardless of what time you consume it, and your metabolism is turned on 24/7, burning those calories all the time.

You *will* gain weight, however, if those midnight snacks are adding extra calories to your overall diet because your body also works day and night converting excess calories into fat. And if you're not getting enough sleep night after night, and you spend your extra "awake time" eating out of boredom, anxiety, or any reason other than true hunger, chances are you'll put on a few pounds.

When you do indulge in late-night snacks, approach snacking the way you (hopefully) approach normal eating. Have a healthful, balanced "mini-meal." Avoid greasy or fried foods, not only because of the extra calories, but because they are harder for your body to digest and digestive disturbances can also disturb your sleep. Also avoid any foods you know might cause gas or heartburn, which will also interfere with sleep.

Probably the most important thing is to have healthy snacks on hand. Any of these five (or a similar combo) should help get you through the night:

Whole-wheat toast or crackers with dabs of peanut butter along with a half glass of milk

Thinly sliced apple or pear with cheese

Low-fat plain yogurt with honey

Thinly sliced lean ham or turkey rolled around a breadstick or pretzel rod

Small bowl of cereal with milk and a few slices of banana

If you stay up late because of your work schedule or your normal sleep pattern is to go to bed late and get up later in the morning, a midnight snack may be just the thing you need to satisfy hunger before you hit the sack. But if you routinely go to sleep earlier and then wake up at midnight or some other time in the middle of the night, craving a snack, you've developed a bad habit that you're probably better off trying to break. If that's the case, you may need to break the sleep/wake cycle by not giving in to a snack when you wake up in the middle of the night. If you can hold out for a couple of nights, your body will stop expecting food at you should soon be sleeping through the night.

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