

Diane Veltri Bendekovic

Diane Veltri Bendekovic has a history of public service, beginning as a 34 year educator with the Broward County Public School System, and most recently to the City of Plantation as a Councilmember, and now Mayor.

Diane grew up in Plantation, and she and her husband, Tom Bendekovic, Jr., a retired Captain of the Plantation Police Department, raised their family here. They have two sons, Richard and Ron, and are blessed with five grandchildren: Joseph, Andrea Sofia, Colette and twin grandsons, Kevin and Richard.



Diane was first elected to City Council in 2001. She was elected as Mayor in 2011, and was re-elected in 2015. Throughout her tenure as an elected official, she has seized every opportunity to promote the City and to stay in touch with the residents through her presence at numerous homeowners' association meetings, a practice that continues today. She works tirelessly with "Team Plantation" – her term for the collective group of City employees, elected officials, volunteers, businesses and residents – to sustain and maintain the City of Plantation.

Mayor Bendekovic strives to maintain quality residential services, and world class recreational facilities and programs for the Plantation community, while remaining fiscally responsible. Her relationship with the business community and the Greater Plantation Chamber of Commerce supports and promotes the development of an economically prosperous City.

As Mayor, she has implemented numerous reductions during the past several years in order to cut millions from the annual budget, including wage freezes and furloughs, bond refinancing, renegotiating the solid waste and recycling franchise agreements, finalizing negotiations with the FOP and exploring options to achieve even greater efficiencies in internal operations. She has reorganized, restructured and consolidated several departments by eliminating positions, removing redundancies and creating efficiencies in order to enhance productivity and improve customer service.

Additionally, the City realized new sources of revenue that helped offset expenditures. They include increased charges to be comparable to other cities for services performed by the City, a stormwater assessment, public safety impact fees and employee contributions for healthcare benefits. The City launched the Employee Health & Wellness Center, which helped avoid employee healthcare costs totaling over \$5 million.

During her tenure, the City's property values increased five consecutive years, by nearly 33% cumulatively. However, in the last six years, due to increased cost of doing business, and increased health care premiums and pension costs, Mayor Bendekovic recommended, and City Council approved, millage increases totaling 1.3858 mils. It was a difficult decision, but one that had to be made in order to maintain the City's long term sustainability.

Together, expenditure reductions and revenue increases combined to eliminate the \$12.9 million budget deficit. After the books closed on the 2016 budget, the City was able to fund capital and

bolster the City's unassigned reserves, or "rainy day" funds, from a low of less than \$1 million in 2012 to over \$11.3 million today. Total reserves, including assigned, restricted, non-spendable and committed total over \$49 million.

Alongside her Police and Fire Chiefs, Mayor Bendekovic is committed to maintaining the City's high standards of Public Safety. For this reason, and despite strong pressure from most other Broward County Cities, and the County Commission, Plantation maintained its own 911 Emergency dispatch system. In doing so, City first responders have direct contact with their residents, understand their issues, and maintain unprecedented response times and accuracy.

Under the Mayor's leadership, the City now has more ways to communicate with its residents than ever before. In addition to its website, Plantation.org, we now have a presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The Parks & Recreation department sends monthly event updates to residents via "Plantation Now," it's e-newsletter, you can tune in to what's going on via Plantation Radio, 1620 AM, and sign up for emergency broadcasts via Plantation "On the Alert." And with "Open Gov," which should be implemented early 2018, residents will experience complete transparency in City financials.

As a 34-year educator with the Broward County Public School System, Mayor Bendekovic is keenly aware of the importance local schools play in our community. Her dedication to the youth of Plantation is exemplified through her support of the Plantation Athletic League (PAL), and her efforts have been instrumental in securing several magnet programs in both South Plantation and Plantation I-Zones.

Mayor Bendekovic's commitment to present-day Plantation and its traditions stems from her strong ties to the community growing up as part of one of Plantation's Pioneer families, as a parent raising her own children here, as an educator, as a Councilwoman, and now as Mayor. While she cherishes Plantation's history, her vision of Plantation will continue to move it forward, with an eye on its future.