

# Affordable Housing

It is a beautiful day outside, but my non-walking body remains chained to a wheelchair. So, it's a good time to write about a topic we continue to kick down the road – affordable housing.

Little is written about disabled persons and affordable housing, so here is a short sidebar. Recently I received a call from a disabled lady in her 60's who has been a caring and productive member of our community. On January 1st she tried to renew the lease on her apartment, where she has lived and paid rent for the past 12 years. Instead of a new lease, she was given an eviction notice.

Having suspected something was afoot, she had already started looking. And, we are talking about a senior woman on Social Security looking for Section Eight housing. She was given a smaller rental with a tub, rather than the walk-in shower she needed due to her disability. Now let me tell you the rest of the story.

The lady had been living in Section Eight



**HELPING SENIORS  
OF BREVARD**  
**JOE STECKLER**

housing that cost her \$130 a month. The new place, smaller and with a tub, would cost \$330 a month. She DOES not complain, other than to berate a landlord who sold her home of 12 years, causing her rent to double in an apartment that does not have a walk-in shower.

Fast forward to already limited affordable housing. By that I mean housing that mid-income families need to rent – housing that used to be rented for \$1,200 a month and now costs \$1,600 or more. For many, this is not really affordable...especially for the disabled lady. She has no resources to meet increased costs and, if there is no lon-

ger any Section Eight housing, she could easily become homeless.

Can we solve this problem? Yes. The City of Palm Bay received \$12 million in American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds, \$5 million of which was recently offered in a Request for Funding to for-profit and non-profit organizations assisting homeless persons and those needing affordable housing. At the same time, there is an empty building in Palm Bay, a structure that was first a hotel, then an assisted living facility, which might be converted to affordable housing for temporary renters facing homelessness.

Now, consider this scenario: the Director of Brevard's Housing and Human Services steps forward and says, "We will form a county coalition to convert this building in Palm Bay into affordable housing and build other affordable housing on County land. We will use the \$5 million from Palm Bay, monies from other Brevard cities if available, and the \$12 million left over from the

County's \$125,000,000 in ARPA funds." Then our legislators could seek matching funds from the state's Sadowski Fund, which is earmarked for affordable housing (and received \$400 million in 2022).

Without such leadership, we will never build affordable housing. The money is there if used wisely. Earlier I mentioned \$12 million in County funds. That \$12 million, my fellow Brevardians, was spent for County pay raises.

We have long needed a plan to build affordable housing. We want people to come to Brevard, but will they come if they can not afford to live here? And, we will always need a way to assist those about to become homeless. That structure in Palm Bay could have been a starting point.

Contact Helping Seniors at 321-473-7770, at [www.HelpingSeniorsOfBrevard.org](http://www.HelpingSeniorsOfBrevard.org), or at P.O. Box 372936, Satellite Beach, FL 32937.

# Summer is almost over

Living here we sometimes forget how lucky we are to live in Florida and especially in Volusia County.

We have around 226 sunny days a year and the average temperature is 72 degrees. Yes, it can get hot, but not for long, and it almost never snows.

Maybe that's why John D Rockefeller decided to buy his winter home here that we



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all know as the Casements. Like so many other successful businessmen, his friends, such as Henry Flagler, Henry Ford, Thomas Edison and Harvey Firestone, would visit here as well.

Why is that a big deal? Think about it. They could afford to live and visit anywhere in the world, but they wanted and picked our area. That's a pretty strong endorsement for where we live!

I grew up and went to school here and, for some reason, Labor Day was a special time for me ... how lucky I was to live here in Florida. I want to thank all the workers of America for giving us the national holiday of Labor Day, which is coming soon. We get to enjoy the long Labor Day weekend of fun, picnics and FOOD.

Growing up in Florida, I can remember hating to see Labor Day weekend come because it meant the end of summer fun and jobs. No more corn dogs, cotton candy, snow cones, going swimming or fishing. It

was time to get ready to go back to school — mature, learn and enter the workforce one day. That was many years ago.

Today, like millions of Americans, I look forward to the mini-vacation from work. It always brings back memories of my childhood growing up in Florida near the ocean, seeing it every day, and enjoying its pleasures. When I retire, I can go back to my childhood pleasures, eat a corn dog anytime I want, watch the sun rise over the ocean and, when Labor Day comes, it will be more enjoyable because every day after it will still be Labor Day. Funny how life goes full circle.

Now let us talk about food. Here is a surprisingly tasty recipe.

**Grilled Cola Flank Steak**

Ingredients

- 1 ½-2 pounds flank steak
- 2 cans cola
- 2 tablespoons Jamaica Jerk seasoning (or just salt and pepper before grilling)

Directions

Place flank steak, cola, and seasoning in a zip bag and marinate 2 hours. Grill for 3-4 minutes on each side on medium heat or cook to the desired temperature. Don't over-

cook the steak; it should be medium-rare. Slice across the grain in thin slices.

**Jerk Seasoning** (buy it ready-made if you like or use the recipe below)

Yield: 3 tablespoons

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon onion flakes
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 2 teaspoons ground thyme
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon ground pimento (allspice)
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons dried chives or green onions

Directions

Mix all ingredients together in a small a bowl.

*Costa Magoulas is dean of the Mori Hosseini College of Hospitality and Culinary Management at Daytona State College. Contact him at (386) 506-3578 or [costa.magoulas@daytonastate.edu](mailto:costa.magoulas@daytonastate.edu).*

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