



BOCA RATON FORUM

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CHANGES COMING TO PALMETTO 5

Voters: No biz on waterfront

BY MARCI SHATZMAN
STAFF WRITER

City of Boca Raton voters passed by nearly two-thirds the ballot referendum that will keep city-owned waterfront property out of commercial hands.

Hillstone Restaurant Group was sitting out the proposal for a restaurant lease on the former Wildflower site, waiting for the Nov. 8 vote for that tract on the Introacoastal Waterway at Palmetto Park Road.

People took sides on what kind of park they wanted. And the Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce and major property owners were up front about their position on the issue. "Vote no" signs were posted all over the city, and the opposition ran television ads and sent emails.

So what happens now? "It seems the people have spoken: I don't know if there's really a next step," said Glenn Viers, a Hillstone vice president.

"We're still trying to evaluate what options there may be, but it's unclear if there are any. We're not prepared to initiate any litigation.

"We're disappointed," he added. "We responded to an invitation from the city to submit a proposal and have been working on it for several years. We continue to feel our restaurant was ideally suited to that piece of property."

"We're disappointed with the outcome, but as a chamber of commerce we respect the democratic process," said Troy McLellan, the chamber's president and CEO. "We will honor and respect the voice of the people, who spoke pretty loudly. So we will work with officials and the city administration to abide by the will of the people as they voted."

The city's next move will be determined.

"City Council will not meet again until the Nov. 21 workshop," said city spokeswoman Chrissy Gibson. She expected the

continues on 17

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Good times flow at Wine & Food Festival



PERUSING Cheryl Hercules of Boca Raton samples items at the seventh annual Boca Raton Wine & Food Festival in Boca Raton on Nov. 5. ORIT BEN-EZZER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 10

Tree lighting starts holiday events

BY MARCI SHATZMAN
STAFF WRITER

Signaling the holidays are here again, Boca Raton's annual Holiday Festival & Tree Lighting Ceremony is set for Nov. 23 in the Mizner Park Amphitheater and adjoining field.

From 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.,

there will be carnival rides, a pile of snow and "Frozen Fantasy" stage show for the first of the city's free holiday events. That includes street and boat parades, Florida Atlantic University's annual Tuba Christmas and a movie night for "Polar Express."

Last year's tree lighting drew nearly 10,000 people, so parking is recom-

mended in the lots at City Hall, 201 W. Palmetto Park Road, or the behind Boca Raton Community Center, 150 Crawford Blvd. The city will run a free shuttle to the amphitheater, 590 Plaza Real, from 5 to 9 p.m., said Becky Self, the city's community events coordinator.

Amphitheater gates open at 5:30 p.m.

"Families keep coming; there's a lot going on and it's all free," said amphitheater manager Amy DiNorscio.

Free events include the carnival rides, snow pile and the show. A 110-foot slide and rides for all ages will be on the field, Self said, adding peo-

continues on 11

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ple should expect some lines and playing in the snow pile is by height for safety reasons.

Make-and-take crafts and food vendors include Tomasso's Pizza inside the amphitheater do charge for purchases. Photos with Santa, who sits under the bell tower, are \$5, Self said. There's also wine and beer for sale. No pets or coolers are allowed.

Dickens Carolers in costume stroll among the crowd. Once they're on stage, it's a signal to gather in the amphitheater for the 6:45 p.m. 15-minute tree lighting by Mayor Susan Haynie.

A brief fireworks display will go off from the amphitheater's higher level.

The tree lighting will simultaneously light up Mizner Park with 50,000 LED lights on the palm tree, poles, wreaths and gazebos. The 20-minute music and light shows at the park's iTree next to Lord & Taylor will begin that evening at 6, 7, 8 and 9 p.m. throughout the holidays, according to a statement.

ZMC Entertainment's 45-minute stage show closes out the evening.

"Adults will enjoy it as much as the kids," Self said.

The 46th annual Street Parade is 7:30



COMING TO TOWN Santa and Mrs. Claus greet children at a previous Boca Raton Holiday Festival. FILE PHOTO

p.m. Dec. 7 on Federal Highway starting at Eighth Street; Polar Express Movie & Family Fun night is 5 p.m. Dec. 16 in the amphitheater. The 40th annual Holiday Boat parade is 6:30 p.m. Dec. 17 with bleachers at Silver Palm Park in the city and Red Reef Park on the west side of A1A. The fifth annual Florida Atlantic University Tuba Christmas at the amphitheater is 5 p.m. Dec. 11.

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