

## Mayor: Seminole is booming

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SEMINOLE – Mayor Leslie Waters provided a State of the City address at the Seminole City Council’s Jan. 24 meeting.

It wasn’t a “traditional” State of the City address, she told the council before the presentation. Instead, she created a Powerpoint presentation displaying photographs of commercial, residential and municipal developments throughout the city.

“Literally showing you, not just telling you, how Seminole has been booming since 2014,” Waters said.

The biggest project in the city is the redevelopment of Seminole Mall into Seminole City Center, an outdoor retail hub.

In the past year, numerous businesses have opened up in the development, from the new Bealls to Earth Fare. The new Studio Movie Grill, an upscale movie theater, is currently under construction, and there’s something new happening at the center every day.

Another major redevelopment over the past two years has been the Bay Pines development which includes a Walmart – one of the largest in the state, Waters said – a Village Inn, a small strip of retail stores and two residential projects, one a gated community of townhomes, the other luxury apartments.

There are other retail developments the city has enjoyed over the past three years. Waters added. This includes the opening of two Starbucks – bringing the total to three in the city – as well as the All Care Medical Facility, Wawa gas station and Culver’s on Park Boulevard.

The Twin Oaks Plaza on the corner of Seminole Avenue and Park Boulevard has been redeveloped. It’s currently home to Lifestyle Family Fitness and DaVita, a kidney care company.

The former Roadhouse Grill location in the plaza is being redeveloped into a Sea Hags Bar and Grill.

As far as municipal projects, the city built a new community center at Seminole City Park, which also includes space for a Seminole Historical Society Museum, and is nearing completion of Fire Station 32. A ribbon cutting will be held in early March, Waters said.

“We are booming,” she said. “We have home developments going up and shops and restaurants and we’re very pleased with that.”

She added that “Seminole is more than bricks and mortar.” At its heart “is a hard-working and passionate of generous hearts and souls that contribute to our city in different ways.” She listed numerous civic organizations, as well as the Seminole Chamber of Commerce, churches, Interfaith Food Pantry and other groups.

In action items at the meeting, the council unanimously approved the establishment of a temporary moratorium on the sale of medical marijuana and on zoning approval for the

location of medical cannabis dispensing companies within the city. The moratorium will expire July 3 of this year unless extended by the council.

The council also gave initial approval to the redevelopment of property at 8680 Park Blvd. The building, which was built in 1977, previously housed a number of businesses, including a spa and series of nightclubs. Most recently, it was used as the former Manhattan Hairstyling Academy.

Developers plan to redevelop the site as a NASCAR car wash. A second public hearing will be held at a future council meeting.

Councilor Roger Edelman expressed concerns about how the project will affect traffic in the area but said he hopes those issues have been addressed by the developers.

The council also provided initial approval to the development of a vacant lot at 9075 82nd Ave. The residential development will be comprised of 24 single-family homes on 4.88 acres on the north side of 82nd Avenue and west of Starkey Road.

The council also authorized City Manager Ann Toney-Deal to enter into an agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection for a Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program grant. The \$100,000, which will be matched by a grant from the city, will be used for the Phase I development of Waterfront Park, which is located on Park Boulevard next to Home Depot.

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