HAPPY MAY!

May has arrived, and with it, summer begins for many families in St Pete! Summer can be a burden for many families that rely on schools for childcare and nutritious meals. St. Pete Parks and Rec department can help. Affordable summer camps targeting a wide variety of interests are available throughout the City. Head to www.StPeteParksRec.org for more information. Summer Break Spot also helps families and children by providing free nutritious breakfasts and lunches. Text “FoodFL” to 877-877 or dial 2-1-1 for locations. I hope you enjoy the last few weeks of spring as we head into summer in the Sun Shine City! - Brandi

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

On Thursday, April 19th City Council participated in the second of two Committee of the Whole meetings on affordable housing. The committee began with a review of existing City programs that help residents purchase or maintain their homes and then explored options to create more affordable housing in St. Petersburg. Currently, the need for affordable housing is dire, and over 60% of residents are cost burdened, or paying 30% of more of their income on housing. Council members and staff discussed a number of potential strategies like employer assisted programs, reducing code and zoning restrictions and waiving fees for new affordable units. A motion was passed to move forward with a Nexus Study, the next step in potentially creating a developer linkage fee that would charge developers a minimal fee per square foot for every new development. The revenue generated from this fee would go into a fund managed by the City that could be used to acquire land or provide low interest loans to developers of affordable housing. Council member Gabbard is also working with the Mayor’s administration team to create a Community Housing Council that would provide a forum for a variety of stakeholders to meet regularly and discuss housing issues and strategies.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY GARDENS

There are 41.2 million Americans that live with food insecurity. In Pinellas County alone, 16% of the population struggles to find enough nutritious, affordable food. Want to help? This Spring, take time to volunteer at a local community garden! There are a number of community gardens in St. Petersburg including the St. Pete Eco Village, the Edible Peace Patch Project, and four sites managed by Wunder Farms Organic Community Gardens. These gardens not only provide a source of sustainable health and wellness for residents, but also strengthen communities by bringing neighbors together. St. Pete Eco Village strives to take the sense of community even further by offering co-op housing opportunities and acting as an incubator for small green businesses.

Ready to volunteer?

- Eco Village: Wednesday and Sunday from 9a – 2p
- Wunder Farms: Contact wunderfarms@gmail.com
- Edible Peace Patch: Daily from 9 -12
Construction on the new St. Petersburg Police Department is quickly moving forward. The project began in 2017 in an effort to replace the station across the street that the police department outgrew.

The 6.3 acre site will include a main building, a parking garage topped with a solar array, and a central energy plant. The 167,519 sq.ft. headquarters will include an administrative wing as well as a property and evidence wing. The main building boasts a stylish new design but more importantly, plenty of room to add additional staff in the future. It also incorporates many sustainability efforts to ensure the longevity of the building. Sustainable building materials and low water use fixtures and appliances are just a few of these measures. Additionally, the main building will be ready to withstand 195 mph winds, or a Category 4 hurricane.

The Central Energy Plant (CEP) will include an emergency power system to manage critical operations in the case of a power outage. Also, the CEP will include high efficiency pumps, cooling towers, and other equipment which will supply chilled water for air conditioning in the main building.

Construction plans also include the restoration of an off-site (1845 13th Ave. N) shooting range featuring officer training space and classrooms. The armory and vehicle storage will be relocated to this site as well.

The City’s $86 million investment is expected to be fully operational in the Spring of 2019.