MEET BRANDI

Dear District 2 Residents,

Working to improve St. Petersburg is a passion of mine, and I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent you on City Council.

I am originally from Indiana and moved to St. Pete in 2003 with my husband Keith. Together, we raise our son Keigan in the Barclay Estates Neighborhood.

I am a Real Estate Broker Associate and Team Leader at Smith and Associates Real Estate. I have over a decade in leadership with the state, local and national real estate associations.

I hope you find the first of these monthly newsletters interesting and informative. Please reach out to me with questions or concerns about our city. I look forward to working for you!

- Brandi Gabbard

COMMITTEES

Council Member Gabbard will be serving on the following committees in 2018.

- Forward Pinellas
- Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
- Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations
- Youth Services
- Arts Advisory
- Housing, Land Use, and Transportation (Alternate)

UTILITY RATES

Beginning next month, you will see a raise in your water, wastewater, stormwater, and reclaimed water rates in order to offset higher operating costs and pay for repairs. The decision to raise rates was not taken lightly, but City Council members ultimately found it necessary. St. Petersburg’s infrastructure is in desperate need of upgrades and improvements. An average resident that uses 4,000 gallons of water per month will have an $11 increase on their bill. Those that use reclaimed water will see an increase of about $16.50. For more information visit: stpete.org/utilityrates

SEWAGE UPDATE

On January 4, 2018 City Council unanimously approved a contract to work with Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. to develop an Integrated Water Resources Program for St. Petersburg.

The contract is aligned with the City’s Capital Improvement Plan and meets the requirements of the Florida DEP’s Consent Order. This is a major step forward in being better prepared and proactive in the future in regards to our water resources.

The program will address the city’s water resources and infrastructure needs by making recommendations to the City about how to improve in a cost effective and sustainable way.

Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. will also be responsible for training city staff to be self-sufficient in administering and managing the program.
FLOOD INSURANCE

Flood Insurance is a very important topic to citizens of any coastal community. Councilwoman Gabbard’s professional advocacy experience has made working on affordable Flood Insurance a primary goal while in office. If you own a home or business in St. Petersburg, it is important to understand your need for Flood Insurance and discounts you may be eligible for.

It is important to protect yourself and promote the resiliency of St. Petersburg in the case of a flood. Flood water does not know where special hazard zones end, which is why it’s so important to have a flood insurance policy, even if your mortgage company does not require you to have one. Even residents in Zone X are very much at risk of being flooded and could benefit from obtaining a flood insurance policy. They are typically fairly inexpensive too.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency operates a voluntary community rating system which evaluates cities flood preparedness and outreach activities. Cities are scored between 1 (Great) and 10 (Poor). Every time a city reduces their score by demonstrating preparedness, residents earn an additional 5% discount on insurance.

Currently, St. Petersburg is rated at a 5, which means everyone living in a Special Flood Hazard Area (48% of St. Petersburg) is entitled to 25% off of their premiums. And those living in Zone X get a 10% discount. In one year, this saves the citizens of St. Petersburg around $9.7 Million! City staff aim to get our rating down to a 4 by 2020.

Visit https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program for more information or contact me with any questions.