

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

May 2005

President's Message

By Karl Nurse

Four months into the CONA Agenda, we are making real progress in getting the City leaders to address our concerns. A special thanks to Tom Killian for going to many neighborhoods to share our agenda. 18 more neighborhoods associations have paid their dues in the last sixty days. We are on target to set a record for the most associations as members. We have also been working with other organizations, including the League of Women Voters and the Sierra Club to build bridges on common issues. We will continue to do this to push our agenda.

Green Cities has been introduced into the City Council by Jamie Bennett. The Mayor has signed on as have several other City Council members. We have an excellent chance of implementing this program in the next 60 days!

The LDR's (what we call zoning) will begin its formal adoption process in June. Please come to our May meeting to join the conversation as to how we can change the system so that the code fits 99% of the time AND variances only occur in that 1% of the time that it does not work. The challenge is to change the mindset after 25 years of granting variances to MOST projects. A great zoning code and plans only work if we have the will to say no to bad development and yes to good development.

The budget discussions will be starting this month. CONA wants to be part of the conversation early so that we can make a difference.

Our top agenda items revolve around police staffing and the need to enforce the "quality of life" laws such as speeding, front yard parking, loose dogs, boom boxes and noise pollution. Although it sounds minor at first blush, these are the things that make for a pleasant or unpleasant experience. A City budget is how we communicate what is important. We will discuss at the May meeting how we can translate this into action!

Let's keep making it a better day in St. Petersburg through our efforts.

CONA Board Meeting Wednesday, May 18, 2005

The SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

Land Development Regulations

2006 City Budget

2006 Nominating Committee

**Featured Neighborhood:
Harbordale**

On the inside

LDR Views from Tim Baker.....	2
LDR - City	3
CONA Leadership graduation	5
Featured Neighborhood	6
CONA Minutes.....	7-8
CONA Officers	8



LDRs - The Real Deal

By Tim Baker

As is so often the case, the most boring part may just be the most important part.

We are talking here about the current effort to revise the Land Development Regulations for the City of St. Petersburg. This is not, to begin with, the most scintillating topic for cocktail party conversation, unless you are at a party of policy wonks. But still, even at a party that's actually fun it should be possible to get an argument going about such things as whether there should be height restrictions on buildings downtown, or whether townhouses should be allowed in traditional single-family neighborhoods.

But we are further talking about the section of those regulations that governs the boards and commissions that administer those regulations.

Just try to get a conversation going on that topic, even amongst the policy wonks. Are we better off with the Planning Commission designated as the official land-use agency for the city, or if that job is left to City Council? Should a request for restoring abandoned dwelling units in a grandfathered apartment building be heard before the full Board of Adjustment, or would it be better to have that hearing before a Special Master?

Well, who cares?

The answer is that we should all care, because even a good set of development regulations can be undermined by a bad system for administering them. Think about the criminal justice system: if you want it to work, you have to have good laws and good courts.

So, mark your calendar for Tuesday, June 14: 7 to 9 p.m. at City Hall. At that time Bob Jeffrey, who is directing the city's effort to rewrite the development regulations, will conduct a public meeting on the makeup of the boards and commissions that administer the city's zoning regulations.

As of the deadline for this newsletter, Mr. Jeffrey

had not yet put together a proposal for this section of the LDRs. However, in previous public meetings he has thrown out some ideas that have been considered, and may still be under consideration. Some of these ideas would result in major changes to the way things work.

A short review of which boards and commissions are involved might be in order.

The Planning Commission is the official land-use agency for the city. That means, for example, that any proposals for rezoning must first go before this commission. The Planning Commission also holds the first hearings for proposed changes to the city's Comprehensive Plan.

The Historic Preservation Commission has the same members as the Planning Commission. Its duties are to designate historic landmarks and to decide whether changes to landmarks qualify for allowed tax breaks.

The Environmental Development Commission has several duties. It holds the first public hearing on proposed vacations of streets and alleys; it rules on site plans where the total floor area of proposed buildings exceeds 150,000 square feet; it rules on requests for variances on large projects; and it decides on special exception uses.

The Board of Adjustment rules on most applications for variances, such as setbacks for building additions or swimming pools. It also is responsible for determining the legal number of dwelling units in multi-family buildings.

The City Council in some cases, such as vacating streets and alleys or designating historic landmarks, holds a second public hearing and makes final determinations. Often, a super-majority vote of Council is required to go against a ruling or recommendation from one of the other boards. In some cases Council also serves as an appeal agency, such as for site-plan rulings from the EDC. In other cases, such as from the BOA, appeals must go to Circuit Court.

Continued on next page

Bob Jeffery to discuss LDR Administration Issues

As we continue with rewriting the city's land development regulations (LDR's), we must also address the processes and procedures which will be utilized to review and process development request when they come forward. Most specifically, how will variances be approved after the new code is developed? How will the City define "hardship"? Who will approve requests for special exception uses? Will the public be notified when an application for redevelopment is brought forward? Will these processes still appear on the City's television station?

At the May 18th CONA meeting, Bob Jeffrey will speak about the processes associated with the Boards and Commissions. The variance processes and other procedural issues involved with the rewrite of the LDR's will also be discussed.

In addition there will be a public meeting Tuesday June 14th which will seek public input regarding the procedures associated with the LDR's and the Boards and Commissions. This meeting will be held in City Council Chambers, located at 175 5th Street North beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Continued from previous page

Now, what changes have been discussed?

One early proposal was to take away the designation of the Planning Commission as the official land-use agency, and turn that duty over to City Council. Another was to create a separate Historic Commission. Another was to allow many of the cases that come before the Board of Adjustment to be heard instead by a Special Master.

At this point it just isn't known whether any of these ideas will live to see the light of day. But other ideas along the same lines will surely surface. And in every case, the devil will be in the details. For example,

allowing a Special Master to hear minor BOA cases would lessen the case load for the full board and possibly speed things along for applicants. But, the full BOA meetings are shown on the city's cable television channel, making it very easy for a concerned citizen to monitor what's going on. Special Master hearings might not be shown on television, taking away the ability to monitor the process from your own home. This is what has happened with a similar setup at the city's Code Enforcement Board. Much of that board's work is now done by a Special Master. While those sessions are open to the public, they are not televised.

So, one question to ask of any proposed changes to the boards and commissions is whether that change will increase or lessen the public's ability to monitor the process. Another is whether a proposed change will make it more easy or more difficult for the boards and commissions to hand out variances to the rules. ■

Call before you dig

It's not just another catchy slogan. It's the law.

1-800-432-4770



Learn more about the "Call Before You Dig" law at your next homeowner's association meeting.

Contact
Jerry Novak at
(727) 520-8159.

www.callsunshine.com

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: _____

RELIABLE POWER.

AND PEOPLE DEDICATED TO KEEPING IT THAT WAY.



Reliability means improving how we deliver your power. Quickly restoring power after storms. Striving to make our customer service the best it can be. And evaluating and preparing for the energy needs of future generations. The relentless pursuit of excellence. It's what we're all about.
progress-energy.com



Progress Energy

People. Performance. Excellence.

CONA Leadership 2005 Graduation

By: Tom Killian

The 2005 CONA Neighborhood Leadership Program held its Graduation Dinner on Friday May 6. The St. Petersburg Yacht Club was the setting for this years 30 graduates. A total of 67 people attended the program. Our Pinellas County Commissioner, Ken Welch was the featured speaker at the dinner.

Congratulations to our 2005 CONA Leadership Graduate

Kathleen M. Bara - Euclid/St. Paul
Fred DeJohn - Crescent Heights
William H. Dudley - Snell Isle
Jonathan S. Eggleton - Greater Woodlawn
Richard Ellman - Historic Kenwood
Blanche L. Ganey - Bayou Highlands
Cheryl A. Gross - North Kenwood
Patricia Guaveia - Snell Isle
Marilyn A. Heitman - Downtown
Adrien Helm - Greater Pinellas Point
Ed Helm - Greater Pinellas Point
Jerry Holderness - Downtown
Susan T. Holderness - Downtown
Eric R. Kartlick - Winston Park
Fred V. Kodes - Disston Heights
Keith Locke - Disston Heights
Ron Magray - Downtown
Vilma Muir - Bayou Highlands
Bob Myers - Disston Heights
Christine A. Page - Euclid/St. Paul
Casimiro V. Rael, Sr. - North Kenwood
Melissa Seixas - Disston Heights
Michael D. Starr - Downtown
Salvador M. Valles - Greater Pinellas Point
Patsy Wedding - Lakeview Estates
Dr. Harold Welch - Jungle Prada
Barbara A. Whittingham - Historic Roser Park
Addie E. Williams - Bartlett Park
Michael Wilson - Greater Woodlawn
Steven W. Zachem - Jungle Terrace



**Leadership Graduate Fred DeJohn (Crescent Heights)
and CONA President Karl Nurse**



**Leadership Graduate
Cass Rael (North Kenwood)
in the picture with County
Commissioner Ken Welch**

**Leadership Graduate
Addie Williams
(Bartlett Park)**



The Leadership Program consists of 10 lessons over four months. Students meet city and county officials, learn to run effective meetings and have a all day Historic Bus Tour of St. Petersburg narrated by Professor Ray Arsenault. Other lessons include, Quasi-Judicial Hearings, Diverse Community, City Services, Effective Communications and more.

Ingrid Comberg was this years Program Chairman, Ann McWilliams was Planning Chairman and Ed Van served as Recruitment Chairman. We thank all the group leaders and mentors who gave their time to make this years program such a success.

The program puts you together with people you need to know when you have problems to solve. You also develop a working relationship with people like yourself who belong to other associations who can help you in the future. For information on the next class call Ingrid Comberg 821-2192.

History

In the late 1800s and the early development years of the 1920s, this area of abundant and flourishing citrus and pineapple groves had only three main roadways: 22nd Avenue (also known as Lakeview Avenue), Tangerine Avenue (18th Avenue), and Maximo (now 31st Street South). Until paved streets came into being, the sandy, muddy paths and roads were covered with shells gathered from the many Indian shell mounds still in existence throughout the southside.

Until the railroad was developed, the economic and subsistence lifeline of the community was by boat from Big Bayou to the east of this settlement and Lake Maggiore (Salt Lake) on the west. Once a navigable body of water, Salt Creek (Harbordale's water ribbon) ties Lake Maggiore to Bayboro Harbor. On the flanks, Salt Creek eases up into the two picturesque streets known as Harbor Drive, East and West. This "water ribbon," home to many birds, egrets, heron, colorful butterflies, fish and the famous alligator, continues to wind its way through the neighborhood and slides into Bartlett Park. This lovely park, with a public access lake, lies to the north of Harbordale and was once the home of annual major world tennis tournaments. The tennis facilities underwent an extensive restoration and revitalization. Notable trees are the stars of this neighborhood, ending beauty, and plentiful shade.

Trinity United Methodist Church has been an integral part of Harbordale history for more than 65 years. It is the only remaining historical building within the confines of this neighborhood, part of this edifice being the original structure built in 1927 under the leadership of Pastor J. Hamilton. Trinity continues to be an "anchor" for our residents and offers many programs in the community under the current leadership of Pastor Joe Teague.

Because of "the boom" in Florida and the recession in many other parts of the country, population increased rapidly, that many houses had to be built quickly to accommodate them. Much of the housing in Harbordale still reflects this period of 20th century home: single family, bungalow style wooden structures. Newer homes of block and masonry were constructed in the 1950s and appear in the western half of the neighborhood.

Organizations/programs

Harbordale benefits from many programs such as Crime Watch, Community Policing, Certificate of Inspection (mandatory before leasing rental units), Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) and the Working to Improve Neighborhoods (WIN) Program. Much of the housing stock, because of long-term vacancy, has been, and will continue to be, rehabilitated through these programs. The residents of Harbordale have completed a neighborhood plan in a unique partnership with the City and the State of Florida. The program is known as the Urban Partnership Initiative. Harbordale is one of only two St. Petersburg neighborhoods involved in this initiative.

The Harbordale Neighborhood Association, under the leadership of Mrs. Theresa McEachern (823- 6390), keeps a "watchful eye" and plays an active role in the continuing efforts to revitalize and preserve the southside.

Boundaries

22nd to 30th Avenues South from 4th to 9th Streets South.

Continued from the back page

ground system resulted in the large underground network in Orlando, was the last fixed after the storms of 2004.

- ◆ Fundamental to the issue of costs is the regulatory requirement of the Public Service Commission that the system design be maximized for cost effectiveness; the least expensive approach to achieve the acceptable levels of service. This requirement mandates that more expensive system designs, (i.e. underground), must be funded by special customer arrangements not under the statewide structure of power rates.
 - The average cost increment to request residential underground electric service, in Florida, is between five and seven thousand dollars.
- ◆ Explaining the failure problems with underground, we learned the aging insulation, water intrusion and lightning deterioration, (direct or only nearby), mandates periodic replacements.
- ◆ Noting the conflicting demands of reliability and esthetics, buried cable systems result in a profusion of "Green Boxes" erupting above ground to accommodate waterproof cable connections/splices.
- ◆ Concrete light poles are more durable than the 20 year average service of wooden poles, their location is restricted because linemen cannot climb them with tree spikes making truck mounted "Cherry Picker" access requisite.
- ◆ We then discussed slides that portrayed the entire power distribution system extending from the generating stations to the residential users. It was noted that in virtually all distribution systems some elements are high voltage lines that are always carried on poles above ground, exposed to the weather.
 - Even buried residential service lines are often broken by uprooted trees.
 - Design of new distribution systems is always a cooperative effort between Progress Energy, developers, and government regulatory agencies.
- ◆ In summation, Mr. Oliver reiterated that undergrounding could be done on any scale, house by house, or whole communities, but that the PSC

rate rules require that the extraordinary costs of burying the service cables must be born by the users. Progress Energy is ready to oblige the funding decision of individual homeowners or entire community authorities.

- ◆ Mo Eppley, (Greater Woodlawn) distributed petitions in support of revisions to the Florida Constitution which will be required to mandate redistricting of the voting precincts.
- ◆ Barbara Heck, (Snell Isle), invited all to a May fifth meeting, (7:30 PM, Snell Isle Women's Club), addressing the threat of "Identity Theft"
- ◆ Steve Plice urged us all to attend the upcoming series of hearings set to approve revisions to the Land Development Regulations, (LDRs), that will profoundly impact the nature of our community for decades to come.
- ◆ The duration of our program was devoted to a presentation by the Old Southeast Neighborhood Association, our featured CONA member association for the month of April.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM. ■

Announcing
CONA's 2005
All-Neighborhood Block Party

November 5, 2005
at
Walter Fuller Park

Hosted by
Jungle Terrace Civic Association

For more information, contact:
Tom Killian 343-2041



2005 Officers

President

Karl Nurse
Old Southeast
572-9311 Ext. 24
karl@baytechlabel.com

First Vice President

Steve Plice
Jungle Terrace
344-3120
Steveplice@verizon.net

Second Vice President

Theresa McEachern
Harbordale
823-6390
terre66@aol.com

Secretary

Conrad Weiser
Edgemoor
522-5008
MAOAI999@aol.com

Treasurer

Libby Steele
Lakewood Estates
867-6916
MPH56@aol.com

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 - April 20, 2005

Minutes by Conrad Weiser

Vice President Steve Plice opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

- ◆ The members of our current CONA Leadership Class were then invited to stand and introduce themselves.
- ◆ Steve then introduced our guest speaker, Jay Oliver, Distribution Operations Manager, in St. Petersburg, for Progress Energy. His PowerPoint presentation addressed the issue of burying power and other utilities underground. Responsible for providing power to 170,000 customers, Mr. Oliver concentrated on four fundamental aspects of the underground issue:
 - 1) Community partnering with other utilities,
 - 2) The overriding requirements of the Public Service Commission,
 - 3) Cost data analysis,
 - 4) Reliability and esthetic considerations.
- ◆ In the aspect of Partnering, Progress Energy continually cooperates with other utility organization to share facilities. They have partnered with many Florida communities to share in design and construction efforts to place utilities underground, (i.e. N. Reddington Beach).
- ◆ Jay pointed out that 80% of all new construction, in Florida, involves underground placement of the utility cables.
- ◆ Focusing on reliability, we heard that the majority of Progress Energies equipment failures develop in their underground units, not the overhead.
 - Though underground components experience 50% less frequent service interruptions, the duration of the repairs to restore power are 50% longer, (on an average), for underground failures.
 - Progress Energy has devoted \$7,000,000 to install and repair underground facilities this year.
 - The average duration of service interruptions in St. Petersburg last year was 55 minutes.
 - We were told that the longer effort to restore damaged under

Continued on page 7

**The Council of Neighborhood
Associations of S Pinellas County
P.O. Box 13693
St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3693**

Presort Std U.S. Postage Paid Permit #1084 St. Petersburg, FL
--