

ALACHUA COUNTY "VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY" PRECINCT NEWS - NUMBER 9.

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"Alachua County is Florida's first county for more than alphabetical reasons." In 1986, following public hearings, a majority of civic-minded voters approved a ballot initiative to create & operate our now wonderful & still improving Library District. Tap into the "Inter-library Loan" system and borrow books from all over America. Reference librarians can help you find information. Other more recent success has come from an elegant process provided by state constitution & county charter: sufficient petition signatures, voted yes, can lead to new forms of civic maturity. Precincts of our county are the environment from which future progressive consequences can emerge.

The "Issues" section of Gainesville Sun – Sunday, June 10, 2018, highlighted a beginning discussion by our DEC Vice-Chair, James Thompson: "A community ready for racial & environmental justice." Go to www.gainesville.com & search for his name. His suggested categories of civic discussion, "discovery", & development are all worth sharing & doing. Hats off to James. This kind of civic etiquette may be the "fired up" that our fellow citizens are "ready to go" with. Keep your motor running. Smile.

In these turbulent times, there is much to accomplish that is worthwhile. We Precinct Representatives, as we introduce ourselves to our constituents, can bring bold ideas & paths to their achievement. Leadership is finding civic movement & going forward. Alachua County can be "first" – we also can be "next." For example, 35 Florida counties have "School Impact Fees." We don't. In 1986, UF Law Professor, Dr. Jim Nicholas conducted a "pro-bono" analysis of the financial burden from every new dwelling unit permitted in our county. The burdens of building new facilities and providing additional services as a result of increasing demands that flow from growing population. The \$ numbers for 1986 were \$20,000 for schools & \$20 K more for other impacts. It is painfully clear that if those who profit from "development" avoid their "fair share", property taxes go up and/or quality of life & community goes down. So, who are we representing & how can we show it? Democracy is more than \$ & votes.

In 1978, a citizen "Worthy" - Sidney Knight, gathered civic activists to create "Gainesville Neighborhood Advisory Board." With 2 Representatives from each of 16 Gainesville Precincts, monthly meetings at the Thomas Center, & orientation by city staff, the "GNAB" soon began its own investigations: "furthering the public interest" by "responsible & responsive public servants." Can anyone report how that turned out?

In 1986, our Florida Legislative Delegation created a monthly gathering: "Leaders of Government in Cooperation" (LOGIC). Every elected official in Alachua County was usually in attendance. Who recalls this? Could Democrats revive this civic creature?

In 1994, Alachua County Commissioners sponsored "Visions 20/20". Hundreds of citizens self-selected to participate in district gatherings facilitated to "ideate" about our "possible community trajectory." Delegates from the district events were chosen to be "Representatives" at Lincoln Middle School. Thoughtful & credit-worthy offerings were made during the day-long event. Can anyone report on that? (any evidence?)