

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

March 2006

President's Message

By Karl Nurse

A packed house of CONA representatives voted at the February meeting on its priorities for 2006. As will be obvious from the list below, many of these issues are not items that will be solved in a year. However, it is very helpful to understand what the neighborhoods consider to be the most important issues so we can focus on them. We will attempt to schedule meetings and speakers to address these concerns during the year.

The 2006 priorities are:

1) **Policing issues** including – staffing, budgets, community policing and officer pay. City Council Chair Bill Foster will speak about policing issues at the March meeting. This is an opportunity to share your concerns. We hope to expand the Court Watch program this year to help the police and state attorney put away the repeat criminals.

2) **Environmental issues** including – environmental codes and enforcement, runoff, silting, dredging and permeable surfaces. A City of lakes, waterfront, wetlands and days of 11" of rain, has many issues. Last month a group that is organizing harbor cleanups came to ask for our help. The largest project we have ever attempted, Pinellas Living Green Expo, is going to connect thousands of people with concrete actions they can take to save power, fuel, water, money and the environment. Check out the web site: www.Pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org.

3) **Monitoring the LDR's or zoning.** The new city-wide rezoning ordinance passed the Planning Commission in February after six years of discussions! Bob Jeffrey, the City staffer in charge of

this huge effort, spoke to CONA in February to give us a status report. The Downtown Neighborhood Association has played a significant role in the new zoning for downtown. This rezoning process will take most of the year to work through the many approvals needed.

4) Tied – **Under grounding Utilities.** As long as Florida has hurricanes and communities want more attractive streets, we will discuss under grounding utilities. The PSC (Public Service Commission) is currently considering how to address this issue. This is an expensive and long term project. A number of beach communities are doing this at this time. St. Petersburg has placed utilities underground downtown and along some corridors like 34th St. because it is more attractive.

4) Tied – **Traffic Calming.** No issue causes more division in a neighborhood. The City is getting better every year at building devices that slow the traffic without ripping off your muffler. The problem is that most of us want to drive over the speed limit until we get two blocks from our home! We will renew conversations with the traffic calming staff about future plans and how to balance citizens conflicting desires. As the City's bike lanes and sidewalk system expands, this becomes an even more important safety issue.

These issues will keep us plenty busy during 2006. Volunteers are needed to work on any of these issues and projects. Thank you for your continuing efforts to make St. Petersburg a better city of neighborhoods!

CONA Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

The SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

CONA Business – Treasurer's Report

Living Green Expo Update

CONA Citizen of the Month

Councilman Bill Foster –

Update on City of St. Petersburg

Former Mayor David Fischer –

Community Foundation of Tampa Bay

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CONA 101 – Membership Meetings

I would like to share with you some of the things that I have seen over the last six years visiting eighty different Associations. Each year officers change at the different Associations and good programs are sometimes lost in the process. Here are some ideas that might help you in your neighborhood work. Please visit other Associations and see some of the most talented, dedicated, hard working individuals that this city has.

Where to hold your meeting: Consider using City Recreation Centers, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Mobil Home Clubhouses, City Resource Centers, Schools, Masonic Home, Woman's Club, Baseball Complex, Individuals Home, Sunshine Center, Nursing Home, Local Business, Restaurant, Polish American Club, and Banks.

How to get people to your meeting. Free food and beverages, Ice Cream Socials, Pasta Nite, Pizza Nite. Work with local Restaurants and caterers to sponsor your Association Meeting. Eagle Crest is supplied with pizza and soda year round by a local pizza chain. Edward White Hospital provides a free meeting room and supplies food and beverages for the N. Kenwood Association. Both of these Associations have very good attendance at their meetings. There are other associations that put on a nice meal for their members who attend the meetings. If you meet at a facility that has a kitchen, please consider doing something that will bring people in. Churches have used food for years to get people into their membership.

Promote your meetings. Submit meeting dates for Sunday publication in St. Pete Times Neighborhood Times Section to Paul Swider at pswider@sptimes.com and for the Wednesday publication in Neighborhood Times send info to Jon Wilson at jon@sptimes.com

- Submit meeting dates to The Gabber at news@gate.net
- Phone Tree call all dues paying members by phone before each meeting. Disston Heights has a phone committee and regularly gets fifty plus members at their meeting.
- Print up a sell sheet about your Association along with the years meeting dates and location. Put it in a frame and install it at key meeting areas, library, youth center, senior center, church.
- Promote your meeting in your newsletter
- Door hangers
- Promote your meeting on your neighborhood chat line
- Promote your meeting on your web site
- If you meet in a facility that has a street bulletin board be sure to put the meeting information there too.
- 18"x24" Meeting Signs put out 5 days before your meeting work great. Put in key locations, this is one of the best ways to get increased attendance. 25 signs printed one color both sides \$158.00 New City Sign.
- Work with your Neighborhood Planner, they can tell you what other associations are doing. They have plenty of ideas.
- Offer free prizes with a lucky ticket drawing. Get food stores and restaurants to donate certificates. Museums and city facilities like Sunken Garden will sometime donate a pair of passes for a drawing.

Setting up the meeting Room. The #1 thing that each meeting needs is a working microphone and speaker system. Please do your members a favor and let them hear what is being said. A must for all meetings. Purchase a used Karaoke unit for \$10.00 to \$15.00 at Boleys 6163 9th. Ave. N. Many units can use batteries for outside events. I use one for our Easter Egg Hunt and Pets in the Park. Make every speaker use the unit when they address the membership.

- Purchase a large banner that tells who you are. Display it in your meeting room and use it at all of your events.
- Set up a sign in table and put your friendliest people there.
* Use name badges to let members and guests know who each other are.

- Have an information table with literature about city activities and your projects.
- Make sure your meeting room is clean and organized.
- Have a suggestion box for people to make comments about the organization. You will learn a lot.
- I use a 28"x38" blackboard for my meeting Agenda. I list what is happening at the meeting that night. It is easy to see, easy to make changes on. I also use it at all of our events for announcements. Purchase a used unit and I think you and your members will be pleased.

Suggestions on how to run your meeting.

- Start on time. No one has respect for a president who wastes its member's time.
- Pledge to Flag
- Introduce yourself as the current President and explain tonight's agenda. You might want to introduce the officers and board members also.
- Introduce guests of the evening.
- President, Officers and Board members should dress properly. If you have association shirts please wear them to the meeting and to all events.
- Use Roberts Rules of Order as a guide to running your meetings.
- I like to run my meeting for 1 1/4 hours maximum. After 1 hour people start to get restless and some start to leave. Keep it interesting and keep it moving. Don't wear them out. Special issues like traffic calming, political night run longer.
- Your guest speaker should be given an allotted amount of time with questions and not be allowed to talk forever. There are many good speakers to call on, city, county and don't forget the businesses that advertise in your newsletter. Your advertisers appreciate the exposure and give good presentations. It makes renewal of their ads easier.
- Voting - Always use a ballot vote on key issues such as traffic calming, zoning votes and of course your elections. This is the only way a person will let you know their true opinion. It also gives you a very accurate count if the election is close.
- Keep your meeting interesting. You might consider combining your meeting with another association. Meeting at your location or theirs. I moved two of my meetings last year, one to Sunken Garden the other to Bill Gramley's Automotive. Do something different and people who normally don't attend meetings will come out. 88 members attended the meeting and tour of Sunken Garden.

If you have additional questions, comments or suggestions, please call "Professor Tom."

CONA 101

Grant Writing new Mentor Program !

Each year the city makes thousands of dollars available to qualified associations through the grant process – Neighborhood Partnership Grants, Police Forfeiture Grants, Arts Grants, etc. Many of you do not know where to start or how to write a grant. CONA would like to help you with this process.

CONA has a group of volunteers who have been successful in getting these types of grants. We will help you as you prepare your grant for submission. Remember, we are not replacing any of the Neighborhood Partnership or Police Grant workshops you must attend to qualify for submitting a grant. We are just another resource for you to use.

Please contact us at the CONA website www.stpeteconacona.com and look for the Mentor icon. No access to a computer? Leave a message with any CONA officer and a Mentor will call you back.

Neighborhood Partnership Grants Program

The Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant Program is designed to provide grant awards to neighborhood and business associations, organizations or groups of residents for specific improvement projects and strategic plans that build relationships and improve the community. These requests could include decorative lighting, general improvements, neighborhood plans, playgrounds, public art and youth initiatives. Last year, over \$200,000 in grant money was awarded to various neighborhoods.

Applicants may apply for grants up to \$25,000 (or \$35,000 for playgrounds). Each applicant must provide a match (in cash, labor, materials, supplies, services and/or maintenance) that equals or exceeds the funds requested.

Come and learn everything you ever wanted to know about this process at one of the following workshops. All workshops are held at the Neighborhood Partnership Building right behind City Hall. Attendance is mandatory at one of the two general meetings and at your project specific meeting if you are applying for a grant.

March 15	1PM or 6PM	(General meeting)
March 22	1PM or 6PM	(Lighting and signs)
March 28	1PM or 6PM	(Parks and arts)
March 30	1PM or 6PM	(Landscaping)
July 25	6PM only	(General meeting)

Each Association has now received via US Mail a copy of the grant application. Let's attend those workshops and apply for those grants.

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Harbor Day Initiative & Celebration

The Harbor Day Initiative is a community campaign, initiated by USF SP students, faculty, staff and administration to

- Clean up Bayboro Harbor
- Promote awareness of important environmental issues affecting our waterways and coastal areas
- Educate the community about the importance of litter and pollution prevention.

Bayboro Harbor is a designated Outstanding Florida Water area and is a recognized manatee habitat area. Bayboro Harbor is the endpoint for much of the City of St. Petersburg's watershed and storm water drainage system. The result is the accumulation of litter and pollution that contaminates our waters, endangers wildlife and is very unattractive.

The Harbor Day Celebration is an event to emphasize the value of our harbor and the efforts we are making as a community to restore and preserve it. **This year the Harbor Day Celebration is April 12, at University of South Florida campus in St. Petersburg.**

Here is what we can do to help. As a community, we can work together to foster an awareness and appreciation for our natural resources, reminding ourselves and others to take individual responsibility for our trash and decisions that may affect the integrity of our coastal ecosystems.

- Participate in April 18th Harbor Clean Up from 10-2PM at University of South Florida, Harborside lawn area.
- Participate in "Keep Pinellas Beautiful" Adoption Programs and marine-clean ups.
- Develop a comprehensive community plan to address storm water pollution.
- Encourage Florida Friendly landscape principles
- Support educational campaigns in the schools, community organizations and governmental institutions to raise community awareness concerning litter and pollution prevention

Together, we can make a difference !!!

www.stpt.usf.edu/coas/espg/seas/seas_index.html



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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CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - February 15, 2006

President Karl Nurse called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- We heard the Treasurer's Report of a current balance of \$3,003.52. [The report was accepted.] Karl expressed appreciation for our new Treasurer. He responded that member associations pay \$15.00 per year for the privilege of utilizing our CONA bulk mail permit. Mailings must be a minimum of 200 pieces.
- Danie Cutler of the St. Petersburg Campus of USF announced a Clean Up Celebration Day scheduled for April 12th. She encouraged our member associations to participate in coincident clean up projects throughout the city. The focus will be on reducing pollution introduced into our Tampa Bay Estuary by city storm water drains.
- Bobbie O`Malley of the Airport Advisors Group urged that we encourage City Council to accept the federal grants now available to advance developments at Albert Whitted Airport.
- The President greeted visiting City Councilmen James Bennett, and Jeff Danner.
- We then heard a presentation about the Court Watch Program from State Attorney Pat Siracusa. He praised the volunteer work of Ingrid Comberg, Carole Giffiths, Andy Garr and Cass Rael. Karl noted that Mayor Baker has promised to sit with our Court Watch volunteers at an upcoming trial.
- Steve Plice, (Jungle Terrace), Chairman of the Pinellas Living Green Expo (PLGE) Steering Committee provided an update on the developing plans for our Green Expo:
 - The Expo Project has been incorporated as a non-profit corporate entity.
 - The St. Pete Times has offered a matching grant of \$6,000 for advertising.
 - Clear Channel will contribute 10 highway billboard displays.
 - PSTA will "Wrap" 2 busses with our advertising message.
 - Major Sponsor Progress Energy plans to display a hydrogen-powered car.
 - Collaboration with the City and County are still in negotiation.
 - Steve solicited referrals to other sponsors or vendors seeking booths.
- Deputy Mayor Mike Dove came forward to read a plaque CONA has awarded to Susan Ajoc, Director Neighborhood Partnership Office, as CONA's first Citizen of the Month, for her long standing commitment to cultivating and empowering our neighborhood associations.
- A poll of members to establish the CONA Priorities for 2006 was distributed.
- City Councilman James Bennett and Beth Eschenfelder, Manager of Social Services Planning of the City Neighborhood Services Administration, distributed copies of a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness in Pinellas County.
 - The County Homeless now number 5,000 with about half in St. Petersburg.
 - Virginia Rowell, Jeff Danner, and Karl Nurse were recognized for their ongoing concern, during recent years, to find solutions to this problem.
 - It was noted that over 200 cities have developed similar long-term plans.
 - Over 80% of the homeless are burdened with mental issues.
 - Nearly 80% of local Emergency Room patients are homeless.
 - Councilman Bennett solicited the help of CONA and its member associations to identify solutions for the homeless problem, to provide volunteers in support roles and to refer families at risk to county agencies.
 - We were reminded of the phone help line "211" that taps into a wide variety of assistance resources. The Mayor's Action Line is another phone resource as is the Pinellas Coalition for the Homeless.
 - The Veterans Administration facility at Bay Pines has many services to offer homeless veterans, including domicile housing.
 - It was noted that the growth of homeless, (locally about 1,000 per year, and the shrinking of available housing as high rise condominiums sprout demand solutions in a time frame less than the ten year study offered.
 - Some cities have imposed special taxes, (e.g. diner's tax), to support the costs of their care for the homeless.
 - Local programs at St. Vincent DePaul, The Boley Centers, and Turning Point may be expanded to offer more assistance on the local scene, though Councilman Bennett asserted that no new care centers were planned at this time.
- Karl Nurse then announced the tabulation of our CONA Priorities Ballot for 2006:
 1. Police Staffing/Budget/CPO Program/Raises
 2. Environmental/Codes Enforcement/Runoff, Silting, Dredging, Permeable Surfaces.
 3. Monitoring LDR's

4. Underground Utilities

5. Traffic Calming – Noise – Quality of Life.

- Motion was made, (L. Lubin), to approve the application for CONA Membership by Real Environmental Preserve Our Parks (REPOP). [Motion failed]
- Our President then opened debate of the proposed land use rezoning of the property owned by the Catholic Diocese at 66th. Street and Ninth Avenue North. Karl pointed out that since a City Council hearing on this issue is offing, our City Council visitors were legally required to recuse themselves from our meeting.
- Speaking in opposition to the developer's, (Sembler Co.), rezoning application was John Healey of Garden Manor Neighborhood Association.
 - He cited objections to the proposed zoning change in a City Staff Report.
 - He pointed out several paragraphs in our city's Comprehensive Plan that would be violated by the developer's proposal.
 - He projected an unfavorable impact on efforts to revitalize other nearby shopping malls that are in decline.
 - Several additional paragraphs of the Vision 20/20 Proposal and the subsequent LDR's were cited as violated by the proposed rezoning.
 - Speaking for The Sembler Company, Craig Sher solicited CONA support for the proposed zone change that his organization has submitted to the city, (PC-690).
 - He noted that over 1,000 responses have been received by the city, via FAX, mail, and E-mail which support, by a 2 to 1 margin, the proposed redevelopment.
 - Sembler polled many area neighborhood associations to learn of their preferences for developing this site. Many accommodations were included in their plans including park areas and restriction of access from 13th. Avenue.
 - He questioned if opposing neighborhood representatives actually conducted a poll of their membership on this development issue?
- Karl then opened the floor to discussion of this issue while the CONA ballots were distributed. He noted that this was the first incident in which a local developer had come to solicit CONA support for a proposal being submitted to the Planning Commission.
 - It was suggested that the cost of the proposed Sembler town houses was beyond the reach of residents in the neighborhood impacted.
 - 66th Street is already overloaded and accident-prone.
 - Previous Sembler developments have been very favorable for the adjoining neighborhoods.
 - We don't need more commercial but more affordable residential development, but should revive failing older malls.
 - The accommodations offered by Sembler to the adjoining neighborhoods should be guaranteed by codification as binding deed restrictions.
 - Moved, (Lubin) That CONA supports our member neighborhoods in opposing the commercial rezoning petition for the 66th. Street Diocese Property. [Motion Approved – 28 For, and 6 Against]
- Moved, (Karpinski) CONA endorses the proposal by Councilman Richard Kriseman to allocate \$15,000 for city website status reports improvements and an additional \$50,000 in facilities for streaming video presentations of all council meetings on the city website. [Approved]

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

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CONA's Citizen of the Month

CONA's second Citizen of the Month Award goes to a very busy person who has touched so many lives since he moved to St. Petersburg. We are pleased and honored to present this award to David McEachern.

Here are some little known personal facts about David

- David was born in Lumberton, NC, but has been a St. Pete resident since 1977.
- He is married to Theresa McEachern.
- They have four sons, one daughter, 11 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.
- He served in the U.S. Army and then retired from the U.S. Postal Services.
- He is a member and Deacon at Mt. Zion Primitive Baptist Church.
- He is past Chairman of the Housing Roundtable.
- He is Chairperson of the Citizen/Police Council.
- He is President Emeritus of the St. Petersburg Neighborhood Housing Services Board of Directors serving as Board President from 1990-1997.
- He is Board President for the past ten years of the Citrus Groves Apartments.
- He served on the Council for Youth-Build.
- He is past President of the Harbordale Neighborhood Association.
- He served as CONA Vice-President and, over the years, on various Committees.
- He received the National Dorothy Richardson Award for Resident Leadership Development in St. Petersburg.

Askia Muhammad Aquil, Executive Director of St. Petersburg Neighborhood Housing Services, says David has helped dozens of families improve their credit history, become homeowners and fix up their residences. He has helped improve social conditions by working with neighborhood associations, other nonprofit organizations, financial institutions and City government. If St. Petersburg had just 10 more citizens like David, most of our neighborhood and community-based problems would be solved.

CONA would like to thank David for all he has done to help his neighborhood and St. Petersburg. Congratulations, David McEachern

IMPORTANT CONA Newsletter Subscription Information
Members: Please update your subscriber list today. Starting in May, we will only mail the CONA Newsletter to your association president and to your authorized representative. Thank you for your help.

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