

**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** 'Joeysharkey@bellsouth.net' [joeysharkey@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 13, 2008 6:28 PM  
**To:** Citycomm  
**Subject:** fire service fee

Dear Mayor and Commissioners,

Evidently you do not understand the wishes of the people you serve. Florida home owners unanimously voted to lower their property taxes knowing full well that State, County and Municipality budgets would be drastically affected. I personally do not think enough was done by the Legislature, but that's another story.

You now want to charge a fire fee to all county residents. Again, this charge will go to homeowners, not renters. You have got to start doing for the city what you do in your personal lives. When you experience a drop in income, you cut your budget of fat and things not necessary. I worked in the Public Sector for many years and have first hand knowledge of excesses and waste. I refuse to believe there are not things that can be drastically cut from our city budget. Will it hurt? There are so many redundant offices, programs and services; I don't think the average citizen would ever notice.

For instance, I just saw a piece on the local news where the director of the car pool stated the city is losing money with Hybrid vehicles, but it's the right thing to do having them on the road because it sets a good example. BS!

Your job is to efficiently run our local government not espouse your beliefs. Run our government and stay out of our wallets. You get enough already.

Thank you for your time,

--  
Joey Sharkey  
Southeastern Claims  
(352) 246-3096

**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Joseph Or Carmen Lander [jnlander@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 22, 2008 3:31 PM  
**To:** Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Poe, Lauren B.; Hanrahan, Pegeen; Henry, Scherwin L.; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Lowe, Craig  
**Subject:** Fire Assessment Fee

We are writing this message concerning the proposed fire assessment fee. We received the notice of the meeting on the new fee this past week. We do not wish to argue about the proposed fee on our residence (even though we think there are other ways for the city to cover the support of fire services) but we do disagree about the fee on non-profit organizations--specifically churches. You know this is a type of double taxation. We are paying the assessment on our residence and then we are being assessed again on the money we contribute to our church for its operation. If we owned a business we would get hit 3 times--on our home, our business and our church. This principal is the same for all non-profit organizations--when we donate to the organization we will now be paying for this assessment. Is that fair? Is this all the first step in adding non-profit organizations to the tax roles for everything? Joe & Carmen Lander

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COL Joseph N. Lander, USA Ret.  
3930 NW 35th Place  
we are special,  
Gainesville, Florida 32606-6148  
(352) 377-0482

"We are not chosen because we're special because we're chosen."

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Greg Magruder [gregmag@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 06, 2008 1:47 AM  
**To:** Commsh  
**Cc:** Poe, Lauren B.; Henry, Scherwin L.; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Lowe, Craig; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Hanrahan, Pegeen  
**Subject:** Fire Assessment fees

Commissioner Henry,

Thank you for providing the forum for discussion of the Fire Assessment fee at Springhill Missionary Baptist Church. The information was presented well and the financial concerns communicated.

As I stated in the meeting, I think that this proposal to assess churches is a bad idea. It may sound fair and equitable but the consequences will be anything but such. If our church, Parkview Baptist Church, is required to pay an assessment fee, it will directly impact the services we provide to the community. We are a small congregation with an old but large church complex. We will be assessed more than the average church in the area. This will impact our church budget and cut into our staffing and ministries.

But even if we remove the impact on our church, the community groups we allow to use our facilities will be impacted even more. We allow 16 community groups to use our church plant. We are open seven days a week and these groups use our facility. They are mostly support groups, scouting groups and recovery groups that have very little income or resources, yet they provide services for the needy and the people most at risk in our society. They donate what they can from member contributions but this covers very little of the actual costs our church incurs. A Fire Assessment fee would force us as a church to either charge these groups or ask them to leave. The most vulnerable will be affected.

I am grateful for the services the fire department provides. The men and women who serve in the department place their lives on the line to protect property and people. This is an invaluable service. However, churches provide valuable services too. We minister to the most vulnerable; those who have fallen through the cracks and those who need more care than city or county services can offer. We do not pay property taxes because for 200 years our country has recognized the valuable service that churches provide for the community. Now that financial constraints call for increased revenue, churches make an easy target. In reality, it is a form of cannibalism. One service takes priority over another service even though both services help the community.

Other communities have assessment fees and yet they exempt churches and other non-profits (see Titusville for instance). I urge you to reconsider this path of taxing churches. It is the first step to full taxation of churches, whether its called an assessment or a tax. That time may come, but you do not have to lead the way. Please remove churches from the assessment fee requirement.

Sincerely yours,

Greg Magruder, Pastor  
Parkview Baptist Church  
3403 NW 13th Street  
Gainesville, FL 32609

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Greg Magruder  
352-380-0066 H  
352-378-2606 W  
gregmag@bellsouth.net

**Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Hal And Ruth Smith [raks33@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 25, 2008 3:49 PM  
**To:** Citycomm  
**Subject:** Fire Tax on Churches

Please do not enact the fire tax on churches. The line between church and state is clearly drawn in the constitution, Additionally, imposing a tax on churches for a governmental service would certainly draw a court case. Do you really want to use taxpayer funds for what seems to be illegal?

Do you want to hurt the very institutions which are giving much to our area in the way of services for programs the city is now not funding? Many churches would have a difficult time maintaining their level of giving--basically worth more than what the city would recover by this taxation.

=====  
This message was generated on the City of Gainesville Website.  
User Name: Ruth Smith  
User IP address: 24.250.251.253  
Client software: Mozilla/5.0 (Macintosh; U; Intel Mac OS X 10\_5\_3; en-us) AppleWebKit/525.18 (KHTML, like Gecko)  
Version/3.1.1 Safari/525.20

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**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Howard Wallace [mailto:howard@hkwbuilders.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 08, 2008 4:24 PM  
**To:** Poe, Lauren B.  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Services Assessment

Thanks for the prompt response! Pleasant surprise indeed. H

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**From:** Poe, Lauren B. [mailto:poel@cityofgainesville.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 08, 2008 3:57 PM  
**To:** Howard Wallace  
**Cc:** Andrew, Devonia L.; Radson, Marion J.  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Services Assessment

Mr. Wallace,

According to Florida case law, fire assessments are only allowed to be levied to improved properties (those with structures). Therefore, only those lots with homes should be assessed. I will check with the city attorney and ask him to get back to you. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.

Best,

Lauren

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**From:** Howard Wallace [mailto:howard@hkwbuilders.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 08, 2008 2:51 PM  
**To:** citycomm  
**Cc:** 'Anne Wallace'  
**Subject:** Fire Services Assessment

Attached please find my respectful objection to the proposed assessment at Villas at 39th. Howard Wallace

No virus found in this incoming message.  
Checked by AVG - <http://www.avg.com>  
Version: 8.0.138 / Virus Database: 270.4.6/1540 - Release Date: 7/8/2008 6:33 AM

**Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Howard Wallace [howard@hkwbuilders.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 08, 2008 2:51 PM  
**To:** Citycomm  
**Cc:** Anne Wallace  
**Subject:** Fire Services Assessment  
**Attachments:** villas fire assessment.doc



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ssessment.doc (21..

Attached please find my respectful objection to the proposed assessment at Villas at 39th. Howard Wallace



**Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Evelyn Casey [ecasey7@datasystems-fl.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 15, 2008 3:14 PM  
**To:** Hanrahan, Pegeen; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Henry, Scherwin L.; Poe, Lauren B.; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Lowe, Craig; 'Bocc@alachuacounty.us'  
**Subject:** Fire Assessment Fee

Dear City and County Commissioners:

I have an idea to present, in case it has not already been considered. My idea is based on the fact that I believe that a sales tax increase is a more equitable way to raise money for fire assessment needs. Property owners are not the only ones who benefit from fire protection services. All people who live here or visit here benefit from these services.

After talking to city and county attorneys, I learned that only the county can call for a Referendum to increase the sales tax and that this money can only be used for infrastructure ..in this case, for fire stations, fire trucks and equipment. If this were done, the amount needed from property taxes could be reduced to an amount to cover fire personnel salaries.

Knowing that the fire assessment issue has been under discussion for quite a while I apologize for not sending this to you sooner.

I am greatly appreciative for all your hard work in trying to resolve this and many other issues. I will appreciate your consideration of this idea.

Gratefully,

Evelyn S. Casey

2811 N.W. 12th Place

Gainesville, Florida 32605

352 373-2943

**Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Frank Green [msg2frank@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 2:27 PM  
**To:** Citycomm  
**Subject:** Fire Assessment Objection

I would like to file an objection with the City Commission to the proposed assessment for fire services.

Primarily I object to charging a fee for the basic governmental services of police and fire protection that should be provided for from the property and sales taxes.

I also object because it is unfairly assessed. The city web page states that "All owners of improved property in the City would be subject to the special assessment with the exception of government-owned properties. Non-profit organizations owning improved property would be subject to the assessment."

One source stated 23 % of the calls for fire department responses were from the University of Florida?

The Fire Department will respond to fires in government owned buildings and continue to respond to automobile accidents.

It appears that each property that benefits will not pay its proportionate share of the costs of providing fire services

--

Frank Green  
423 NW 21st Street  
Gainesville, Florida 32603  
msg2frank@gmail.com

**Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Donovan, John F. - Commissioner [/o=gru.com/ou=gruadm/cn=recipients/cn=donovanjf]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 2:22 PM  
**To:** Betty Covell  
**Subject:** RE: [QUARANTINE BYPASSED] Approval of assessment of fire protection service.

Thanks for your input, Betty.  
Jack

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**From:** covelle@bellsouth.net [mailto:covelle@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Wed 7/9/2008 10:11 AM  
**To:** citycomm  
**Cc:** covelle@bellsouth.net  
**Subject:** [QUARANTINE BYPASSED] Approval of assessment of fire protection service.

Dear Commissioners:

I strongly support the proposed assessment for fire protections services. I think it is fair to all. Fire protections services are invaluable to this community.

Sincerely Yours,  
Elizabeth B. Covell

## **Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Donovan, John F. - Commissioner [mailto:donovanj@gru.com/ou=gruadm/cn=recipients/cn=donovanj]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 2:08 PM  
**To:** Blackburn, Russ D.  
**Subject:** fire fee questions

Hi Russ,

Questions that have come my way on the calculation of the fire service assessments:

1. Who/what is the organization that calculated our rates per business, institution, and residence?
2. Were the calculations specific to Gainesville properties and fire service delivery records (calls, etc)?
3. Why are institutions charged a higher rate than businesses?
4. Shouldn't places of religious assembly be charged at lower rates than other institutions or businesses given that they are subject to less intense use?
5. What period of time was included in the fire services assessment study? Was the unusual spate of fires set by a homeless arsonist back in the early '90s taken into account one way or another?

Thanks,  
Jack

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**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Donovan, John F. - Commissioner [/o=gru.com/ou=gruadm/cn=recipients/cn=donovanjf]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 6:29 PM  
**To:** Blackburn, Russ D.  
**Subject:** FW: And Furthermore - Fire Fee

Hi Russ,  
Regarding Larry Reimer's email, am I right that the rate per square foot for institutions and businesses is based on a cost of service analysis? Is it pretty solid?  
Thanks,  
Jack

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**From:** Andrew, Devonia L.  
**Sent:** Tue 5/20/2008 1:30 PM  
**To:** 'Larry Reimer'  
**Cc:** citycomm; cityngnr  
**Subject:** RE: And Furthermore - Fire Fee

Pastor Reimer,

The Mayor and Commissioners are in receipt of your email and the City Manager has been copied for his information.  
Thank you for your time in this matter.

Devonia L. Andrew  
Executive Assistant to the Mayor

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**From:** Larry Reimer [mailto:larryr@ucgainesville.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 10:18 AM  
**To:** citycomm  
**Subject:** And Furthermore - Fire Fee

Dear Commissioners:

It's me again! Charging \$.17 per square foot for the fire protection fee for non-profits, when the fees for industrial and commercial are significantly lower, and not charging the city or university properties for fire protection is rather incompressible to me. In a time when everyone is experiencing funding cuts, the churches are called upon to do more and more in terms of providing space and financing for people and groups in need. If a fire services fee is to be imposed, it should be equitable, and inclusive of city and the university, all of whom use fire services.

Plus, it should be done in conjunction with the county. I don't think Gainesville wants large churches to leave the city, as has been done recently by Trinity Methodist, Westside Baptist, North Central Baptist, United Pentecostal, and now First Baptist. This is another incentive to do so.

Thanks.

Larry Reimer

United Church of Gainesville

1624 NW 5 Ave.,

Gainesville, FL 32603

352-378-3500

[www.ucgainesville.org](http://www.ucgainesville.org)

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**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Donovan, John F. - Commissioner [/o=gru.com/ou=gruadm/cn=recipients/cn=donovanjf]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 6:24 PM  
**To:** Lannon, Kurt M.; Folkers, Paul E.  
**Cc:** Blackburn, Russ D.; Northcutt, William K.; Rountree, Becky L.; Citycomm; Dg\_clerks  
**Subject:** RE: New Date for Commission Meeting on Final Assessment Resolution

Hi Kurt and Paul,  
Quite likely I will be unavailable 7/28-8/8.  
Jack

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**From:** Lannon, Kurt M.  
**Sent:** Tue 5/20/2008 2:32 PM  
**To:** Folkers, Paul E.  
**Cc:** Blackburn, Russ D.; Northcutt, William K.; Rountree, Becky L.; citycomm; DG\_CLERKS  
**Subject:** RE: New Date for Commission Meeting on Final Assessment Resolution

I would caution on July 15 since two late nights in a row is a bit tough.

I will have Devonia and Neomia look at possibilities. We should probably wait until next week to reserve any tentative dates when the two new Commissioners are here.

We can finalize the dates on the June 9th meeting unless you would like the Mayor to "call" the meetings before then.

KL

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**From:** Folkers, Paul E.  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 20, 2008 12:18 PM  
**To:** Lannon, Kurt M.  
**Cc:** Blackburn, Russ D.; Northcutt, William K.; Rountree, Becky L.  
**Subject:** New Date for Commission Meeting on Final Assessment Resolution



Kurt,

As you know, the Commission changed the schedule on the fire assessment. As a result, we will need to change to date for the Final Assessment Resolution which was scheduled for June 26. We would like to check on Commission availability for the following dates.

July 15, 16, 23 and 24 at 6 p.m. This would include a public hearing that could have a very large crowd. We would like to place the tentative date on the City website and the Commission will need to confirm the date as part of the Initial Assessment Resolution on June 9. Please let me know which of these dates would work for the Commission.

Thanks,

Paul

Paul Folkers  
Assistant City Manager  
City Of Gainesville  
200 East University Avenue  
P.O. Box 490, Station 6  
Gainesville, FL 32602-0490  
(352) 334-5010  
(352) 334-3119 Fax  
folkerspe@cityofgainesville.org

**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** 'Dmscro@bellsouth.net' [dmscro@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 08, 2008 10:25 PM  
**To:** Hanrahan, Pegeen  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Protection Fee

RE: the fire protection fee: NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO!  
I don't know if you will be called upon to vote on this issue, but IF YOU ARE.....PLEASE VOTE NO!!!

I live at 705 N.W. 19th Ave, and own my duplex. I STRONGLY object to the fire department asking for more money because they have neglected to plan for the increases in fuel costs, etc. EVERY time I see an ambulance picking up someone, (WHEN NO FIRE IS INVOLVED!!!) there is a LARGE, gas-eating (how many miles to the gallon do they get, two? three?) ladder fire truck along. When I called the line to OBJECT to the notice of possible assessment (they charged me for three units when there are actually two in my duplex), the EMT I spoke to informed me that the reason the fire truck goes to the scene of each and every ambulance call (even though there is no fire) is that the EMTs can't ride in the ambulance. I have NEVER lived in a town before (been here three years, and have lived in many cities over the years - of course, I'm retired) where a LARGE ladder truck accompanied EVERY ambulance call where EMTs might be needed!! When I told the young lady that, she said that gas had not been up for very long, ....etc.,,,,,!! My opinion is that the practice of accompanying LARGE ladder trucks SHOULD have been stopped when gasoline went over \$2.50 a gallon! AT THE VERY LEAST, the fire department could have planned ahead to buy electric-powered or hybrid trucks (which the city of Memphis, TN has had for TEN years!!!) to carry their EMT personnel on calls when they can't fit in an ambulance, or when the ambulances aren't housed where the EMT's are posted during duty hours (whatever the reason they can't ride on ambulances - THAT was never explained to me at all - I can just guess the two above reasons). At any rate, I would hope that you will be reasonable and REQUIRE the fire department to cut their EXTREMELY HIGH proportion of administrative personnel and to CUT OUT THEIR USE OF LARGE LADDER TRUCKS THAT ACCOMPANY AMBULANCES ON EVERY CALL rather than taxing (?????) your poor citizens to death. Our city property taxes are just the same as they were on the same price house as the last city I lived in, but the personnel (service deliverer level) are paid much less, and the services (garbage pick up, crime per capita), arts and parks events and facilities), and infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, etc) are absolutely inferior to that city I moved from. I love the fact both my children live here and the climate, but I, for one, just don't understand why retirees without my family connections and Florida background would want to live here, considering the high taxes we pay for the poor services and infrastructure! Please think about your constituents! We will be thinking about your vote when we vote.

Respectfully,  
Dianna Crosby





## **Auerbach, Les**

**From:** 'Dmscro@bellsouth.net' [dmscro@bellsouth.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 08, 2008 10:17 PM  
**To:** Hawkins, Jr., Thomas  
**Cc:** Mastrodicasa, Jeanna  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Protection Fee

RE: the fire protection fee: NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! I live at 705 N.W. 19th Ave, and own my duplex. I STRONGLY object to the fire department asking for more money because they have neglected to plan for the increases in fuel costs, etc. EVERY time I see an ambulance picking up someone, (WHEN NO FIRE IS INVOLVED!!!) there is a LARGE, gas-eating (how many miles to the gallon do they get, two? three?) ladder fire truck along. When I called the line to OBJECT to the notice of possible assessment (they charged me for three units when there are actually two in my duplex), the EMT I spoke to informed me that the reason the fire truck goes to the scene of each and every ambulance call (even though there is no fire) is that the EMTs can't ride in the ambulance. I have NEVER lived in a town before (been here three years, and have lived in many cities over the years - of course, I'm retired) where a LARGE ladder truck accompanied EVERY ambulance call where EMTs might be needed!!! When I told the young lady that, she said that gas had not been up for very long, .....etc.,,,,,!! My opinion is that the practice of accompanying LARGE ladder trucks SHOULD have been stopped when gasoline went over \$2.50 a gallon! AT THE VERY LEAST, the fire department could have planned ahead to buy electric-powered or hybrid trucks (which the city of Memphis, TN has had for TEN years!!!) to carry their EMT personnel on calls when they can't fit in an ambulance, or when the ambulances aren't housed where the EMT's are posted during duty hours (whatever the reason they can't ride on ambulances - THAT was never explained to me at all - I can just guess the two above reasons). At any rate, I would hope that you will be reasonable and REQUIRE the fire department to cut their EXTREMELY HIGH proportion of administrative personnel and to CUT OUT THEIR USE OF LARGE LADDER TRUCKS THAT ACCOMPANY AMBULANCES ON EVERY CALL rather than taxing (?????) your poor citizens to death. Our city property taxes are just the same as they were on the same price house as the last city I lived in, but the personnel (service deliverer level) are paid much less, and the services (garbage pick up, crime per capita), arts and parks events and facilities), and infrastructure (streets, sidewalks, etc) are absolutely inferior to that city I moved from. I love the fact both my children live here and the climate, but I, for one, just don't understand why retirees without my family connections and Florida background would want to live here, considering the high taxes we pay for the poor services and infrastructure! Please think about your constituents! We will be thinking about your vote when we vote.

Respectfully,  
Dianna Crosby

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**Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Children'S Campaign, Inc. [info@iamforkids.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2008 4:04 PM  
**To:** Henry, Scherwin L.  
**Subject:** Early Learning Front Burner: Quality Care Under Fire

Early Learning Front Burner: Quality Care Under Fire  
Child Care Licensing Threatened in Broward County

Parents in ever increasing numbers are demanding better quality early care for their young children. But one of the most successful local efforts faces a new threat. Advocates are encouraged to take note and to take action.

Not content with Florida standards of quality and operation that lag behind other states, Broward County empowered its county government to license child care centers in 1991. Yet this model that has achieved national acclaim may be shuttered if proposed budget cuts at the local level add the Office of Child Care Licensing and Enforcement to the growing list of budget slashing victims.

Broward County holds its child care to a higher standard in such key areas as licensing, staff training and health. In fact, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) rated the child care oversight provided in Broward County as the second best in the United States. Broward County's health and safety requirements for child care address eight of the ten essential standards as set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

An independent audit also gave the county's childcare licensing and enforcement effort high marks. Beyond a clean bill of health, the audit reported that "County ordinances provide increased protection for children in care arrangements through the establishment of higher standards for licensing and regulatory activities." This is a model for all of Florida.

The loss of Broward County's Office of Child Care Licensing and Enforcement will result in the transfer of licensing and regulatory action back to the State, which has said publicly that it can't do it as well.

Without county ordinances' increased protection, standards will be lowered and visits will be less frequent - ultimately resulting in less safe conditions than parents and the general community currently expect for Broward children.

Broward County's child care licensing and enforcement office is a treasure to be honored and protected but is staring at its own demise due to the combined impact of Amendment 1 and property devaluations which are forcing county governments to cut citizen services. To balance its ledger sheet, Broward must cut \$100-million from its FY2008 budget of \$1.3-billion.

An article in the May 27 Sun-Sentinel details the proposed cuts. Care for the mentally ill, child support enforcement, and parental visitation assistance join Broward County's child care office as targets.

Advocates throughout the state, and especially in Broward County, are encouraged to contact members of the Broward County Board of County Commissioners and express support for the continuation of local funding for child care licensing.

Commissioner contact information can be found at Broward County: Commissioners in the Community.

#### Quality Rating System Challenged

Quality Rating & Improvement Systems (QRIS) have been the topic of debate not only in Florida, but also nationwide, centered around this question: What are the factors that determine high quality early learning?

Quality Rating & Improvement Systems (QRIS) raise awareness among child care centers and their staff about the important components of a quality early care and education program. They also help parents assess quality when choosing a child care center.

The Early Learning Coalition of Duval County (ELCD) currently has a QRIS in place, known as Guiding Stars of Duval. This QRIS, however, recently came under fire when the Florida Association for Child Care Management (FACCM), an early learning industry group, filed an administrative challenge against Florida's Agency of Workforce Innovation and the ELCD's Guiding Stars of Duval quality rating system.

According to a recent article in the Florida Times-Union, FACCM cites the QRIS as "additional regulatory costs" while it simultaneously supports the Gold Seal program. Yet the various QRIS' across the state are not in place to be at odds with Gold Seal. In fact, child care centers earn additional points towards the voluntary QRIS for achieving that accreditation.

In an interesting twist, some FACCM members have openly supported the Guiding Stars of Duval quality rating system in direct opposition to FACCM's official position.

Guiding Stars of Duval QRIS is a strictly voluntary program, and every child care center that participates does it by choice.

Despite the voluntary status of localized rating systems FACCM would appear to oppose them, as they have opposed improvements in teacher credentials along with several other proposals to enhance quality early learning.

FACCM has published its position statement.

The Early Childhood Association of Florida, (ECA) the largest organization for early childhood professionals in the state of Florida, and the state affiliate for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), support QRIS and their potential for improving overall quality of care for children.

Pre-K Now Releases New Report: Governor Crist Listed as a Hero

The annual state-by-state comparison of state pre-k leadership efforts has been released on <http://ga3.org/ct/N7B-SS71Yrx/>.

The report lauds Governor Crist for his support of degreed teachers and mentions Children's Campaign efforts in support of the initiative.

Governor Crist was one of sixteen governors to request an increase in pre-k funding. Pre[k]now Leadership Matters Report, April 2008

#### Award-winning Public Relations

Tallahassee public relations firm Salter-Mitchell scored big at the Florida Public Relations Association Image Awards, held on May 22. Among the honors Salter-Mitchell took home was the Division A Public Relations Program Award for a

Children's Campaign Quality Pre-K Press Conference featuring Governor Charlie Crist. Children's Campaign Executive Director Linda Alexionok attended the event and accepted the award for Salter-Mitchell.

Salter-Mitchell also won the Florida Public Relations Association's top honor, the Grand All Image Award, on May 22. Salter-Mitchell's "The Fifth Guy" hand-washing promotion campaign earned the prestigious award. Congratulations and thanks!

This Early Learning Front Burner is brought to you by:

Roy Miller, President

Christen Smiley, Communications Coordinator

Mark Eichler, Contributing Writer

Visit the web address below to tell your friends about this.

<http://ga3.org/join-forward.html?domain=QualityPreK&r=b1B-SS7q45TF>

If you received this message from a friend, you can sign up for Children's Campaign, Inc. at:

<http://ga3.org/QualityPreK/join.html?r=b1B-SS7q45TFE>

This message was sent to [henrysl@cityofgainesville.org](mailto:henrysl@cityofgainesville.org). To modify your email communication preferences or update your personal profile, visit your subscription management page at:

<http://ga3.org/QualityPreK/smp.tcl?nkey=xwnsbxd417xib7wx&>

To stop ALL email from Children's Campaign, Inc., reply via email with "remove" in the subject line, or use the following link:

<http://ga3.org/QualityPreK/smp.tcl?nkey=xwnsbxd417xib7wx&>

\*\*\*\*\*

This email is Powered by Convio, Inc.

<http://www.convio.com>

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## **Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Children'S Campaign, Inc. [info@iamforkids.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2008 4:04 PM  
**To:** Mastrodicasa, Jeanna  
**Subject:** Early Learning Front Burner: Quality Care Under Fire

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## **Auerbach, Les**

**From:** Children'S Campaign, Inc. [info@jamforkids.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2008 4:03 PM  
**To:** Donovan, John F. - Commissioner  
**Subject:** Early Learning Front Burner: Quality Care Under Fire

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**From:** Children'S Campaign, Inc. [mailto:[iamforkids.org](mailto:iamforkids.org)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2008 4:01 PM  
**To:** Lowe, Craig  
**Subject:** Early Learning Front Burner: Quality Care Under Fire

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**Sent:** Thursday, May 29, 2008 4:00 PM  
**To:** Hanrahan, Pegeen  
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**Auerbach, Les**

---

**From:** Daniel Daniel [daniel@aldantrading.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 2:32 PM  
**To:** Poe, Lauren B.  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Ass Fee

This is what I understood but I would not be able to make it at that date and I would like to be able to know what the results were. Or maybe to be able to speak my voice over the phone during the hearing, if it would be possible.

Thanks

Daniel Daniel

-----Original Message-----  
**From:** Poe, Lauren B. [mailto:poel@cityofgainesville.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 2:29 PM  
**To:** daniel daniel  
**Cc:** Andrew, Devonia L.; Lannon, Kurt M.  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Ass Fee

Mr. Daniel

I believe that we will have second reading of the ordinance on July 16th. You can check with Kurt Lannon, the clerk of the commission, to verify this.

LP

---

**From:** daniel daniel [mailto:daniel@aldantrading.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 1:40 PM  
**To:** Poe, Lauren B.; citycomm  
**Cc:** 'isaac Daniel'; moshe@aldantrading.com  
**Subject:** RE: Fire Ass Fee

Dear Lauren

First I thank you for replying back.

I am Glad that you do not approach this issue in a lightly manner. However I hope that you can understand the sensitive position property owners are in during this economic situation in the US (I try not to use the word recession but it is the right description of the US market).

I am also aware that the municipal are in bad shape, and that they are hurt from the economy, I see it in other cities in the US as well. But additional fees such as this fire ass fee would only make things more difficult since the city already raised prices to other services that they provide to property owners (such as eviction rates etc...).

Eventually property owners would not be able to bare these increases in prices and additional fees and taxes, and when it will happen it would not help the municipals.

PS

When will you reach a conclusion on this matter?

Best Regards

Daniel Daniel

-----Original Message-----  
From: Poe, Lauren B. [mailto:poel@cityofgainesville.org]  
Sent: Wednesday, July 09, 2008 1:09 PM  
To: daniel daniel  
Subject: RE: Fire Ass Fee

Mr. Daniel,

I would like to thank you for contacting me regarding the proposed fire assessment. I assure you that I do not approach this issue lightly and I will strongly consider all input before making my final decision. I will weigh several

alternatives to keeping our fire department fully funded, including making drastic budget cuts, raising the millage rate on property owners, and assessing a fire fee for service (so long as it is minimal and includes a sunset clause). I take none of these options lightly, as they all will have serious consequences on all or part of our community.

Best,

Lauren

---

From: daniel daniel [mailto:daniel@aldantrading.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, July 09, 2008 12:38 PM  
To: citycomm  
Cc: 'isaac Daniel'; moshe@aldantrading.com  
Subject: Fire Ass Fee

Dear City Commissioners

Ref: Fire Ass Fee; Parcel 06778-000-000 & 06776-000-000

I have Recently Received a letter in the mail regarding a Fire Assessment Fee for my Property. From what I understood there will be a public hearing about this matter on July 16 2008 unfortunately I would not be able to attend this meeting and I would like to speak my voice regarding this matter.

I definitely think that the city of Gainesville and any other city in the U.S should keep a well Maintained Fire Department which should give the best service possible to the city residents.

However in the current real estate market in Florida and slow rental community it is a great burden on Property owners. Noor Group has a 94 Unit complex which mean we will have to pay approximately \$3,000.00, something that we can not offered to pay, with the constant increase in overhead and decrease in Income.

Noor Group has no choice but to object this fee.

PS

Please reply to this e-mail so I will know that it reached the appropriate personal that deals with this matter. And let me know if there is anything else I should do if there is a need to further impose my objection to this fee.

Best Regards

Daniel Daniel

Moor Group LLC

T: 305-624-6623

F: 305-624-7333

E-mail: [daniel@aldantrading.com](mailto:daniel@aldantrading.com)



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I am Glad that you do not approach this issue in a lightly manner. However I hope that you can understand the sensitive position property owners are in during this economic situation in the US (I try not to use the word recession but it is the right description of the US market).

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Eventually property owners would not be able to bare these increases in prices and additional fees and taxes, and when it will happen it would not help the municipals.

PS

When will you reach a conclusion on this matter?

Best Regards

Daniel Daniel

-----Original Message-----

From: Poe, Lauren B. [mailto:poel@cityofgainesville.org]

Sent: Wednesday, July 09, 2008 1:09 PM  
To: daniel daniel  
Subject: RE: Fire Ass Fee

Mr. Daniel,

I would like to thank you for contacting me regarding the proposed fire assessment. I assure you that I do not approach this issue lightly and I will strongly consider all input before making my final decision. I will weigh several alternatives to keeping our fire department fully funded, including making drastic budget cuts, raising the millage rate on property owners, and assessing a fire fee for service (so long as it is minimal and includes a sunset clause). I take none of these options lightly, as they all will have serious consequences on all or part of our community.

Best,

Lauren

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From: daniel daniel [mailto:daniel@aldantrading.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, July 09, 2008 12:38 PM  
To: citycomm  
Cc: 'isaac Daniel'; moshe@aldantrading.com  
Subject: Fire Ass Fee

Dear City Commissioners

Ref: Fire Ass Fee; Parcel 06778-000-000 & 06776-000-000

I have recently received a letter in the mail regarding a Fire Assessment Fee for my property. From what I understood there will be a public hearing about this matter on July 16 2008 unfortunately I would not be able to attend this meeting and I would like to speak my voice regarding this matter.

I definitely think that the city of Gainesville and any other city in the U.S should keep a well Maintained Fire Department which should give the best service possible to the city residents.

However in the current real estate market in Florida and slow rental community it is a great burden on Property owners. Noor Group has a 94 Unit complex which mean we will have to pay approximately \$3,000.00, something that we can not offered to pay, with the constant increase in overhead and decrease in Income.

Noor Group has no choice but to object this fee.

PS

Please reply to this e-mail so I will know that it reached the appropriate personal that deals with this matter. And let me know if there is anything else I should do if there is a need to further impose my objection to this fee.

Best Regards

Daniel Daniel

Noor Group LLC

T: 305-624-6623

F: 305-624-7333

E-mail: [daniel@aldantrading.com](mailto:daniel@aldantrading.com)

**Auerbach, Les**

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**Sent:** Wednesday, July 09, 2008 12:38 PM  
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**Cc:** 'Isaac Daniel'; Moshe@aldantrading.com  
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T: 305-624-6623

F: 305-624-7333

E-mail: [daniel@aldantrading.com](mailto:daniel@aldantrading.com)

**Auerbach, Les**

---

**From:** Delena May [delenamay@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 20, 2008 8:10 AM  
**To:** Hanrahan, Pegeen  
**Subject:** another assessment..NO

NO ASSESSMENT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Re-work your BUDGET! That's what I have to do... with the extreme rise in Cost of Living, responsible people must go over and over their list of expenses, and cut, postpone or eliminate items. You are spending WE THE FEW PEOPLE who actually PAY taxes money. We have enough round-a-bouts, expensive Palms, Crepe Myrtles and Petunias, folks... enough asinine over-budget waterfalls on public properties... and certainly more than enough facilities for the homeless! Two men digging a hole don't really need three men to watch!

We can assume the COMMISSIONERS are agreeable to vote a pay cut in salary to demonstrate a commitment to do their part in these hard times?

My UTILITY BILL (jokingly represented as from a company I own) has gone up more than 30%... the cost to fuel my economy car has doubled, check-out at the markets is up 40%... and I don't bother to go to the MALL, no matter how tempting the SALES flyers. My retirement check is up 3%.

The City Commission Notice Dated June 25th sounds as if (as usual) this assessment is a DONE DEAL... no matter who comes to speak out at your kangaroo court hearings... we indeed have representatives WITHOUT REPRESENTATION.

**Auerbach, Les**

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**From:** Delena May [delenamay@cox.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 20, 2008 8:11 AM  
**To:** Hawkins, Jr., Thomas  
**Subject:** NO assessment!

NO ASSESSMENT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Re-work your BUDGET! That's what I have to do.... with the extreme rise in Cost of Living, responsible people must go over and over their list of expenses, and cut, postpone or eliminate items. You are spending WE THE FEW PEOPLE who actually PAY taxes money. We have enough round-a-bouts, expensive Palms, Crepe Myrtles and Petunias, folks... enough asinine over-budget waterfalls on public properties... and certainly more than enough facilities for the homeless! Two men digging a hole don't really need three men to watch!

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## **Auerbach, Les**

**From:** 'Djohnson@trinitygmv.org' [djohnson@trinitygmv.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 01, 2008 11:49 PM  
**To:** Hanrahan, Pegeen; Hawkins, Jr., Thomas; Mastrodicasa, Jeanna; Henry, Scherwin L.; Poe, Lauren B.; Donovan, John F. - Commissioner; Lowe, Craig  
**Subject:** [QUARANTINE BYPASSED] Fire Fee/Tax

Dear City Leaders,

I am Dan Johnson, Senior Minister of Trinity United Methodist Church and I am writing to urge you not to move forward with the "fire fee/tax" that you are proposing. There are four important reasons not to do this:

1. **History.** We have a 200+ history of separation of church and state in this country. The church is not to encroach on the government and the government is not to encroach upon the church. The government has honored this by giving churches, synagogues and mosques tax exempt status. Historically the "fire fee" has been paid through taxes. Your dropping the nomenclature of taxes and calling it a fee does not change the reality that you are now taxing churches, synagogues and mosques in a way that you have never done before. It is a wrong precedent to take. It is a mistake.
  2. **Churches, synagogues, mosques and non-profits provide tangible and intangible services to the health and wholeness of the city that are essential to the vitality of the city.** Further, they help the poorest among us in ways that the city cannot and does not do. By "taxing" humanitarian, faith-based non-profits you are hitting the churches, synagogues and mosques with a double hit, for who provides the financial support for the nonprofits such as Gainesville Community Ministries, St. Francis House, House of Hope, Habitat for Humanity, etc? It is the churches, mosques and synagogues that you are already proposing a tax upon. It is a double hit.
  3. **Our church, like most religious organizations, takes our role in the community very seriously.** We met with city officials and civic leaders prior to our move to 53rd ave. We asked your opinion about community needs and we are seeking to address them. We open our facilities to the community above and beyond expectations. Last year on nearly 600 occasions non-Trinity groups used our facilities: School Board, middle school and high school graduation; Pace for Girls, Child Advocacy Center, Polling Place, and on and on. But that and the intangible things we offer for the soul of our community aren't enough. Now you want to add a fire tax. That is not right.
  4. **Your action will open the floodgates of more "fees."** Right now our projected fee is \$5,291 (not the \$2500 figure reported twice in the Gainesville Sun do to miscalculations of our square footage. I do not doubt for a moment that that amount will go up year after year. And I also fear that other "fees" for other services will soon be assessed upon churches and nonprofits. You are starting a dangerous precedent. Please do not do this.
- I understand that you have a financial shortfall problem. Appoint a blue ribbon committee to address this, shift monies, cut back, do whatever, but please do not break with our historically sacred relationship and take us down this path where the unintended consequences will be monumental.

Thank you.

Dan Johnson



## **Auerbach, Les**

---

**From:** 'Djohnson@trinitygnv.org' [djohnson@trinitygnv.org]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 19, 2008 10:15 PM  
**To:** Poe, Lauren B.  
**Cc:** Andrew, Devonia L.; 'Hadley.hartman@sfcc.edu'  
**Subject:** RE: fire assessment

Dear Lauren,

Thanks for taking the time to write and offer these helpful explanations. I have a couple of comments:

1. I have done some research and have learned that FSU pays a fire fee as does FAMU - similar situation in Tallahassee as we have here in Gainesville vis a vis UF.
2. I understand that the city feels the real need to gain more revenue. It does seem very odd to me that what has historically been known as a tax - i.e. fire protection funding was the result of taxes for decades, now, through change in nomenclature becomes something else. The only thing that has changed is the naming.

This seems to me to be a clear attempt to maneuver around the traditionally held standard of not taxing churches and nonprofits. It further is very scary that this new found source of revenue will take on a life of its own: first the fire assessment fee, what is next and next after that.

Many of the nonprofits (most) live on a thin margin. This action, taken against the very agencies that benefit the city in so many ways, doing the things the city doesn't do, will be destructive.

I appreciate that you will lobby for a low rate. My experience is that these things come in low and most assuredly rise with each passing year.

I have never bought into the notion of "culture wars." I don't fully understand that arena. But this really does seem to me and others to be an attack on the churches, and I think it is wrong.

Thanks, Dan Johnson

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**From:** Poe, Lauren B. [mailto:poel@cityofgainesville.org]  
**Sent:** Thu 6/19/2008 11:57 AM  
**To:** Johnson, Dan  
**Cc:** Andrew, Devonia L.; hadley.hartman@sfcc.edu  
**Subject:** Fire assessment

Pastor Johnson,

I am writing at the behest of my good friend and colleague Hadley Hartman. He passed on to me a portion of your

church's newsletter with your reaction to the proposed fire assessment. I will attempt to answer some of your questions and explain the rationale for instituting this assessment.

1) Fire service is one of the two primary functions of local city government. Because of Gainesville's unique revenue conditions, over half of city property is off the tax rolls (the most of any city in Florida). Furthermore, half of our city's general fund budget is comprised of public safety. Because of the passage of Amendment 1, the city finds itself in a difficult position. We must continue to fully fund our public services, yet we have less revenue with which to do so. The special fire assessment is a method of funding that will remain independent of the somewhat unpredictable nature of sales tax or property tax revenues.

2) There is a significant difference between a tax, a fee and an assessment. I will attempt to explain:

a. A tax is levied throughout the taxing unit (the city) for the benefit of all residents and "...are imposed under the theory that contribution must be made by the community at large to support the various functions of the government." (Sarasota County v. Sarasota Church of Christ, inc.). There is no requirement that a relationship exist between the tax payer and the services funded through the tax (for example, a childless couple pays school property tax, but does not directly benefit from the service). Churches are exempt from paying taxes.

b. A fee "...is charged in exchange for a particular government service which benefits the party paying the fee in a manner not shared by other members of the society...and is paid by choice, in that the party paying the fee has the option of not utilizing the government service and thereby avoiding the charge." (City of Gainesville v. State Department of Transportation). Thus, a person or group may pay a fee to rent a park pavilion, play golf on a public course, or rent the Thomas Center for a wedding.

c. An Assessment is in between a fee and a tax. They are like taxes in that they are mandatory, however, they are different in that while taxes require no direct benefit to the payer, assessments require that the real property being assessed receive a special benefit from the assessment (in this case, the special assessment is better fire protection and as a consequence, lower insurance rates).

3) In order to determine whether or not an assessment can be levied for a specific service, it must meet two tests.

a. Does the property receive a benefit from the service provided? If no, the property cannot be made to pay the assessment. If it does, that the assessment can be levied.

b. Is the assessment fairly and reasonably apportioned among the properties that receive that benefit? The assessment must also meet this second test. Therefore, the assessment must be fairly apportioned among all properties that receive the benefit to be legal (meaning churches, non-profits, industrial, etc.).

c. What about the University of Florida, you ask. This is the rub. Churches and non-profits are tax exempt, meaning they are specifically exempt from paying taxes (see definitions above). However, according to Florida statute, government institutions (read UF, SFCC and ACSB) are immune from paying taxes and assessments. Therefore, we have no way to force UF to pay their fair share. We are in negotiations to persuade them to voluntarily pay their share (almost \$3 million), but it does not look good. Believe me, if we could, we would!

NB: I will suggest a minimal rate for the assessment, only high enough to cover the budget decrement for fire services

and I will advocate a sunset provision so the commission will have to reassess the need for this assessment every 5 years.

I hope I have been of some help, and I look forward to serving in any way I can. I would like to sincerely thank you for all you and your parishioners contribute to our community. Together, we will make it through this difficult time.

Lauren Poe

Commissioner: District 2

(352) 334-5015

[commlp@cityofgainesville.org](mailto:commlp@cityofgainesville.org)

200 E. University Avenue

Station 19

PO box 490

Gainesville, FL 32602

7/16/08  
080146  
submitted  
@ meeting

1930 NW 46<sup>th</sup> Street  
Gainesville, FL 32605-5701  
July 14, 2008

Letter regarding the City of Gainesville's proposed special assessment for fire services

Dear Neighbor,

Although, for about the last decade, our property taxes have been increasing at a rate of approximately 2% a year (this is a rate higher than that of inflation); our community services have remained about constant. Even with a small tax reduction last year, our property taxes are still somewhat proportionately high--probably higher than justified. The proposed \$30 per house fire assessment represents about a 1.25% tax increase. In view of the rapid increases in electricity costs--now over 10 cents per KWH & going higher (with a substantial portion of GRU profits resorting back to the City of Gainesville), the City of Gainesville does not well justify any increase just for fire services. Past surpluses have not really been well spent although each person probably has a different opinion about what these surpluses (expenditures) constitute --they are nevertheless spent.

When we moved here from Tennessee about two decades ago, Florida real estates taxes were at least one and a half times those we were used to in that state. Though Florida's real estate taxes are much less than those in New York City (about the highest in the nation), there is ample reason to believe they are sufficient to cover the justifiable costs of community government without picking out any one service as justification for a special increase such as fire services. Just because a few other communities tax separately for fire services--most do not, and their services have not all of a sudden become more important or more sophisticated or effective; there is little justification for added taxes in this service category in Gainesville. As fire prevention methods have improved, relative fire service costs should also decrease and offset the need for increased costs.

Any possible future tax decreases, to be sure, will not be substantial enough to justify segment offsetting increases which only nullify any possible reductions. Mandating tax efficiencies, of course, is not popular--but added taxes on segmented services is even less popular. We need to think hard about advocating any new taxes and refrain from approving them even in Gainesville.

Sincerely, a neighbor,

W. Reed Langford  
Ph: 352-377-4706

Submitted  
C. Smith  
7/16/08  
#08046

On Monday last (July 14) the Gainesville Sun published a column I had submitted which laid out the increase in property tax revenues over 2003-2007. My point was that there seems to be no need for additional funding specifically for fire services beyond property taxes; the additional revenue seems to have mostly been spent on non-essential services. Putting fire service at the center of the city's assessment is a smokescreen for making up for rollbacks in property tax revenues, in my opinion; the intent is to avoid (as much as possible) cutting non-essential services.

Haywood C. Smith, Jr.  
3947 N.W. 31<sup>st</sup> Place  
Gainesville, FL 32606