



September 9, 2021



### COVID-19 Update

As COVID-19 infected a record number of people over the last few weeks, our local hospitals reached capacity. In the Glades, for example, Lakeside Medical Center ran out of ICU beds and no other hospital in Palm Beach County could take its patients, forcing a difficult effort to find a hospital elsewhere—sometimes as far as Miami and Orlando—that had room. In response, I called for the County Commission to declare a local state of emergency, which we did on August 17th.

This declaration not only has helped raise awareness of the severity of COVID-19 spread in Palm Beach County, but also required private hospitals to report the availability of their regular and ICU beds on a daily basis, as well as how many COVID-19 patients they are treating. The dashboard can be found here: [PBC Hospital Dashboard](#).

This has allowed hospitals to be more flexible and swift in the placement of patients, while helping policymakers see where additional resources may be needed. For instance, instead of waiting for the State to do so, Palm Beach County partnered with American Medical Response to establish a Glades monoclonal antibody infusion site, which is open now at Lakeside Medical Center.

Sadly, the COVID-19 spike has greatly impacted the family of one of my staff: my Glades aide recently lost her grandmother, uncle, and cousin to this virus in a span of just a few days. I am going to continue doing all I can to ensure our underserved communities have

access to these life-saving vaccines. For example, over the coming weeks, as our agricultural growers bring in new workers to help grow our nation's fruits and vegetables, I will be working with local health authorities to bring vaccination clinics to them.

I urge you all to please continue taking precautions. We continue to see adult ICU beds over capacity, and a high percentage of pediatric beds filled. By getting vaccinated and wearing masks when around others, we can overcome this wave and save lives together.

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## Vaccination Bus

On August 31st, the Palm Beach County Commission viewed Palm Tran's latest bus wrap. The Public Affairs Department collaborated with Palm Tran to produce four bus wraps promoting COVID-19 vaccination. The bus wraps feature Kansas City Chiefs Coach Terry Bradden, a Riviera Beach native, along with information on how to find a vaccine.

To find a vaccination site near you, visit [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov).



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## Off Highway Vehicle Townhall

On August 19th, I hosted a town hall at the Acreage Library to hear input from residents on the future Off Highway Vehicle Park, to be located near 20-Mile Bend. I was excited to see the enthusiastic turnout, with approximately 120 people in attendance!

I will continue to share updates with you as the park development progresses.



## **Exciting News!**

I am excited to share that I've been selected to serve, as the only Floridian, on the Environmental Protection Agency's Local Government Advisory Committee.

It's an honor to be called upon by the Biden/Harris Administration to serve in this role. Including the voices of those of us serving at the grassroots level to advise on environmental issues across our nation shows the President's commitment to a strong local/federal partnership. I'm excited to be on the team!

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## **Sober Homes Update**

On August 26th, the Palm Beach County Commission adopted significant changes to its Unified Land Development Code concerning the regulation of community residences for people with disabilities, such as sober homes, and recovery communities. These amendments revamp the County's regulatory treatment of these entities. The changes will protect the residents of these homes and communities while preventing clustering and intensification in neighborhoods, which makes community integration and normalization, both essential for those in recovery, much more challenging. I want to thank County staff, citizens, stakeholders, and State Attorney Dave Aronberg's Sober Homes Task Force for their input and hard work during this lengthy, careful process to ensure these amendments will best serve and protect the residents of Palm Beach County.

Click [here](#) for the agenda item summarizing the amendments.

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## **Replacement Housing In the Glades**

I had a wonderful time attending replacement housing ribbon cutting ceremonies in Belle Glade and South Bay on Aug. 13! The events were held to celebrate replacement housing for two homeowners in the western communities. Congratulations to Rennie Gayle in Belle Glade and Lola Mae Cameron in South Bay on their beautiful homes!

Other guests included Assistant County Administrator Dorritt Miller, Palm Beach County Department of Housing and Economic Development Director Jonathan B. Brown, South Bay Commissioner Taranza McKelvin, South Bay City Manager Leondrae D. Camel, SBW & Associates President Javin L. Walker, and other representatives.

The Palm Beach County Department of Housing and Economic Development partnered with SBW & Associates on the construction of both properties.

The Replacement Housing Program assists income eligible homeowners residing in dilapidated structures that are beyond rehabilitation. Eligible uses of funding include, but are not limited to, demolition of the existing property; construction cost of a replacement home on the same lot (or) purchase of an existing home; and relocation costs (includes utility deposits, storage and moving).

Lola Mae Cameron offered this quote: "Thank you to everyone that helped; I appreciate everyone for their hard work. It's a beautiful home and I hope to enjoy it for many years to come."

These homes served as a model for the Replacement Housing Program, and now three more homes are on the way. This is why I became an elected official--to make a positive difference in people's lives!



## Fire Rescue Graduation Ceremony

On August 20, I joined my fellow County Commissioners in congratulating Palm Beach County's latest Fire Rescue graduates! Class #81 is composed of brave men and women who will work hard to ensure our public safety. I thank them for their determination and drive to serve Palm Beach County.

*Photo (l to r): County Commissioner Maria Sachs, County Commissioner Gregg Weiss, Fire Rescue Chief Reginald Duren, County Commissioner Mack Bernard, County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay*



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## League of Women Voters Meeting

On August 18th, I was the guest speaker for the League of Women Voters of Palm Beach County's meeting. I spoke about home rule, and its importance to the governance of Palm Beach County and its municipalities. Local governments are constantly fending off efforts by the state to strip away home rule authority. Raising awareness of this serious problem has been a top priority of mine--as policymakers at the local level, we know our communities best and how to address the issues affecting them. Each year, we lose more and more of that ability in favor of a one-size-fits-all, top-down approach.



## **HOT TOPIC**

### **HOME RULE**

Please join us in welcoming County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay as she discusses the concept of Home Rule and its importance in the governance of Palm Beach County and its local municipalities.

**August 18, 2021**

**12:00 PM via Zoom**



**Melissa McKinlay**

Palm Beach County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay was first elected to the Board of County Commissioners in 2014, served as County Mayor from 2017-18, and was re-elected unopposed in 2018. She is Immediate Past President of the Florida Association of Counties, Vice Chair of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Agriculture & Rural Affairs Policy Steering Committee and a member of the NACo Board of Directors.

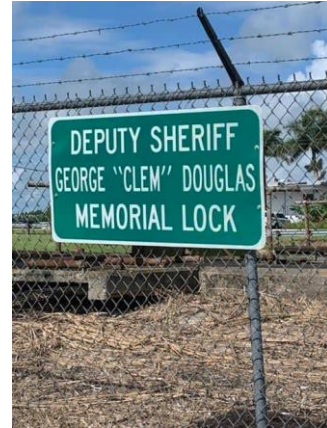
Her public service involves working at all levels of government, including with (former) U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, the U.S. and Florida House of Representatives, the State of Florida, and both Palm Beach & Sarasota (FL) counties.

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## **PBSO Memorial**

On August 27th, my office attended the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office 100th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony in honor of Deputy Sheriff George Clem Douglas, who was killed in the line of duty on August 27, 1921. The ceremony was held in Lake Harbor, near

the site where Deputy Douglas lost his life responding to a theft at a labor camp by the locks for the Miami Canal. The Miami lock was renamed in Douglas's honor. Attending this wonderful ceremony were two of his grandchildren.



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## In Closing

For rental assistance, click here: [Emergency Rental Assistance Program](#)

To find vaccine sites near you, click here: [Interactive Vaccine Locator](#)

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Commissioner Melissa McKinlay  
(561) 355-2206  
[mmckinlay@pbcgov.org](mailto:mmckinlay@pbcgov.org)

Kelley Burke  
Chief of Staff  
(561) 355-2206  
[kburke@pbcgov.org](mailto:kburke@pbcgov.org)

Joseph Sophie  
Senior Legislative Aide  
(561) 355-2206  
[jsophie@pbcgov.org](mailto:jsophie@pbcgov.org)

Lisa Wilson  
Legislative Aide  
(561) 996-4814  
[awilson1@pbcgov.org](mailto:awilson1@pbcgov.org)

