Business-friendly” is one of those buzz words you may keep hearing around town. It characterizes Palm Coast’s practices as being conducive to business concerns. In a broader sense, it refers to our guidelines for building standards that ensure a level playing field, support a new company’s infrastructure for water, design, planning and technology and reinforces our community’s access to a diverse, educated workforce.

Businesses want to move here because we have 85,000 residents whom they believe will want to purchase their goods and services. Likewise, residents often move here because we offer the businesses where they prefer to shop. As a City Council, our challenge is to strike a diplomatic balance to uphold the architectural and landscape standards that are amicable for both our businesses and residents.

To this end, we continue to make improvements to our permitting and development review. This includes adjusting our technology (on-line applications and payments; electronic submittals; electronic simultaneous reviews); process improvements (pre-submittal courtesy reviews; weekly technical review team meetings with applicants; performance measures for quick review turnaround time; streamline residential and zoning reviews – over the counter; simplified transportation impact fees; designated project managers). Once new businesses open to our community and people shop locally, more money is spent right here in Palm Coast. We’ve invested this money for park improvements, landscape beautification projects, fiberNET and miles of magnificent multi-purpose trails. This cycle gives back to business-friendly as being the catalyst for the growth of our population, the money we spend locally to build our infrastructure and the employment opportunities we make available to our residents.

Here’s what some of our new business owners are telling us:

**Gary Heckel,** Co-owner of Dunkin Donuts: “Palm Coast was a big help to us in the rebuilding of the Dunkin’ Donuts/Baskin Robbins on Palm Coast Parkway. It started from the initial meeting with us, our general contractor and the various City Council, our challenge is to strike a diplomatic balance to uphold the architectural and landscape standards that are amicable for both our businesses and residents.

**Sompong Banchanurat,** Owner of Thai by Thai Restaurant: “The service we received at the building department was fast and very good for business. Customers here wanted us to stay in Palm Coast, so we were able to open in a big space without much trouble. This year, doors are opening at new retail shops, car washes, banks, supermarkets, restaurants and gas stations. We’re also welcoming brand new senior assisted living residences to town. Our feedback has been really positive and we look forward to partnering with new incoming businesses in the near future.

**Jack Barrett,** Vice President of Superwash Car Wash: “I've had years of experience working with different cities in Florida, and Palm Coast was definitely one of the most professional and intelligent groups to work with and they did so without compromising their high standards for community development. They were always willing to listen and implement modifications when needed. Just take a look around the beautiful orderly community: you can tell they care.”

**Somporn Banchanurat,** Owner of Thai by Thai Restaurant: “The service we received at the building department was fast and very good for business. Customers here wanted us to stay in Palm Coast, so we were able to open in a big space without much trouble.

**Holland Park** is back again, like a long lost friend. No matter what your age, you’re going to find lots of your favorite things to do with friends and family. And the new park has so much more to offer.

What’s going on in the park? The two-year-olds are being pushed in strollers by moms who are walking the trail. Eight-year-olds are climbing the coquina wall and zip-lining. 30-year-olds are playing tennis and basketball. The 50-year-olds are jogging the trail. The 70-year-olds are playing horseshoes.

Here are some of our Park favorites for you to explore:
- A 24-station playground steeped in Flagler County history: Coquina rock dates back to our days of sugar mills.
- A zip line to exhilarate our kids.
- New features include a sand volleyball court, horseshoe pits, pickle ball courts.
- A two-sided fenced dog park with separate areas for large and small dogs. Both include wash-down stations.
- A hike/biking path surrounding the perimeter of the park.
- An abundance of parking that surrounds the park.

Holland Park was originally dedicated in 2002 in memory of Palm Coasts forefather James Holland. He was one of our City’s original Council Members and our own Mayor Melissa Holland’s loving father. His legacy of leisure fun for generations gives our residents the perfect spot to have fun and spend time together.

It took a while, but it was worth the wait.
Senior Games Inspire a Generation

The best senior athlete out there is the one having the most fun. That's why Palm Coast and the Flagler Beaches love hosting the Annual Senior Games, this year scheduled from September 9-24. Games are for the fun-at-heart, seasoned athletes, late bloomers, serious competitors who are over 50 years of age. Program goals are for athletes to feel healthy and competitive as they age in a program that fosters quality of life and community spirit.

The Senior Games will officially open at the Tuesday, Sept. 5 Palm Coast City Council meeting with the reading of a proclamation and will close at the Tuesday, Oct. 3 meeting where the winners will receive their gold, silver and bronze medals. Victorious athletes will also move on to compete next year in the Florida State Senior Games. Fees are only $15 per game.

This year’s events are:
- Archery (Compound Fingers, Compound Release, Recurve, Compound Recurve, Barebow Recurve, Barebow Compound): 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 9; at Indian Trails Middle School fields, 5453 Belle Terre Pkwy, Palm Coast
- Pickleball Singles: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 14; at Belle Terre Park Tennis Center, 339 Parkview Drive, Palm Coast
- Pickleball Doubles: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 15; at Belle Terre Park Tennis Center, 339 Parkview Drive, Palm Coast
- Golf Croquet: 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16; at Palm Harbor Golf Club, 100 Cooper Lane, Palm Coast
- Cycling (5K time trial, 10K time trial, 20K or 40K road race): 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 17; course begins at Central Park in Town Center, 975 Central Ave., Palm Coast
- Tennis Doubles: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday, Sept. 18; at the Palm Coast Tennis Center, 1290 Belle Terre Pkwy, Palm Coast
- Tennis Singles: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 19; at the Palm Coast Tennis Center, 1290 Belle Terre Pkwy, Palm Coast
- Golf 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20, at Palm Harbor Golf Club, at 100 Cooper Lane, Palm Coast
- Horseshoes: 7:30-10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 20; at Old Dixie Community Park on North Old Dixie Highway, Bunnell
- Swimming: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 22; at Frieda Zamba Swimming Pool, 339 Parkview Drive, Palm Coast

To participate, go to www.palmcoastgov.com/events/senior-games

Where Trees are Planted to Grow, There is Life and Legacy

Six thousand magnolia, holly, redbud and Chickasaw Plum trees adorn properties in Palm Coast because residents and their City have teamed to make this community beautiful. For 12 years, the City of Palm Coast has been distributing 500 free trees per year to residents at the annual Arbor Day event.

That's thousands of grand structures around our town impacting our quality of life and the legacy that we want to leave for future generations. Our trees hold us rooted in nature.

If you ask Melissa Chipps about the trees on her property, she'll tell you how much she loves looking out at the serenity in her yard. She's nurtured eight trees she's received at Arbor Day events and she says she's so pleased to live in a City that works hard to connect neighborhoods with beautifying and preserving nature. "I've lived in 13 different states and I found my perfect paradise right here in the C section in Palm Coast", she says.

Joanne Johnson concurs. Magnolia and holly trees from Arbor Day grow strong in her Quail Hollow yard. And she's donated other trees to various organizations and parks around the area. "What's better than having a free new tree?" she observes. "It's such a smart thing for the City to do: to enhance our homes while helping us save some money on plants on our properties."

Both Melissa and Joanne entered their trees in a City contest that recognized homeowners who've supported Arbor Day. Categories included Tallest by Species (Joanne won first place) and Overall Appearance. The City's Arbor Day event has expanded over the years to include not only tree giveaways, but also green exhibits, butterfly release, 5K Root Run, paper shredding and food donations. Free trees are also being distributed each January at a Christmas Tree Recycling Event.

Because so many of us in Palm Coast are rooted in nature, thousands of trees line the streets, parks and public buildings, vintage greenery that we will never take for granted. With our gift of a tree every year at Arbor Day, residents will always have a place to sit and contemplate the world and roots will have a place to grow.