

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

April 2006

President's Message

By Karl Nurse

Our top priority of the year is public safety, not surprisingly. The City Council voted 8-0 to perform the first outside management review in 18 years of the police department. Our hope is that we can learn from an outside perspective some lessons that the best departments are using to drive crime rates down. This is not a criticism of our police department, but learning from others is always a good practice. Good neighborhoods start with public safety. Then, we get to move on to "quality of life" issues.

Thank you for Council members Rick Kriseman, Jamie Bennett and Jeff Danner for being strong advocates of this outside review. Thank you to all City Council members for voting for the review. The areas to be looked are being discussed by the City Council members at this time. We will get an update at the CONA meeting as the scope and time table. We hope this will come directly from a council member.

The City voted last summer to seek to become a "green city". This is a comprehensive series of changes in city policies that reduce air and water pollution and use energy of all kinds more efficiently. The City has completed a benchmark survey of 118 current policies. Soon, the Mayor and the City Council will begin changing policies to move us towards a Green City. We will get an update at the April meeting.

Two weeks ago, I visited the Florida House in Sarasota with two members of City Council, Jeff Danner and Jamie Bennett, and Mike Connors, who is the lead staff person appointed by the Mayor to implement the Green Cities program. The Florida House is a demonstration house showing energy efficiently, hurricane protection, water conservation indoors and outdoors, locally produced building products, healthier home materials and new building materials. There were dozens of examples of things that could benefit the City and its citizens if they were widely adapted. If you get a chance to visit, you will come away with many ideas for your life. We will have many of these items at the Pinellas Living Green Expo in June at the Coliseum.

Finally, everyone is welcome to attend the CONA meetings. You do not have to be your neighborhood's representative.

CONA Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 19, 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

CONA Citizens of the Month

Pinellas Living Green Expo Update – Steve Plice

Green Cities Update – Councilman Rick Kriseman

Upcoming Police Management Review

Public Art - Ann Wykell – City of St. Petersburg

Americana Cove – Featured Neighborhood

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CONA 101 – Neighborhood Partnership

By: “Professor Tom” Killian

The Neighborhood Partnership Office was created under former Mayor David Fischer originally as a one person department reporting directly to Mayor Fischer. Mike Dove was its first director. The position was created and appointed in July and August 1993. The position was expanded to a division in October 1993 when 4 other individuals from throughout the organization were transferred to assist. Susie Ajoc was one of the four.

In 1997 the division was separated from the Mayor's Office and a Neighborhood Services Administration was formed. **Susie Ajoc took over as Manager of Neighborhood Partnership.** The Partnership Office is located in the Old Technical School building at 440 Second Avenue N. behind City Hall. It was built in 1902 and was completely renovated two years ago. It is a designated historic landmark.

Neighborhood Partnership Primary Functions are as follows:

Neighborhood Planning

There are now 31 (City Council) approved Neighborhood Plans in place.

Operation Commitment

Implementation of neighborhood plans

Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grants

\$200,000+ annually for neighborhood improvement projects

Liaison between the neighborhoods and city

Staff is assigned to geographic areas of the city to assist in responding to resident concerns and or providing appropriate contacts/resources.

Susie Ajoc - Northeast from 1st. Ave N west to approximately 49th St

Regina Wade - Midtown

Bernice Darling - Ponce de Leon

Terese Hillard - Downtown and south around Midtown to Perry Bayview

Andy Garr - West of 49th Street

City Teams

Problem solving teams involving frontline staff (e.g. CPO, codes investigator, PSR, planner, resident) to address day to day issues. Policy and ordinance changes have occurred as a result of the City Team meetings (e.g. sidewalk repair, impound ordinance)

Association List

Maintain city list of neighborhood associations, contacts, meeting dates, locations.

Additional Responsibilities include:

Coordination of volunteer efforts

Carefest (faith based), Scrubbin da' Burg (Summer teen camps)

Faith-based Initiatives

Building partnerships between faith-based organizations and neighborhoods.

Youth initiatives-partner with TASCOS and Youth Council on a variety of projects

They have sound equipment and a variety of games for children. 4-Turn around St. Petersburg: anti-drug march initiative, call Andy Garr 893-7885.

Neighborhood Cleanups

Call Regina Wade at 893-7885 to schedule neighborhood cleanup with Sanitation.

CONA 101 Continued on next page

CONA 101 Continued on from previous page

Americana Cove (formerly Mobel Americana) has a history dating back to 1961 when the first mobile or manufactured homes were erected on the site at 7201 North First Street. Americana Cove became an adult only community in 1967 and in March 1993 was purchased by the residents. It is located in the northeast section of the city just north of downtown St. Petersburg.

Today some 758 lots are occupied with one fourth of them located on canals or small lakes that lead to Riviera Bay and then to Tampa Bay. A new channel to Riviera Bay has made boating more popular with access to Tampa Bay with no bridges. For those who don't have a private dock, boat slips are available to rent near the clubhouse. There is also an RV, boat trailer and van storage area in the park.

The park has a 24-hour guarded entrance. Amenities include a Clubhouse used daily by 27 activity groups, Hobby Shop with shared power tools, shuffleboard courts and a heated swimming pool. The clubhouse has a fitness center, billiards room, and a modern kitchen. A courtesy van makes weekday trips to a local shopping center.

A variety of organized and other recreational and social activities are available to residents including dinners, bingo and a Sunday evening church service featuring a regular choir and visits by ministers from various denominations.

The Shuffleboard Club competes regularly with other park groups, and The Par Seekers, a golf group, plays a full winter season at the Mainlands Golf Course in Pinellas Park and other locations. The Garden Club, the Old Timers Social Club and Crime Watch are just some of the smaller groups that are active. The residents also sponsor a bazaar and a 'White Elephant' sale annually to assist the activity fund for many of the groups.

Florida Neighborhoods Conference - One of the founding members of the Florida Neighborhoods Conference; host of 1999 conference. *Task Forces/Committees

Neighborhood Partnership staff is also involved with the following:

Florida Design out Crime Association (FDOCA)(Formerly Florida CPTED Network)

Director is planning liaison with the Executive Board

Triple E (Engineering, Education and Enforcement)

Multi-disciplinary team to address pedestrian vehicular safety concerns

School Safety Committee

Meet to discuss school safety issues (e.g. sidewalk locations)

CPTED Task Force

Multi-disciplinary team that conducts Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) surveys

Special Assessment Committee

Review of special assessments

Homeless Task Force

Neighborhood Partnership is supported with your tax dollars. They are there to help you make your association a success. Please call on them for advice and use all the available services they offer.

Please also take advantage of the partnership grants which can be used for Signs, Lighting, Landscaping and Art Grants. Work with your Neighborhood Planner and your Public Service Representative. Both are knowledgeable and very helpful. Also remember that CONA has a Grant Mentor program to assist you in preparing your grant application. Send an e-mail request to the CONA website and we will put you in contact with someone who can help you.



Pinellas Living Green Expo

**Save Money.
Save the Environment.**

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FREE Admission

Saturday, June 17
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday, June 18
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
The Coliseum, St. Petersburg

The **Pinellas Living Green Expo** is a **FREE**, fun-filled family event that helps residents make informed decisions and take action to lead more healthy and sustainable lives with less impact on the environment. This two-day event will provide information, ideas, resources, products and motivation to live more sustainably

Still accepting applications for Exhibitors!

www.pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org

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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.stpetecon.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.

NOTICE OF TAX INCREASE

By David Zachem

Rep. Frank Farkas has introduced HJR 39 which will result in a tax increase for every Homesteader in Florida. This proposed constitutional amendment will give to commercial property the same benefit that "Save Our Homes" gives to homesteads, which wipes out the advantage homeowners receive and raises the mill rate for all.

You should remind every association member that they should call Rep. Farkas and ask him to withdraw the measure (727-893-9855). His staff may attempt to distract you with support for "transportability" which many homeowners support, but this is another Representative bill and would be a "killer" if tied to the Farkas tax increase. They will complain that small businesses are getting hit with high assessments which is true. But remember, small business get big tax breaks on their corporate tax that homeowners do not get. Further, it is business that is in a better position to impact elected officials in the budget process and they are non-existent in that process !!!



Pinellas Living Green Expo

**Still accepting
applications for Exhibitors!**

www.pinellaslivinggreenexpo.org

**Click on Media to Download flyers
and ads to use for your newsletters
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association meetings.**

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CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - March 15, 2006

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

- ◆ It was moved, (McEachern) to approve the Minutes of our February 15th meeting as published in our Newsletter. [Approved]
- ◆ Treasurer Annie McWilliams reported a current balance of \$3,419.93. She also noted that there are now 42 dues paid associate members.
- ◆ President Karl Nurse welcomed the return of Childs Park to our Council. He also announced a meeting at Coquina Key, March 28th, to discuss a Mooring Project in Big Bayou. We were told a program at the Weedon Island Nature Preserve on March 22nd featuring a renowned expert, Dr. G. Vargas.
- ◆ V.P. Barbara Heck discussed the advantage of requesting the St. Pete Times Neighborhood News Columnist, Paul Swider, to emphasize, in bold print, the names of the neighborhood associations he is reporting about as well as including some data on meeting agendas. Both features were practiced in that news column in the months and years past.
- ◆ Karl read a text describing the work of our Court Watch Project that he urged our member associations to copy in their monthly newsletters.
- ◆ Our President then introduced former Mayor David Fischer who made a very interesting presentation in behalf of the Community Foundation of Tampa Bay. As Foundation President he provided much information on their operations.
 - This is one of over 800 similar Community Foundations in the USA.
 - Started in 1964, our Foundation has amassed \$120 million dollar endowment from over 400 donors. Last year they gifted \$8.5 million among 80 not-for-profit recipients.
 - Because they gift only from earnings, never from capitol, gifts to the Foundation are perpetual, "Forever"! Unlike fiduciary trusts, the Foundation can risk losses to "Take a chance" in supporting worthy projects. The Foundation's assets are protected from all creditors.
 - The Foundation will negotiate matching, (\$1 for every \$3 collected), grants with other groups fund raising projects including programs proposed by neighborhood associations.
- ◆ Steve Plice, Chair of the PLGE Steering Committee then provided an update of our organizing efforts for the upcoming Pinellas Living Green Expo.
 - Pinellas County Government has become a major sponsor.
 - Steve displayed a check for \$2,500., our downpayment for leasing the Coliseum. He noted that no discount from their full fee has been offered.
 - We were too late to appeal to some sponsors so we must begin our campaign and planning for 2007 and perhaps 2008.
 - We have commitments for 20 to 25 exhibitor booths so far.
 - Six other American cities have had such Green Expos in the last 5 years.
- ◆ Vice President Tom Killian asked David McEachern to come forward to receive our CONA Citizen of The Month Award Plaque. David offered a very cogent commentary in his words of acceptance and appreciation.
- ◆ Tom then called for candidates for Neighborhood of The Month Awards for future dates on our calendar. Americana Cove was suggested by Conrad.
- ◆ We were reminded that the City Council Meeting, tomorrow night at 6 p.m., would mark one of the concluding hearings of the LDR's Development Project that has extended over the last 7 years.
- ◆ We next heard from David Zachem, speaking for an organization called the Ad Val Orem Group. His message was that a legislative effort to extend the evaluation caps, (currently sheltering homeowners under "Save Our Homes"), to cover business property development as well, will, in fact push our property taxes out of reach and destroy the protection originally intended. He urged us to contact Senator Fascino and Representative Farkas to voice our opposition to this legislative revision.....that the Governor cannot veto! Mr. Zachem promised to provide a summation of his position for our Newsletter.
- ◆ The President read a letter to CONA from the Juvenile Welfare Board describing their many supportive social programs and noting their continuing need for volunteers. They requested a CONA representative for their supervisory council.

- ◆ Aimee Bennett, R.N., then addressed our meeting presenting the multifaceted outreach programs of Edward White Hospital.
 - We heard of the close support the hospital has provided for Phil Whysong's North Kenwood Neighborhood Association. The hospital would like to be involved with other neighborhoods as well.
 - They have outreach programs for area businesses and employers.
 - Major seminars or brief programs to supplement neighborhood association meetings are offered.
 - Staff presentations are provided by Physicians, Therapists, Nurse Practitioners, R.N.s, and Dieticians who will visit your groups and sites.
 - Advertising announcements for such meetings are provided for participating neighborhood newsletters.
- ◆ Returning our focus to the CONA Priorities for 2006, Karl noted our success in winning support at City Council for a Council directed independent review of Police Department Operations. He introduced Councilman Bill Foster who reviewed the budget concerns they cope with and recognized the problems faced by a perpetually under staffed Police Department.
- ◆ With the assistance of Officer George Loftopn, Councilman demonstrated the new Taser weapons that he promoted in the program to equip all city officers with this modern crime deterrent weapon.
- ◆ Neighborhood Partnership Director, Susan Ajoc reminded us of the series of Grant Workshops currently scheduled for Matching Grant applicants.
 - This year's deadline for grant applications is September 8th.
 - Karl invited neighborhoods planning to apply for city grants to contact CONA, via our website, or by speaking to any CONA Officer, if they would like to request support from our grant mentoring program. Not a substitute for the Neighborhood Partnership Workshops or city staff assistance, the CONA Program seeks to pair neighborhoods unfamiliar with the grant request procedures with experienced, successful grant writers willing to help.
 - Susan also appealed to all neighborhood leaders to respond to the R.S.V.P. invitations for the April sixth "Neighborhood Social."
- ◆ Under New Business:
 - Riviera Bay Civic Association announced a weekend, neighborhood-wide Garage Sale from March 31st. through April 2nd.
 - Barbara Magada, (Americana Cove) announced that the last remaining Police Resource Center on the north side would be closed April 15th. after 10+ years of community service due to a funding short fall. [Barbara is currently the Manager of this Resource Center.]

Our meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

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CONA's Citizen of the Month

CONA's April Citizen of the Month Award actually goes to three outstanding people who share a long history of helping their neighborhoods. CONA would like to welcome the following outstanding Citizens of the Month (in alphabetical order).

Please congratulate:

Theresa McEachern
Steve Plice
Libby Steele

In addition to being officers and leaders in their local neighborhood associations, they also assumed officer duties with CONA for many years. Theresa as VP, Steve as VP and Libby as Treasurer.

We are indebted to them for providing strong leadership, guidance and sound advice to all of us.

Thank you Theresa, Steve and Libby.

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.

**The Council of Neighborhood
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