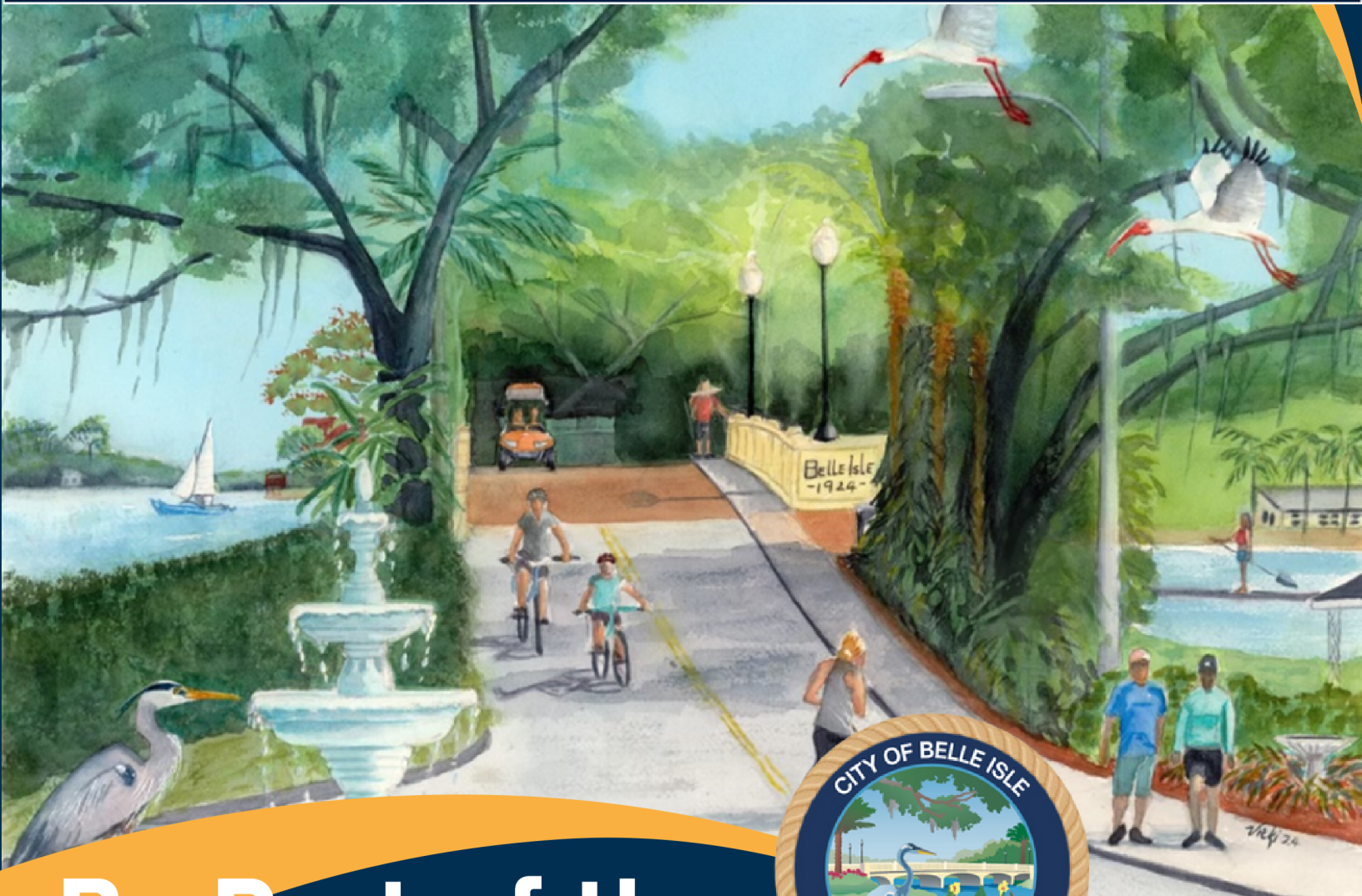


Jan-Mar  
2024

City of Belle Isle, Florida

# CONNECTION



## Be Part of the Next 100 Years



Artwork  
By Vicki Littell

In 2024, The City of Belle Isle will celebrate its 100th anniversary. This significant milestone in the City's history will be celebrated by commemorative events and programming.

### LET'S CELEBRATE BELLE ISLE

To commemorate the 100th Anniversary of its incorporation, the City of Belle Isle is hosting a year-long celebration, culminating in a final extravaganza on October 19, 2024.

We welcome everyone to join together and learn all about our rich history and celebrate the City of Belle Isle's 100th birthday throughout all of 2024!

# 100



Mayor C.H. Hoffner

# BEAUTIFUL ISLAND

CITY OF BELLE ISLE FOUNDED IN 1924

Once a Native American oasis, Belle Isle was founded by Central Floridians in 1924 to protect Lake Conway and its chain of lakes. Town supporters resisted Orange County’s plan to use the lakes for drainage by forming their own municipality.

Belle Isle’s first citizens and interim Mayor C.H. Hoffner unanimously voted on the city’s name, which resembles the French phrase for “beautiful island.” Arthur Q. Lancaster later served as the first elected mayor.

In 1928, Belle Isle was annexed back into Orange County, and records of the City ceased to exist. However, residents rallied against another attempt by the County to use the lakes for drainage in 1954, and the local government was reinstated. The State of Florida later recognized the City of Belle Isle’s charter in 1972. The same year, City Hall was named “Dexter Hall” to recognize Mayor Ross Dexter, the first mayor to pass away while in office.

The City’s government ran continuously until 1988, when a City Manager-Council form of government was adopted in an attempt to better serve Belle Isle residents. Since that time, the City has flourished. Annexations, the establishment of a Belle Isle Police Department, and an agreement to open Cornerstone Charter Academy on City property have all contributed to creating the place more than 7,000 residents call home. ■

## HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY! CENTENNIAL PLANNING ON THE WAY

### SPECIAL EVENTS COMMITTEE

Happy birthday, Belle Isle! The Special Events Committee has several events in the planning stages, along with our traditional event. One of the first decisions made was to find an artist who not only resides in Belle Isle but also, could capture what we all treasure in our community. After a year of planning and work, a beautiful watercolor rendering of “Our Belle Isle Way of Life” was created by Vicki B. Littell. The artwork is on display at City Hall and will be used on some of the merchandise and other items we plan to celebrate our centennial.

On May 18, 2024, we will host our first centennial celebration event, “Boogie on the Bridge.” A street party with music, food, and fun.

More information on parking, vendors, and a few surprises will be coming soon.

Plans are also in the works for our big event in October! Several components are being investigated and researched because we want this to be a memorable event!

We started this momentous year with an act of altruism by hosting a food drive supporting Servants Heart Ministry’s food bank. Thank you for the impressive amount of non-perishable food items, toiletries, and pet food, which was donated and appreciated- Great job, Belle Isle!

Save-the-Date on a few of the upcoming events,

- Easter Egg Hunt at City Hall– **March 30**
  - Boogie on the Bridge - **May 16**
  - Light the Way – **December 4**
  - Santa Ride throughout the City– **December 10 and 12**
  - 100-Year-Old Tree Recognition “The right tree in the right place.” – TBD
  - Bicycle/Golf Cart Parade – TBD
- 
- Visit the [CelebrateBelleIsle/Facebook Page](#) for more information.
  - Watch out for the bright blue “What’s Up?!” yard signs throughout the City about one week before a city-sponsored event.

**It is time to celebrate, Belle Isle by “Celebrating Belle Isle.”**

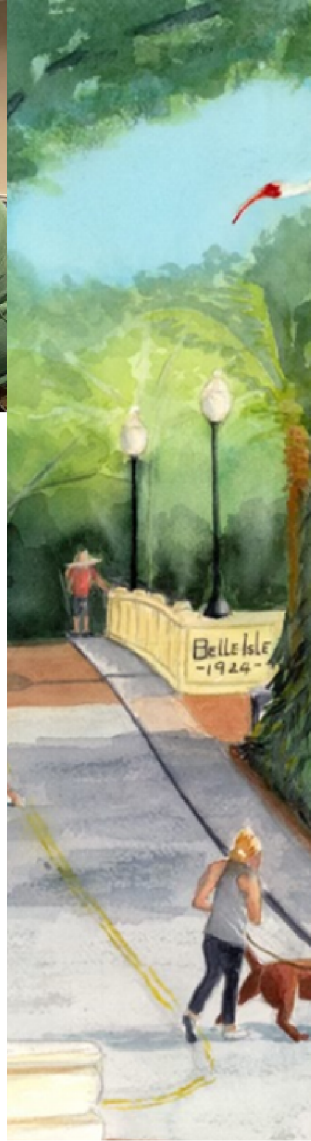
If you would like to be part of all the fun, the Special Events Committee always welcomes new members, suggestions and of course, sponsorship. Please email us at [specialevents@belleislefl.gov](mailto:specialevents@belleislefl.gov) or call City staff at 407-851-7730. ■



**JOINT COMMUNITY WORKSHOP UPDATE**

*On February 15th, a Joint Community Workshop was held in City Hall for the City's Comprehensive Plan Update and the Vision Zero Action Plan initiative. Public participation plays a vital role as each project seeks to address our community's future planning and development. We were joined by RVi Planning, and VHB, our consultants for these two projects.*

*“RVi Planning & Landscape Architecture was pleased to present our observations and highlights of recommended updates to the City's Comprehensive Plan to the residents of Belle Isle. The City of Belle Isle is a unique residential community reminiscent of the Brady Brunch, whose unique characteristics should be celebrated and highlighted in its policy documents. Our team appreciated the turnout at the community meeting and the interactions we were able to have with the City's leadership and residents. The City has a lot of pride in its community and wants to do everything it can to protect it. We feel confident that our policy recommendations will mirror the community's desires and help guide the City over the next several decades. However, as we continue our work, we would appreciate input from the City's residents and business owners. Please visit our online survey to help shape the outcome of our policy recommendations to the City Council. Thank you to the City for its continued partnership, and we're looking forward to finalizing this project over the summer!” ■*



Mayor  
Nicholas Fouraker  
[mayor@belleislefl.gov](mailto:mayor@belleislefl.gov)  
407-868-1317

Council Members

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3  
407-851-7730
- District 4  
Jason Carson  
[district4@belleislefl.gov](mailto:district4@belleislefl.gov)  
407-717-7855
- District 5  
Beth Lowell  
[district5@belleislefl.gov](mailto:district5@belleislefl.gov)  
407-457-2427
- District 6  
Stan Smith  
[district6@belleislefl.gov](mailto:district6@belleislefl.gov)  
407-717-8017
- District 7  
Jim Partin  
[district7@belleislefl.gov](mailto:district7@belleislefl.gov)  
407-717-6545

**ACCESS THE SURVEY BY VISITING OUR WEBSITE AT [WWW.BELLEISLEFL.GOV](http://WWW.BELLEISLEFL.GOV).**

**SURVEY**

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF

# BELLE ISLE

WE WELCOME EVERYONE TO JOIN TOGETHER, LEARN ABOUT OUR RICH HISTORY, AND CELEBRATE THE CITY OF BELLE ISLE'S 100TH BIRTHDAY THROUGHOUT 2024!

**1869**

Poet William Wallace Harney's homestead, constructed of native pine and turrets, is called "Castle in the Pines." Thus, Pine Castle is named.

**1928**

Belle Isle is annexed into Orange County, and government business ceases.

**1972**

Florida state legislators reaffirm the City Charter. City Hall is dedicated as "Dexter Hall" in memory of the first mayor to pass away while in office: Mayor Ross Dexter.

**2008**

A new city seal featuring the Great Blue Heron is adopted.

**2010**

Cornerstone Charter Academy agrees to open its doors on Belle Isle property.

**2020**

The City Council purchases the Bank of America Building

**2024**

The City Council approves the build out of Accredited School Campus.

**1800-1900**

Timucua live in Belle Isle on Lake Conway. These Native Americans comprise one of the largest indigenous groups in Florida.

**1924**

Belle Isle settlers gather to name the town at the Thompson Gregg's Pavilion on Pleasure Island. Hoffer is elected as the City's first Mayor.

**1954**

Orange County plans to use Lake Conway for stormwater drainage. Belle Isle residents reinstate the City and its government. Millard Sullivan is elected Mayor.

**1988**

City Manager-Council form of government is adopted.

**2009**

The Belle Isle Police Department is established.

**2016**

The City Council purchases Wallace Field.

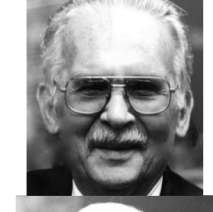
**2022**

Sienna Place is annexed into the City of Belle Isle.

**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

**100TH ANNIVERSARY** OCT 19, 2024

## TRIVIA: DO YOU KNOW YOUR MAYORS?



ARTHUR LANCASTER, MILLARD SULLIVAN, LEO BARRY, WH PRICE, EG LANGSTON, JACK HOLLOWAY, ROSS DEXTER, TOM FOWLER, WILLIAM HAND, EARL DEIMUND, FRANK BORGAN, MAURO RIGANTE, CHARLIE SCOTT, BILL HAND, BILL BROOKS, LYDIA PISANO, AND NICHOLAS FOURAKER



## HOW OLD IS MY TREE?

LINDSEY PURCELL

If you know when the tree was planted and its age at the time of planting, you can easily and accurately determine its age. Most trees are between 5 and 10 years old when they come out of the nursery. The second most accurate way to estimate tree age is to count the annual rings of wood growth. However, we don't want to injure or cut the tree down just to figure out its birthday.



Annual rings can be counted using two different methods. You can extract a core from a live tree using an increment borer, which can leave wounds in the tree. Dead trees and trees that have been removed enable ring counting on the stump. Although counting rings provides an accurate estimate of age, most people do not have access to an increment borer for live trees, or the tree must be cut down. By following three (3) easy steps, you can get a rough estimate of a live, standing tree's age without knowing when the tree was planted and without injuring or cutting it down.

Read the full article on the City's website or at [www.belleislefl.gov/community/newsletter](http://www.belleislefl.gov/community/newsletter) ■

## SAVE OUR BELLE ISLE TREES?

CHRISTOPHER STALDER,  
BELLE ISLE TREE BOARD MEMBER

It's an exciting year for the City of Belle Isle as we celebrate our 100th Anniversary! I have been a Belle Isle Tree Board member since it began and look forward to attracting more active members! We can encourage people to reach out to join our mission to help "Save our Trees" and all they mean for our natural beauty and quality of life. Trees help give us shade, clean pollutants from the air, and help absorb water from heavy rains, keeping runoff from being a big problem for our beautiful lakes!

I have lived in Lake Conway Estates since I was seven (7) months old—over 60 years now. I remember when there were vacant lots on St. Germain, where I would chase butterflies with my net and see all sorts of wildflowers, insects, and wildlife that would capture my attention. Many species have been lost from our environment, and we can encourage more to come back with pollinator gardening and adding fruit and flowering trees to our gardens and landscapes.

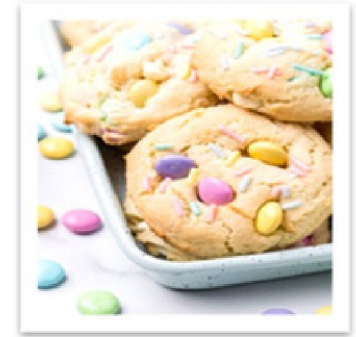
Thanks to our many residents who are eliminating toxic chemicals from our homesites and gardening to encourage a healthier environment with diverse plant and animal life. Visit [www.leugardens.org](http://www.leugardens.org) and look under classes for the Eventbrite link for classes on pollinators, beekeeping, honey tasting, native snakes, and more. The full article can be found on the City's website at [www.belleislefl.gov](http://www.belleislefl.gov).

With Kindest Regards, Christopher Stalder, Environmental Scientist, Agronomist, Master Beekeeper, Herpetologist, and Natural History Instructor at Leu Gardens (407)855-1131 - [chris.stalder3@gmail.com](mailto:chris.stalder3@gmail.com) ■



## SPRINGTIME CAKE MIX COOKIES

BY HEIDI PEACOCK



### CODE ENFORCEMENT - DID YOU KNOW!

#### WHAT IS THE 'IMPERVIOUS SURFACE RATIO'?

It is great to make improvements to your property, but...they also can cost you a lot of unforeseen fines if you do not get a permit ahead of time. Yes, even if you are replacing an existing project. As we all love to care for our properties, it is also great to understand that one's improvement might hurt a neighbor's property. This is one of the reasons that a permit is required before work is done. Along with ensuring that everything is up to code and safe, we need to ensure that we are not going over the City's "Impervious Surface Ratio requirement."

**What is the "Impervious Surface Ratio"?** This is a great question, and the answer is this: the less area on your property to absorb the rainwater we get, the more it will run off to our neighbors and possibly cause issues for them. So, to ensure we are not doing this and keep our neighbors from having to deal with flooding from excess rainwater, obtain a permit so that everything is checked out for safety and the longevity of everyone's property. ■

#### TREE REMOVAL-WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?

Governor DeSantis signed [SB 518](#) effective July 1, 2022. The bill further amends Section 163.045, F.S. to provide that a local government may not require a notice, application, approval, permit, fee, or mitigation for the pruning, trimming, or removal of a tree on a residential property if the property owner has documentation from an arborist or landscape architect that the tree poses an unacceptable risk.

**So, what does this mean for your community?** This law does not mean that owners in your community may remove trees in violation of your architectural and other requirements. However, some may wish to interpret the new law differently. This new law applies to local government requirements. This new law also does not automatically mean that your community may remove "dangerous" trees from common areas without obtaining the proper approval under your documents, the statute, and the local ordinance.

**Please be sure to call City Hall staff when the issue of tree removal and this new law arises to be sure that you are properly interpreting and applying the law.** ■

#### Ingredients

- 15.25oz Vanilla or White Cake Mix
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup oil
- ¼ cup flour
- ¾ cup M&M's
- ½ cup white chocolate chips
- ⅓ cup pastel sprinkles

#### Instructions

- Heat oven to 350° F and line a cookie sheet with parchment paper.
- In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to combine cake mix, eggs, oil, and flour until well blended. Fold in candies, chips, and sprinkles.
- Scoop 2 tablespoons of cookie dough onto the prepared cookie sheet approximately 2 inches apart.
- Bake for 10-12 minutes until the edges are slightly golden. Do not overbake.
- For a "bakery-style look, add a few M&Ms and sprinkles to the cookies as soon as they come out of the oven.
- Cool cookies for a couple of minutes on the pan then transfer cookies to a cooling rack.

# CODE ENFORCEMENT

# Best Management Practices

CONNECTION NEWSLETTER - JAN-MAR 2024

## HOW STORMWATER RUNOFF CREATES POLLUTION

Rainwater flows from roofs, streets, or other surfaces into waterways, picking up pollutants as it goes.



Common pollutants include dog poop, trash, ice melt, motor oil, dirt and debris, leaves, and lawn fertilizer.

## LAKE CONWAY

## Why is Stormwater Runoff a Problem?

Runoff picks up oil, fertilizer, and other pollutants and carries them through ditches and storm drains. Ultimately, it deposits these contaminants in natural waterways, lakes, and oceans, creating health hazards for homeowners, farmers, and the overall ecosystem. Left unmanaged, runoff can degrade stormwater quality, compromising access to clean water and drinking water for people nearby. This is why implementing stormwater BMPs on your construction site home and business is important.

## Keep Lake Conway Clean

- Never rake or blow leaves and grass clippings into streets, ditches, or storm drains.
- Only apply fertilizers or pesticides if necessary, and do not overapply. Select slow-release and organic fertilizers, which are less likely to wash away. Fertilize lawns in the fall to promote root growth and prevent nutrients from washing away during spring rains.
- Do not dump yard waste, trash, dog poop or other waste near or into storm drains.
- Keep sidewalks and streets safe by cleaning up leaves and yard debris properly.



# Easter

## EGG HUNT

**9 am - City of Belle Isle  
City Hall 1600 Nela Ave**

**JOIN US FOR A MORNING OF FAMILY FUN AS WE SEARCH FOR COLORFUL EASTER EGGS.**

**9 AM EVENT START**

**9:15 AM HUNT BEGINS FOR CHILDREN 5 AND UNDER**

**9:45 AM HUNT BEGINS FOR CHILDREN 6 AND OLDER**

**MIMOSAS - ID REQUIRED**

**PHOTO OP WITH  
GYPSY THE PONY WEARING HER  
EASTER BEST**

**PARKING IS AVAILABLE ON SIDE STREETS  
HANDICAP PARKING AT CITY HALL**



# SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH