

Joe Catigano
Oak Hill City Commissioner Seat #3

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– The Right Leader Now –



October 23, 2025

Hi Everyone,

This was such a hot summer; we are blessed with this much welcome cool down. I hope all of you are enjoying this break from the heat as much as I am. So far so good on the tropical storms and hurricanes.

Citizen turnout at our commission meetings has been amazing, thank you all for supporting our city. Your participation is essential to its health and well-being, and it's having an impact.

Picnic at the Oak Hill Community Garden

Please join us at the Oak Hill Community Garden for a City Picnic and Talent Contest. The event will be held on Saturday, October 25, 2025 from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM [Click Here](#) for a printable PDF file with additional information. Free Hot dogs and refreshments will be served or if you prefer, you may bring your own picnic basket.



The [Oak Hill Community Trust](#) is creating a time and space for people to come together for fellowship. This is a perfect opportunity to get to know your neighbors. While you're there, please pick up a free Oak Hill Citizen



Handbook. Vendors and representatives from local clubs and organizations will be on site to answer questions and to help you become a member. Organizations include Churches, The Oak Hill Garden Club, and Farm House Cats. Plants will also be available for purchase. It will be great fun and educational, so PLEASE JOIN US and support your community garden!

Sculpture in community Garden

The Daytona Beach Museum of Arts and Sciences donated this beautiful sculpture to the Oak Hill Community Trust for the Community Garden. We are lucky and grateful for the generous support of this prestigious institution. They have also donated a large seashell collection which will be on display.



Dr. Kerchoff Presentation to the City of Oak Hill



Dr. Nicole Kirchhoff, owner of Live Advantage Bait in Fort Pierce, Florida, has led the state's only warm water marine bait and food-fish hatchery for the past 13 years. She is a champion of farmer collaboration, research, restoration, and innovation—including pioneering fish spawning implants now pending FDA approval—and she actively connects domestic and

international seafood businesses and markets.

Florida's aquaculture industry is a nearly \$400 million sector with over 1,000 certified farms statewide, producing everything from tropical ornamentals to clams to aquatic plants and food fish. In her talk, Dr. Kirchhoff will share an overview of the present scope of Florida aquaculture—its size, value, species, and production system diversity—while highlighting opportunities for business development in Volusia County, and the sector's broader contributions to the local economy, job creation, ecosystem services, and community resilience



AME Church Restoration and Museum Conversion

At the June 23, 2025 Oak Hill City Commissioner's meeting the commission discussed doing an assessment of the Historic AME Church located 222/223

Cummings Street. The church building and lots are owned by the City of Oak Hill. [Click here](#) to view the minutes from that meeting. The purpose of the assessment was to determine if a restoration of the building is feasible. The goal being to gain a historic place designation and to ultimately use the building as a museum.



This lofty goal would have provided our community with a sense of pride by turning a historic church into a place to learn about our heritage. A place where our city's history could have been be put on full display for current and future generations to reflect upon and gain an understanding of our past. Remember a wise person once said, "*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it*"

This was a moment in time when our city commission was poised to accomplish something for our city that would have benefited our citizens for generations. As usual, our commission failed to rise to the occasion and act. Instead, they squandered an opportunity to unite our citizenry, benefit them, and reach out beyond the boundary of our municipality and showcase our history and pride to all.

Instead, Commissioner Werning chose to use this opportunity to accuse me of trying to circumvent our city's purchasing procedure by steering [the contract](#). My response to this unsubstantiated accusation was to point out that while I'm not opposed to using the competitive bidding process as outlined in [Sec. 2-324](#) of our municipal code, that very same code, more specifically [Sec. 2-325](#), provides for situations like this, where a single source or solicitation of bids is otherwise deemed to be inappropriate. Not to mention [Sec. 2-310](#) which states that the term "services" shall not include professional services which are unique in their nature and not subject to competition.

I have a problem when people accuse me of breaking the law, so during this

contentious exchange, I reached out to our city attorney and asked for his support. Rather than citing the relevant parts of our municipal code Attorney Kelly choose to ignore my request. Shortly after that exchange, a citizen came to the podium and asked me where in the municipal code was the provision for single source and professional service. I responded by informing her that I could not remember the specific sections but would get back to her as soon as I could. She proceeded to read the [Sec. 2-324](#) in its entirety but left out the two sections that supported my argument.

This is an example supportive of the old truism that “no good deed goes unpunished.” After the nearly 3-hour meeting I looked up the municipal code and sent her [a text](#) containing a reference to the relevant section. You can see the text message by [clicking here](#). She answers my text by asking me another question, “who determines single source?” So, I answer that question too - “the commission.” I went on to say “I understand that you have no interest in saving the church.” Before I could get the next text out, which would have read, “but that doesn’t change the content of our municipal code,” she fires off another text telling me that “I will not go back and forth with you.” [Click here](#) to view that text.

I took exception to this remark because I’m not the one asking the questions. As a commissioner elected to serve the citizens of this city, I feel obligated to answer when someone asks me a question. She then goes on to berate me, saying that I have no right to say what her interests are and that I was wrong. I responded by saying that the contractor is uniquely qualified and I have no doubt about that. [Click here](#) to see that text. After a few more [unsolicited comments](#), she finally ends the text exchange by accusing me of harassing her and tells me “you have no right to be texting me.” [Click here](#) to see that text. Funny, she didn’t mind texting me while I was working my butt off to get her husband elected mayor. See how that works? When you can’t beat the truth, shut it down.

The next day, I called city attorney Michael Kelly to ask why he failed to provide the commission with an accurate assessment of our municipal code as it pertains to purchases. After a discussion he asked if I would like him to send the commission a memo with his interpretation. While “a day late and a dollar short,” I agreed. [Click here](#) to read the attorney’s memo. After a review, I concluded that the attorney was either trying to scuttle the project or he failed to actually read the proposal. I called him to verify whether or not he had read it.

A quick review of the [May 12, 2025 proposal](#) reveals that [A.G. Pifer Construction](#) never proposed to perform “construction and restoration.” The proposal was for inspection. In fact, the title says “Building a Condition Investigated Services Proposal.” If you read the final paragraph of



Attorney Kelly’s memo, he states “The primary aspect establishing the uniqueness of Mr. Pifer’s proposal is his ability to provide engineering and design services in addition to construction services. However, Fla. Stat. § 287.055 provides specific bidding requirements for “architecture and professional engineering.” What Attorney Kelly leaves out is that no where in [Mr. Pifer’s proposal](#) does he offer architectural and engineering services to our city.

The verbal gymnastics that Attorney Kelly goes through in his analysis boggles the mind. The proposal doesn’t offer any service other than an inspection of the historic church. When I confronted Attorney Kelly with this reality, I asked if he had actually read the proposal before he wrote the memo. His answer to me was to say that he did not, and that he wrote the memo extemporaneously from memory and his notes. You can’t make this stuff up.

After discussions at the July 14, 2025 City Commission meeting, [click here](#) to view the minutes from that meeting, The commission decided to hold a workshop. A community workshop was held on July 10, 2025 to discuss this topic and to gauge community support for this project. [Click here](#) to view the minutes from this workshop. No less than 14 citizens spoke in favor of restoring the church. Not a single citizen spoke in opposition.

Another discussion on the Historic AME Church inspection proposal was held at the August 11, 2025 City Commission meeting, [click here](#) to view the minutes. Despite community leaders, including Pastor Jiles Smith, Dana Greatrex, Uda Mary Alderman, Evelyn Evans, and Pastor Willie Wood speaking out passionately about their desire to see the city preserve the

church as a historic building, our mayor and city commissioners still managed to defy the will of the public.

The vitriol during these discussions became so toxic that at one point Commissioner Werning told Pastor Wood that the city had “better things to spend the money on.” These commissioners completely turned the tables on the will of the citizens and sent them a strong message - You don’t tell me how you want your tax dollars spent, you give me your money and I’ll tell you how I’m going to spend it.

At that very same meeting, the commission voted to spend \$4500.00 on a single speed bump, when enforcement is something the taxpayer already foots the bill for. A more recent event that really sent that message home is when, without the approval of the commission, \$2348.48 of city tax dollars went to [buy flags](#) and [flag poles](#) that were only displayed for about 4 hours. Mr. Pifer’s proposal to inspect the Historic AME Church was for \$7500.00. So, no money approved for something that could benefit our city for generations to come but plenty of unapproved funding for something that benefits few and lasts for mere hours. After hearing all the ill will that was coming from the commission, Mr. Pifer reached out to me and offered to do the inspection for \$5000.00.

At the August 11, 2025 City Commission meeting I made a motion to approve the funding for Mr. Pifer’s proposal. The rest of the commission, as if acting in lock-step with each other, sat on their hands and let the motion die. The priority of this commission is to pass on a project that the public wants, a project that would provide a century or more of utility and pride to our city, for short term projects that essentially benefit no one.

I will keep trying to get this project completed using grants and land value as matching funds. Please help by letting me and the other commissioners know how you feel about this.

RPUD Extension

In other news, I wanted to let everyone know that the commission voted 4-to-1 against extending the RPUD moratorium. I was the only one who voted in favor of extending it. Mayor Ricky Taylor, and Mark Drollinger despite all their promises to you, (every time they approached you for permission to put a



campaign sign in your yard) once again thumbed their nose at Oak Hill and voted against what they told you they stood for.

Christmas Parade

Sign-up to participate in our annual Oak Hill Christmas parade which is being held on December 13, 2025. Contact Tosha or Megan Bracy at city hall for an application.

The next Oak Hill City Commissioner's meeting is, **October 27, 2025** at city hall. The time is 6:00 PM. [click here](#) for the agenda and [here](#) for the agenda pack.

Please come and let your voice be heard. Your presence and participation are how we hold our commission to account.

As always, it's my pleasure to serve you, I appreciate your support. Please let me know what I can do to help. I'm here to represent you...

Thanks again,

Joe Catigano

Oak Hill City Commissioner

Seat 3

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Email

October 23

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