

# CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

February 2005

## President's Message

By Karl Nurse

The January meeting of CONA was a brainstorming session to develop a list of priorities for the year. Please feel free to print this list in your newsletters and bring your feedback to the next meeting.

I have attempted to group the suggestions into categories. They are as follows:

1) Green Cities – This is a comprehensive plan that is being implemented in other Florida cities to reduce how local governments use energy, pollute the air and water and develop more efficient policies and rules both for the city and the community.

2) Enforcement of quality of life laws. There a series of laws that the city chooses not to enforce usually based upon policy or lack of personnel. This includes traffic laws/speeding, noise ordinances, illegal signs, loose dogs, and its "no chase" policy. We communicate to the violators this message. Compare this to Kenneth City, where it is widely known that if you speed, you get ticketed.

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## CONA Board Meeting Wednesday, February 16, 2005

The **SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.**  
Doors open at 6:00 p.m.; meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

### Agenda Items:

Joint meeting with the League of Women's Voters to discuss Bi-Partisan Redistricting

CONA Goals for 2005

Featured Neighborhood:  
Jungle Terrace Civic Association

Report on Indoor Mini-Storage Issue

## CONA to feature a different Neighborhood Association each month

*Starting with our February Board Meeting, one of our neighborhoods will give us a short presentation about their neighborhood each month. These presentations will focus on activities the featured neighborhood is currently pursuing.*

*This should be a good way for us to share ideas and learn what others are doing. The ability to learn from others and develop networks of people who have dealt with issues similar to our own is one of CONA's greatest strengths.*

*In addition to the presentation, we will include background information about the featured neighborhood in our CONA Newsletter. Jungle Terrace has volunteered to be the featured neighborhood for February, and Tom Killian will make the presentation. Other neighborhoods wishing to "strut their stuff" should contact Steve Plice (phone: 344-3120 email: [steveplice@verizon.net](mailto:steveplice@verizon.net)).*

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# Partnership Notes

## Neighborhood Partnership Office

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**Neighborhood Partnership  
Grant applications  
for FY 2006 are available as a  
PDF file on the City's website:  
[www.stpete.org/pdf/ngrant05.pdf](http://www.stpete.org/pdf/ngrant05.pdf).**

***Applications have been mailed  
to all association presidents.***

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3) Police Staffing Levels. St. Petersburg has not increased the number of police officers in more than ten years. We continue to lose many officers each year, use the community officers to fill the gaps and never achieve a full department of trained officers. Many believe the lack of police officers results in a lack of police enforcement and safety.

4) Undergrounding Utilities. Four hurricanes served to remind everyone that undergrounding utilities is more than eliminating visual blight and protecting trees. We have called upon the Legislature to begin the transition in the coming session.

5) Vision 2020 and the LDR's (Land Development Regulations). We want the vision 2020 plan implemented with LDR's that re-enforce both traditional and suburban neighborhoods. After 25 years of zoning by variance, the new system needs to provide protections that make variances the exception rather than the norm. Neighborhoods need a place on the Boards that will enforce this. Currently, the makeup of the Boards are mandated with development interests getting about 2/3rd's of the positions. That is not balance.

6) Sidewalks, alleys, bike plans. The Tampa Bay area is among the most dangerous places to walk or ride a bike. While we have repaired the old sidewalks, large sections of the city lack sidewalks. Many alleys remain in poor condition or are unpaved. The City's bike plan should make a huge difference for bikes.

7) Homelessness. We want the City/County governments to help reduce homelessness, not simply provide feeding locations. Free food, without the alcohol, drug, and mental illness help, has a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Our goal in the process is to publicize our priorities to make this a better city, to ask the Mayor and City Council to take a stand on these issues and to involve neighborhoods in bringing our issues to the table. Please come to the February meeting ready to tell us your neighborhoods priorities.

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# Indoor Mini-Storage: County Commissioners weigh in

By Cathy Wilson

Crescent Heights and Greater Woodlawn took their case on Indoor Mini-Storage to the County Commission on February 1st. You may recall that the neighborhoods were trying to prevent a local landowner's attempt at land use change from ROR (Residential Office Retail) to CG (Commercial General) so that he could legally operate an Indoor Mini-Storage business. The City of St. Petersburg's Planning Commission (PC) had DENIED the request for change but City Council, in a super majority, overrode the PC. Their decision had to gain the approval of the County and was next heard at the Pinellas Planning Council (similar to our PC but on a county scale). They heard the matter and recommended approval when they referred it to the County Commission.

In a surprising turn of events, the County Commissioners, in a unanimous vote, REFUSED to agree to change the land use forever and sent it back to the City of St. Petersburg to have a Developer's Agreement drawn up. What they want is an agreement between the City and the landowner that limits the zoning change to CG as long as the only use is an Indoor Mini-Storage. As soon as the use changes, the zoning will revert back to ROR. This means a great deal to the neighborhoods since one of their greatest fears about the land use change was the density and intensity of development allowed in CG and the list of occupancies that could possibly end up in that parcel.

The County Commission's action was very unusual and was the result, I think, of several factors;

- 1) Crescent Heights and Greater Woodlawn NEVER GAVE UP! They stayed the course over three years and loads of meeting, hearings and phone calls.
- 2) The neighborhoods were right in their message about spot zoning and the impact of commercial development on neighborhoods. They honed their presentations and got in as much detail as is possible in three minutes time.
- 3) Many people from CONA sent emails and letters in support of the neighborhoods to the County Commissioners on the issue. This helped to blunt the impact of all the favorable letters the landowner had in his application package.

Even though elections seem to be far away, they're looming closer every day.

**REMEMBER** these names when people start campaigning and asking for your vote... **Virginia Littrell and Richard Kriseman were the only two City Council Members who voted to support the neighborhoods** (and the city's own rules too by the way). Earnest Williams, Bill Foster, John Bryan, Jay Lasita, Jamie Bennett and Rene Flowers voted for the landowner.

**The County Commissioners who made up the unanimous vote were; John Morroni, Ken Welch, Ronnie Duncan, Bob Stewart, Karen Seel and Calvin Harris.**

Next up for the neighborhoods is an effort to get the association's names on the Developer's Agreement as parties to it as well as a seat at the table when it's drawn up.

Stay tuned for further developments...

# EDC approves “Unlimited” Development Rights

By Tim Baker

The city's Environmental Development Commission at its February meeting handed out its first ever approval for a project with "unlimited" development rights, something that's not available even in Midtown Manhattan. The project - the Bayway Lofts on 3rd Avenue North between 2nd and 3rd Streets - was proposed by developer Grady Pridgen and approved by a vote of four to one.

Bob Jeffrey, the city's manager of Urban Design, is currently working on a project to rewrite the development rules, which are expected to eliminate the possibility of unlimited rights. But given the slow pace of this project, it is certainly possible that more developers will ask for this ultimate development bonus before new rules come into play.

The land on which Bayway Lofts would sit is now vacant. It is across the street from the Heritage Hotel, in a part of downtown with existing development of a relatively low density - mostly two- and three-story buildings. Bayway Lofts would loom above all these neighbors, with a 29-story condominium tower perched on top of a six-level garage. Along the front and one side of the project there would be a separate building containing a series of storefronts, with several floors of residential use above. All told, the project would include 450,000 square feet of floor space. The building lot is about 50,000 square feet. The Parkshore Plaza, currently under construction on Beach Drive, is about the same size, but on twice as much land.

Building density downtown is regulated by Floor/Area Ratio (FAR). The base FAR for the Bayway Lofts site is three, meaning that a building of 150,000 square feet would be allowed. But, if enough bonuses are earned, then the zoning code allows for “unlimited” FAR. This is what Mr. Pridgen applied for, and got. The project as actually approved by the EDC has an FAR of about nine. While the EDC placed no limit on the project's FAR, there are other constraints that limit a project size, such as a height limitation of 371 feet imposed in this case by the Federal Aviation Administration, open space requirements and setback requirements.

The Downtown Neighborhood Association asked for a number of modifications to the plan, all but one of which were incorporated into the approval. These included setting back the parking garage ten feet from the alley, with the garage base to be landscaped; requiring ingress and egress to the parking garage from 3rd Avenue rather than from the alley; and requiring that the garage be fully enclosed. A request to eliminate a semi-circular driveway on 3rd Avenue was rejected.

Additional conditions were added by the staff and the EDC. These included a requirement that air-conditioning equip-

ment be placed on top of the tower, rather than on the roof of the parking garage; a requirement that the visible walls of the garage be treated architecturally to resemble the residential tower; and requiring that a service bay be built into the back of the garage so that service vehicles don't block the alley when loading and unloading.

While the neighborhood association sought modifications to the proposal, a number of individuals spoke strongly against the project, based on its impact on its immediate neighbors. A number of the speakers live in the Huntington Townhomes, which are across the alley from the Bayway Lofts site. Some of the townhouses there have bedroom windows just 32 feet from the Pridgen property line. That is why the neighborhood association focused on the parking garage in its requests for modifications.

*Tim Baker is President of the Downtown Neighborhood Association and a resident of the Huntington.*

## City Staff changes and promotions: Big changes in Economic Development and Planning Departments

The city of St. Petersburg announced organizational changes within its City Development Administration, including the appointment of David S. Goodwin as the new economic development director. Mr. Goodwin was promoted from his previous position as the assistant director for Development Services.

Bob Jeffery has been promoted to the position of assistant director of Development Services, the position previously held by Dave Goodwin.

In addition to managing the city's urban planning and growth management functions in his previous position, Mr. Goodwin managed the city's annexation and development of regional impact programs. These programs are important economic development initiatives that have directly contributed to improving St. Petersburg's employment and tax bases, and will continue to be under Mr. Goodwin's direction. Mr. Goodwin has developed and administered multi-million dollar annexation agreements that were incentives to bring valuable commercial and residential properties into the city.

Bob Jeffery will report to Julie Weston. He will be responsible for Comprehensive Planning, Land Use Planning, Historic Preservation and Urban Planning.

**Congratulations to Dave and Bob!**

# Jungle Terrace Civic Association

## Jungle Terrace Neighborhood

There are approximately 3,000 single family residences in the Jungle Terrace Neighborhood. Many of the residential homes were built in the 1950s, 60s and 70s, featuring single story masonry block style two and three bedroom houses. Fascinating homes from the 1920's and earlier are found throughout the area reflecting area's rich history. Mansions selling for well over one million dollars can be found on the western edge of the neighborhood along Boca Ciega Bay. The neighborhood includes Tyrone Square Mall and much of the Tyrone shopping district.

## Boundaries

Jungle Terrace neighborhood includes the area west of 66th Street to Boca Ciega Bay. The southern boundary is 22nd Avenue North and the northern boundary is the city limits line (generally, 40th Avenue North).

## Organization

The Jungle Terrace Civic Association was formed in 1954 when the conversion from septic tanks to a City sewer system drew neighbors together to discuss the issue. Over the years, the Association has addressed myriad issues that affect the quality of life in the neighborhood.

## History

Some historians have placed this area as the site where the first European explorers visited North America starting in 1528. Indian mounds dating back more than 2,000 years have been identified and one archeological dig is currently underway. In the early 20th Century, the Jungle Terrace area became one of the finest vacation destinations in Pinellas County. The Jungle Country Club (now the Admiral Farragut Academy) was built by Walter Fuller in 1925. The Jungle Prada complex (now the Saffron's Restaurant building) was built in 1924 where The Gangplank became St. Petersburg's first nightclub. Count Bassie and Duke Ellington played at the Gangplank and Babe Ruth was married there. During the prohibition era, there was a secret underground tunnel leading from the bay to Jungle Prada which was used by bootleggers. In the 1920's, the land where Tyrone Square Mall is now located was an airport. Al Capone and other notorious characters used the airport for easy access to the Jungle resort area. According to legend, Al Capone was a part owner of the Jungle Prada nightclub. Saffron's Restaurant claims that there is still an un-opened safe in the building that dates back to the Al Capone days.

One structure, 8318 37th Avenue North, has a colorful history. Built before 1912 by David Watts, a mining engineer who had migrated from England. David Watts married the daughter of Dr. Abercrombie, who was the first doctor in South Pinellas. They had no children and after the death of his wife, Mr. Watts was known as being quite eccentric and a recluse. He would not ride in an automobile and he would push a wheelbarrow up to the trolley line starting at the Jungle Prada to do his shopping in town. On returning, he would put his goods in his wheelbarrow and walk home. Mr. Watts' house was the only good dwelling in this area, there being some fisherman shacks along the South shore of the bay. He owned all of the property between 36th Avenue and 42nd Avenue.

Mr. Watts wanted to will his property to the City of St. Petersburg, but the City was not willing to assume his debts. Upon his death, the property went to relatives living in England. Mr. Walter Fuller convinced the relatives to waive their rights to a piece of the property which is now known as Abercrombie Park. The use of the park was restricted to its being kept in its natural state with no automobiles allowed.



*Mayor Rick Baker, Lita Sargent, Tyrone Square Mall Manager and Tom Killian, Jungle Terrace Civic Association President speak at the Tyrone Square Lifestyle Redevelopment Announcement on January 12, 2005.*



# 2005 CONA Membership

2005 CONA Membership fees are now due. Please complete the form below and mail it to CONA, or bring it to the next meeting.

We will be using these forms to update our mailing list so be sure to include phone numbers and email addresses. Please include the names and addresses of people to whom we should be sending the CONA Newsletter.

## CONA Membership Application

*Time to renew you CONA membership for 2005!*

2005 dues are due January 1, 2005. Fill out this CONA Membership Application and mail it along with the Membership Fee to: C.O.N.A., P.O. Box 13693 , St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3693. Or you may bring it to the next Board Meeting.

Association Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Boundaries: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Households: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Members: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Dates & Location: \_\_\_\_\_

President: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

CONA Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternative Rep: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Add these names to the CONA Mailing List:

Name	Address	Zip

Please include annual dues of \$35. If you would like to use the Bulk Mail Permit #, please add \$15 to your dues to help pay for the cost of the permit. Indicate below, the frequency of your mailings (monthly, quarterly, etc.), approximate mailing dates and # of pieces per mailing.

Frequency of Mailing: \_\_\_\_\_ (monthly, quarterly, etc.)

Approximate Mailing Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ # of pieces per Mailing: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Minutes for January CONA Board Meeting**

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a flagrant example of “Spot Zoning” won through political influence, our members were urged to continue our protest as the issue goes before the County’s Planning Commission. Details of our objections will be posted on the CONA Listbot. It was suggested that we utilize the FAX facility of our web site to mount a campaign of protest to the county commissioners.

- Representative Frank Farkas spoke briefly of the shared funding for joint services within the cities of the county, noting the disparity of the training required by various communities and the corresponding irregular level of service provided.
- Our meeting then focused on the identification of neighborhood goals for year 2005 which will be compiled at this meeting and then referred to all of our member associations in order to establish the priorities that our neighbors recognize for these various issues.
- The “Green City Movement” should be promoted here to achieve the correlative reductions of environmental pollution and improved energy efficiencies in all aspects of our society and our government.
- Public Safety must continue to be the predominant objective for all other progress is meaningless without it.
- Traffic Control is the foundation of pedestrian, bicycling, and vehicular safety.
- “Speed bumps” should not be a cheap substitute for strict police enforcement. Pedestrian safety has taken second place to the development of bicycle lanes.
- We heard a discussion of some aspects of the police problems at Baywalk.
- The issues of safety as related to the homeless population were considered. Highway intersection panhandlers need to be restricted.
- The need for CONA to oppose further reduction of public facilities on our waterfront at the hands of condominium developers was highlighted.
- There was a discussion of the need to press, at state level, for legislation that will encourage and enforce the underground installation of utility wires.
- CONA’s strategy should be to demand a commitment to our neighborhood goals from candidates and from government leaders who come here to address us.
- Many existing codes and ordinances are not vigorously enforced due to insufficient staff, the result of faulty budget plans of the city administration.
- CONA should coordinate and promote the appointment of neighborhood leaders and lay consumers to the many review boards and commissions in our city and county.
- CONA will e-mail the above compiled list of proposed neighborhood goals to all of our member associations urging them to discuss these issues locally and to identify the relative priorities of each topic, (which are vital and foremost or which should be viewed as long term issues).

Our meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted



## 2005 Officers

### **President**

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### **Treasurer**

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### **Frequently Called Numbers**

Neighborhood Partnership Office:  
892-5141  
Mayor's Action Line: 893-7111  
Codes Office: 893-7373

### **CONA Newsletter Deadlines**

Copy Deadline: 30th of each month.  
Publication: 2nd Wednesday of month.  
Mailing: 2nd Friday of month.

**Editor: Steve Plice 344-3120**

## CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - January 19, 2005

President Karl Nurse called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

- City Councilman Richard Kriseman officiated at the swearing-in of the newly elected CONA Officers for 2005: President- Karl Nurse, First V.P.- Steve Plice, Secretary- Conrad Weiser, and Treasurer Libby Steele. [Second V.P. Elect-Theresa McEachern was not present.]
- In his introductory remarks, Councilman Kriseman explained that he was officiating as a replacement for Mayor Baker who is out of town.
- The President expressed our appreciation for the excellent work that Steve Plice has performed in producing our monthly CONA Newsletter.
- Members of the new CONA Leadership Class were invited to introduce themselves.
- Karl Nurse, (currently serving on the Homeless Task Force), opened a discussion of city efforts in this area.
- We next heard from retiring Police Lieutenant Tom Edwards who recently joined the city staff of Codes Enforcement. We heard of dramatic improvements in the efficiency and reduced process cycle times for handling codes complaints.
- Karl explained that he is planning to revise our meeting format, somewhat, by reserving the opening minutes for a neighborhood report of progress and successful initiatives
- We learned that our February meeting will be a jointly sponsored event with League of Women Voter Chapters from St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Tampa. The guest speaker will be Betty Castor addressing the issue of "Gerrymandering our voting districts. Vs reapportionment".
- We heard several comments on the challenge to rezone a site on 30th. Avenue that the neighborhood association, (with support from CONA), that has one approval, through City Council, despite our protests. Cited as

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