

BE A CITY – LOW TAXES, QUALITY SERVICES AND LOCAL CONTROL

PINECREST BANKRUPT!?! That's right - the County Budget Office incorporation analysis concluded that if Pinecrest became a city, it would be BANKRUPT!

I led the effort to incorporate the Village of Pinecrest and served as Mayor for the first eight years. Every step of the way, the County told us we could not afford incorporation. Here's the reason: the County spends so much unnecessary money that if we ran our city like the County ran the county we would be bankrupt.

Instead we watched every penny, had real competitive bidding for contracts, the Community News published a list of every check we issued and every dollar we spent so our residents knew where the money was going, we had our Council meetings in our neighborhood so residents could attend and we listened to our residents.

What happened in Pinecrest? Taxes: lowest in the County. Services: Excellent. Property values: huge increase in values. Residents: happy every day for our city and for neighborhood control over development, taxes, services and quality of life.

Our taxes were the lowest taxes in the Miami-Dade County – why? Because now you pay Unincorporated Miami-Dade City taxes to the County and the County sets your tax rate. But Pinecrest residents pay their City taxes to their own city and WE – not the County – SET OUR TAX RATE. Our residents wanted low taxes, so we had low taxes. You want low taxes, YOU SET YOUR OWN TAX RATE!

You have more than enough money for your basic services – police, building and zoning, parks, roads. If you want low taxes, you can afford them. If you want more services, pay for them. But that control will be with you, not with the County – you will elect the people who set your tax rate.

Mitigation was never a problem. The Pinecrest Incorporation Committee Budget was accurate - we paid our mitigation and focused on improving our community, spending wisely, creating a reserve, and improving services for our residents. The County said taxes would go up – they have said that for every one of the nearly ten incorporations and they have been wrong almost every time. OUR TAXES WERE THE LOWEST IN THE COUNTY BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT OUR RESIDENTS WANT.

Our services improved. Five of our neighbors were elected Council members – we saw them in the grocery, the little league, the community meetings and they listened to what we wanted. Slow police response? Call your councilmember. Broken sidewalk? Neighbor complaint? Dog barking? Zoning issue? Park complaint? Call your Councilmembers, who live in your neighborhood, know your streets and will respond – promptly, because you and only you elect them.

Utility surcharges and communication service tax will not increase. Pinecrest continued to be under the county contract for utility surcharges and communication service tax (franchise fees) until the contract ended and then simply adopted the new county contract as its contract – which you will have the right to do. You will be under the same contract as if you stayed in the county!

Our property values increased. When you have local services – police, zoning, building department for permits, parks and recreation, road maintenance and repair – and when you have local people solving local problems, the entire neighborhood improves and property values increase. Your County Commissioner is terrific, but that’s all you have. Cities have a Mayor, Council members, Village attorneys, Planning Board members – all volunteers serving their community and advocating for their city. One Commissioner cannot do it all.

You have no idea how much extra service and benefits cities receive because their Council members and staff are downtown arguing with the county – transportation tax, cities get their share. Sales tax? Utility fees? Franchise fees? Road improvements paid for by the County? Park improvements? Advocacy works for cities because people organize and pressure for results.

Despite enormous opposition from skeptical residents and county employees, Pinecrest was incorporated in 1996 and is enormously satisfied with its city. I urge you to vote for incorporation and take control of your community.