

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

February 2006

President's Message

By Karl Nurse

Friends,

We are starting off the year with a full plate of projects and issues to consider. The February meeting will include setting the priorities for the year, an update on the biggest project in our history – the Pinellas Living Green Expo, Council member Jamie Bennett will tell us about a plan that people have worked on for two years to deal with the problem of homelessness in Pinellas County and finally, we will discuss a contentious rezoning proposal on 66th Street.

This is the second year that we have brainstormed ideas at the January meeting and voted in February on the agenda for the year. I like the process because it is open, democratic and allows people to consider the range of issues before settling on a smaller list of priorities. The minutes of the January meeting, printed elsewhere in the newsletter, has the list that people suggested. Please take a look at these and be prepared to set priorities at the meeting.

The Pinellas Living Green Expo is moving along quickly. We are in the stage of organizing the event, soliciting sponsors, vendors and presenters for the information sessions. Frankly, I have never worked on a project where the response was so positive! We believe we will have an expo that will be a big draw and provide people with the kind of information to change how they use electricity, gas and water and save money. It is a perfect symbol of thinking globally and acting locally. We will happily accept volunteers to do the early work to make this a huge success.

Homelessness is a nationwide problem. Council member Jamie Bennett worked as part of a homelessness task force for the last two years to develop a plan to make a real difference on an issue that seems overwhelming. Please come and listen to the ideas.

Finally, we will finish discussing the proposed rezoning on 66th St. between 9th & 13th Ave N. The Sembler Company has a proposal for this property. The four closest neighborhood associations are heavily engaged in the pro's and con's on the project as well. The only thing I ask is for neighbors to discuss the issue without personal attacks. It is obvious that many people feel strongly about the proposal and CONA is happy to provide a forum for the issue. However, next month there will be other issues to deal with.

Our goal is simple: to make the neighborhoods of St. Petersburg a great place to live and leave to the next generation.

CONA Board Meeting Wednesday, February 15, 2006

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

Agenda Items:

CONA Business – Treasurer's Report
Pinellas Living Green Expo Update
CONA Citizen of the Month – Susan J. Ajoc
Councilman Jamie Bennett – Homeless 10 yr. Plan
CONA Vote on proposed 2006 Priorities
Sembler Development at 9th Ave and 66th St N.

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The Sembler Company is proposing a mixed-use project at the northeast corner of 66th Street and 9th Avenue North. The site is the former Notre Dame High School owned by the Catholic Diocese. The proposed project would consist of approximately 50 town homes, a neighborhood retail center of approximately 88,000 s.f., and a City park. The environmentally sound project will feature magnificent architecture and landscape buffering, as well as the first new neighborhood grocery store in over 20 years.

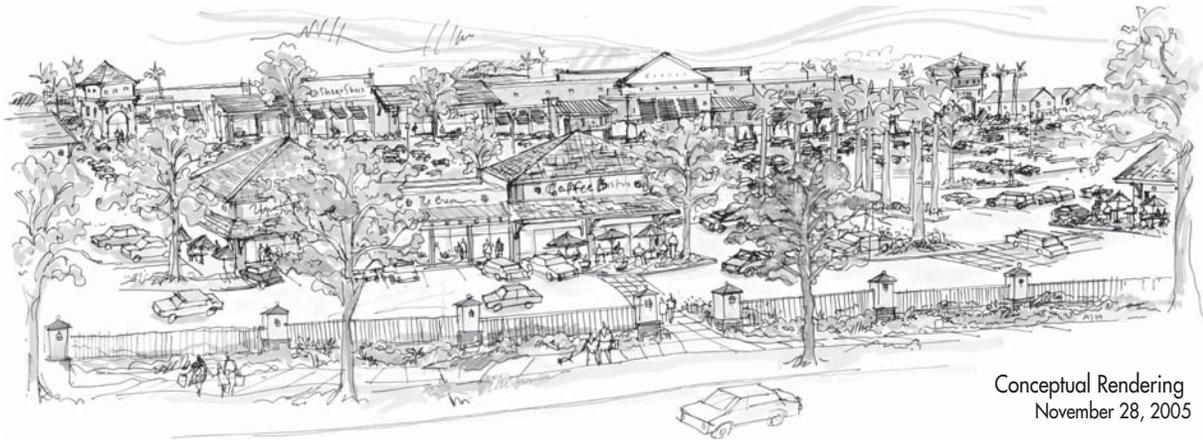
The Sembler Company has met on numerous occasions to listen to the input of neighbors and in response to that input, we have agreed to the following:

1. Sembler agrees to build a grocery store no larger than 50,000 feet.
2. Sembler agrees to remove the vehicular access point from 13th Ave. N. and provide pedestrian access only.
3. Sembler will provide open space, including drainage retention with landscape buffer, (approximately 260') from 13th Ave. to development line, parallel to post office property.
4. Sembler will incorporate the most current site lighting technology and use flat lens, shields, and low profile poles as well as buffering to eliminate lighting conditions to the neighbors.
5. Sembler has agreed to fund traffic-calming devices to be approved by Eagle Crest, Crossroads, and the City.
6. Sembler will coordinate with City transportation staff to design and permit right-in/right-out access as 65th Street and 9th Avenue North to eliminate cut through traffic through Eagle Crest.
7. Sembler will prohibit drive-thru fast food restaurants, bars/nightclubs, and any other nuisance uses.
8. Sembler agrees to provide and maintain extensive buffering which may include dense landscaping, decorative wall and fencing, and a landscape berm along 9th Avenue N.
9. Sembler has committed to design and construction of high quality, two-story town homes for sale.

The recommendations of St. Pete Vision 2020 provide that:

1. Projects should be mixed-use and that neighborhoods should be consistently and adequately buffered.
2. Neighborhood commercial should provide basic needs such as groceries, sundries, and dining. These centers should be designed to fit seamlessly within their surroundings in a mixed-use environment.

We believe our project personifies Vision 2020 and is exemplary of what development should be to improve the quality of life in the community. We believe that all neighborhoods would welcome such a project. We welcome the opportunity to answer your questions or provide further information.



Conceptual Rendering
November 28, 2005

66th Street North & 9th Avenue Property

The Neighborhood Response to Sembler Project - City File #PC-690

Four neighborhood associations and The Real Environmental Preserve Our Parks, Inc. oppose the application to change the Future Land Use and rezone +18 acres at 66th Street and 9 Avenue North to allow the Sembler Company to construct a shopping center and townhomes. Our reasons are discussed below. It is important to remember that we are not against development. The issue is land use, not site design which is only relevant if the land use is appropriate.

The site's existing zoning is residential (RS-100). As part of the City's Land Development Code update, the City itself is proposing a Neighborhood Suburban zoning for the site which is also a single-family residential designation. Both zonings are consistent with the development pattern of surrounding neighborhoods and show that this property is envisioned as residential. The proposed rezoning is inconsistent with Comprehensive Plan Policy LU2.8 to protect existing and future residential areas and the St. Pete Vision 2020 document which calls for strengthening and protecting the character of existing urban and suburban neighborhoods.

The Tyrone area has a surplus of commercial development to serve the needs of the neighborhood trade area. Three grocery store anchored shopping centers, with 400,000 square feet of commercial use, currently exist in the trade area (all less than 5-minute drive and walkable from adjacent residences). The Tyrone Activity Center is in the trade area. The applicant's consultant found 890,000 square feet of neighborhood-serving retail space within 10 minutes of the subject site; and this figure does not include the three existing shopping centers. The change to commercial would further commercialize our area, thereby promoting commercial sprawl. This is inconsistent with Comprehensive Plan policies to protect existing and future residential areas and restrict additional commercial land uses (Policy LU2.17 & Objective LU3.2). The over-commercialization of Tyrone Blvd and 66th Street is specifically recognized in with the St. Pete Vision 2020 document which states that "the abundance of this commercially zoned corridor space allows business to relocate instead of reinvesting in their existing location, which leads to blight."

The existing retail and office development pattern along 66th Street south of 13th Avenue North is low intensity. This pattern is an appropriate scale. The subject property could be developed with similar uses along 66th Street and residential to the east.

We support the redevelopment of the existing shopping centers and the redevelopment that is rapidly occurring in the Tyrone Activity Center (Tyrone Mall redevelopment, new Home Depot, Jo-Ann Fabrics, Home Store, Panera Bread and more). Establishing new commercial uses is an over-commercialization of the Tyrone area that will have negative impacts such as increased traffic, light pollution, noise and other activities detrimental to residential neighborhoods. Development on the subject site should reflect the established character of our neighborhoods (Policy LU 2.6).

The proposed land use change and rezoning are inconsistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan and Vision 2020 document and detrimental to our neighborhoods. We ask CONA to support us, your fellow neighborhood associations, support the Comprehensive Plan, and St. Pete Vision 2020.

Eagle Crest, Garden Manor, Jungle Terrace, Tyrone Landings and The Real Environmental Preserve Our Parks (REPOP)

CONA's January Leadership Dinner

CONA would like to thank the following companies for their contributions to our January CONA Leadership Class Orientation dinner.

- **CREATIVE CATERING/CAFE TEN-O-ONE** at 1001 First Ave N
for the wonderful sandwich wraps, coleslaw, and cookies.
- **CHICK-FIL-A** at 4241 4th St N
for the large platter of 40 great nuggets and tea.
- **PIZZA HUT** at 4001 4th St N
for the 40 superb wings and multiple cheese sticks.
- **GFS (Gordon Food Service)** at 3131 4th St N
for the 6 cases of soda.
- **SWEETBAY SUPERMARKET** at 1794 22nd St S
for the yummy veggie trays.
- **PUBLIX SUPERMARKET** at 200 37th Ave N
for the \$25 gift card.

Please patronize these companies that are willing to help their community. By working together, everyone benefits. We also would like to thank the RIVIERA BAY CIVIC ASSOCIATION which coordinated, picked up and delivered these donations to the dinner. And finally we would like to thank everyone who helped make this dinner a great success.

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Pinellas Living Green Expo – 2006 Science Fair Winners

Congratulations to three Pinellas Area students who participated in the Pinellas Regional Science & Engineering Fair. Their projects were judged to best represent our Living Green Expo tenets.

- First Place \$75 check
Heather Mooren
Heat Release from Waste (paper) Burn
- Second Place \$50 check
Nicolas Cerf
Efficient Water Heater
- Third Place \$25 check
Matthew Murphy
*Rising water temperature effect on
Coral Bleaching*

Shelly Schwarz, Conrad Weiser, Mo Eppley and Barbara Heck represented CONA / Pinellas Living Green Expo as judges. Each student's project was evaluated on the following criteria:

- Creative ability / originality
- Scientific thought
- Clarity
- Thoroughness
- Skill
- Display

We congratulate all students who participated in the 2006 Regional Science Fair held at Seminole Middle School February 4. The judges were overwhelmed with the quality of the exhibits, the student's knowledge of their subject and definitely their enthusiasm. We thank all who entered.

We also want to thank Robert (Bob) Orlopp, K-12 Science Supervisor, for inviting us to participate and award these Living Green prizes.

CONA 101

Something new is coming to your CONA Newsletter next month. We are honored to have a special "how to" column called CONA 101 written by our own "Professor Tom." After graduating from the CONA Leadership Class and guiding Jungle Terrace Assn. as its current president, "Professor Tom" will be giving everyone practical suggestions on how to organize and run a neighborhood association.

Some of the topics he may touch on in future columns:

Membership	<i>How to get 'em, how to keep 'em</i>
Meetings	<i>Wow 'em, not bore 'em</i>
Food	<i>Feed them and they will come</i>
Projects	<i>Find it, fund it, finish it</i>
Volunteers	<i>Hard to get, harder to keep</i>
Contacts	<i>The best . . . and the rest</i>

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CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - January 18, 2006

President Karl Nurse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m, and led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag.

- Seeing many unfamiliar faces in our audience, Karl invited each attendee to briefly introduce themselves by name and affiliation.
- City Councilman John Bryan then officiated in the swearing in of the elected CONA officers for 2006: President Karl Nurse, First V.P. Barbara Heck, Second V.P. Tom Killian, Secretary Conrad Weiser, and Treasurer Annie McWilliams.
 - Offering his congratulations to CONA and the new officers, Councilman Bryan enumerated many of the recent projects, initiated by City Council, that have enhanced the quality of life for our neighborhood residents.
- Karl then reviewed the priorities that CONA pursued in 2005, noting the successes in promoting these issues in our city last year.
 - Assisted by Cathy Wilson recording submitted themes, Karl called for proposals from the floor of issues, important to our neighborhood associations that we will compile as our "CONA Priorities for 2006". These will be formalized and confirmed at our February meeting.
- We then heard a review by Bob Jeffrey, (City- Urban Design & Historic Preservation), providing a wrap-up of the Land Development Regulations (LDRs), that CONA has cooperated in developing over the last two years. He outlined the schedule for the remaining steps for review and approval of the LDRs and fielded questions about the program that had its genesis in the CONA Vision 2020 Project.
 - In summation, he promised that the new LDRs would preserve the character of our existing neighborhood heritages while providing clearly defined rules for future developments, especially along the traffic arteries.
- Steve Plice [Jungle Terrace Civic] then gave us an update on the developing plans for the Pinellas Living Green Expo (PLGE), which will be hosted by CONA at the Coliseum in June.
 - Steve has been impressed by the enthusiasm of all of the organizations that he and Karl have solicited as supporters and sponsors of our Expo. To date, \$25,000 has been pledged by major sponsors such as Progress Energy. The list of exhibitor organizations is growing rapidly.
 - Some exhibits may be out of doors, notably hybrid automobiles.
 - A new web site has been setup by Mo Eppley where much information including advertising material is already available for downloading.
- We then moved to contrasting presentations by representatives of The Sembler Company and spokesmen of three contiguous neighborhood associations.
 - Attorney Joseph DiVito, (representing the Catholic Diocese of St. Petersburg), and Craig Sher of the Sembler Co. presented a PowerPoint display of their plans to develop an 18 acre parcel of land, currently owned by the Diocese, south of Thirteenth Avenue North along 66th Street. These plans will require approval of a zone change petition to permit the development of retail facilities, (most conspicuously a Publix Market), on this site now restricted to residential construction. They appealed for CONA support of their zone class change appeal.
- Challenging the proposed appeal for a zoning change to permit retail development were Lance Lubin of Eagle Crest Civic Assoc., John Healey of Garden Manor Neighborhood Assoc., and Dr. Ed Carlson of Jungle Terrace.
 - Though appreciative of many concessions offered by Sembler regarding traffic control, landscaping and a park area set aside, each objected to the change from the residential patterns of their neighborhoods into a commercial center, noting that there were currently three concentrated retail centers, (malls), within very short driving distance to residents adjoining the proposed development site. A neighborhood association has voted in opposition to the development despite Sembler presentations and concessions to win their support.
 - The three representatives encouraged our CONA members to support them and their neighborhoods in opposing the proposed zoning change
 - It was noted that there would be a hearing on the zone change petition at the Planning Commission on February 21st.
- Moved, (Wilson) to table discussion of the Sembler zoning petition until our next CONA meeting, (February 15th).
[Approved]
- Our President, Karl Nurse, took this opportunity to announce that V.P. Barbara Heck has agreed to serve as the new Editor of our monthly CONA Newsletter. He promised that our February issue of the newsletter will include a balanced presentation of the two opposing camps we heard tonight speaking of the development plans for the diocese's property.
 - Urging all representatives to pay their 2006 CONA dues before leaving, Karl adjourned the meeting at 9 PM.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary



Pinellas Living Green Expo

Saturday, June 17
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, June 18
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Coliseum, St. Petersburg

Pinellas Living Green Expo is a **FREE** educational event focusing on smart energy solutions. Participants will learn how to **save money, save resources, and protect our environment for future generations.**

www.pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org

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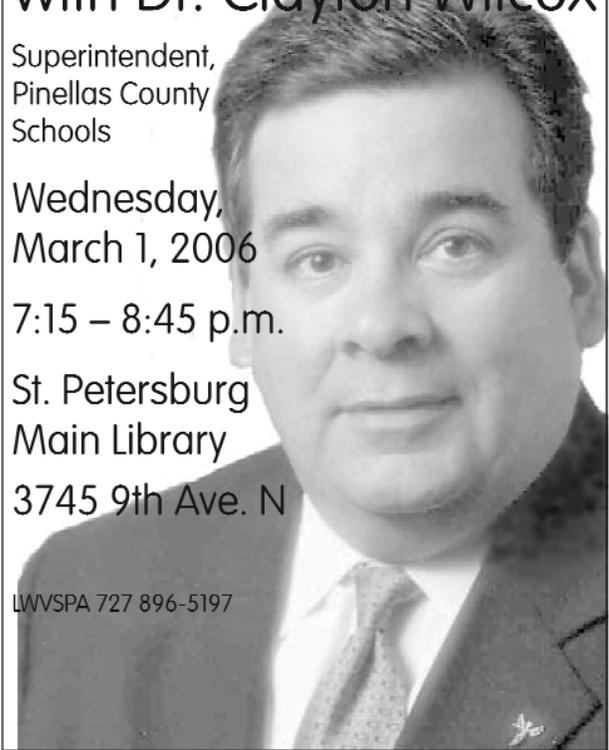
Superintendent,
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7:15 – 8:45 p.m.

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Frequently Called Numbers

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Codes Office: 893-7373

CONA Newsletter Deadlines

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CONA's First Citizen of the Month

It is fitting that our very first Citizen of the Month Award goes to a wonderful person who has worked tirelessly with all our residents to help build the neighborhood associations of St. Petersburg.

Susan J. Ajoc (otherwise known as Susie) is the diminutive dynamo and director of our city's Neighborhood Partnership Office. She and her staff now work with over 113 neighborhoods in the city. While we all know Susie in her work environment, here are some little known personal facts about Susie that may amaze you:

- Susie is a former military brat and has lived in California, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Mississippi and Florida and traveled to every state and several countries as a child.
- Susie is a Gator, graduating from the University of Florida with a Master of Arts in Urban and Regional Planning and from the University of North Florida with a Bachelor degree in Psychology and a minor in Chemistry.
- Susie was a gubernatorial appointee and served as the Student Member of the Florida Board of Regents in 1986 - 1987.
- Susie was a student lobbyist and the Student Government Liaison with all the campus organizations while at the University of North Florida.
- She is a Doorway Mentor having mentored in the Pinellas County School System for the past eight years.
- Susie is person of deep faith and spirituality and very active in several parish ministries at St. Mary Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church.
- Susie loves animals - has two cats and an 85 lb dog who walks her regularly!
- Susie is now a doting aunt - her 10 month old nephew is adorable.
- Susie loves to travel - ask her about her recent trip to Italy.
- Susie enjoys movies and live theater.
- Susie enjoys rollerblading on the Pinellas Trail and at Fort DeSoto.
- Susie is a dedicated distance walker and has competed in numerous races including a full marathon and several half marathons.

No wonder it is hard to keep up with her boundless energy. CONA would like to thank Susie for all she has done to foster and grow our neighborhood associations. Susie truly represents the spirit of CONA Citizen of the Month. Congratulations.

**The Council of Neighborhood
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