

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

October 2006

President's Message

By Karl Nurse

First, a few pieces of good news that we may have heard. The "Green Cities" program in which participating governments make dozens of changes in policies and practices to save energy, water, money and the environment is moving ahead quickly. Mayor Baker has directed staff to "go for the gold" level ranking. It would be the first in the State. Pinellas County has hired a full time "sustainability" person to develop the County's program. The City of Dunedin passed the program in September and is getting started. The City of Seminole is investigating passing a fertilizer ordinance designed to reduce algae blooms and red tide growth caused by excessive nitrogen runoff in water. Clearly, local governments are trying to shift policies so that Florida can sustain the impact of a thousand new residents everyday! CONA has played a role in encouraging these efforts.

This brings me to what is the purpose of CONA. Contrary to the phone requests I get every month, it is not a vehicle to help companies sell a product. We do not endorse candidates for office. We do not tell neighborhoods how to run their associations. CONA needs to perform two tasks: speak for neighborhoods on issues that cross neighborhood boundaries and to help train and grow the next group of neighborhood leaders to lead their associations. The task of growing leaders is performed through a CONA Leadership program which is more than a decade old. Every month, at the CONA meeting, neighborhood leaders also spend time learning from each others efforts. Articles in the newsletter attempt to help shorten the learning curve as well.

It is speaking out on City or Countywide issues that get most of the attention, both good and bad. Sometimes it is our job to complain loudly and endlessly in an attempt to get government to act. This does not win us friends. However, it is clear that many neighborhoods number one need is for better policing. This is why CONA's number One issue continues to be crime. We hope the police review will provide a path that leads to more effective efforts to fight crime. We hope the new city program in Childs Park will have significant positive impacts, starting with crime reduction. We are pleased that the County will have passed (by the time you read this) an ordinance to stop the sale of "drug accessories". Thanks, to Commissioner Ken Welch for leading this effort and to our Cass Rael for serving as our rep on the committee that developed this new ordinance.

The long effort to update our zoning or land development regulations will finish this year and will help the older, traditional neighborhoods in the continuing need to redevelop, rehab and rebuild. Our corridors will improve over time as result of these new regulations. CONA volunteers gave hundreds of hours on this project. The PSTA is rolling out a 20% service expansion over the next nine months which will help as well.

THANK YOU for your unpaid work to leave this a better community than we found it. It is a great job we have!

CONA Board Meeting Wednesday, October 18, 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 Spotlight – Bayou Highlands Neighborhood Association
CONA Leadership Classes
Pinellas County Commissioner – John Morroni
Updates – PLGE

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CONA 101 – Your Neighborhood Plan & City Team Meetings

By Tom Killian

Of our 110 Neighborhood Associations, thirty-two have adopted Neighborhood Plans. Our city urges all neighborhoods to work with the Neighborhood Partnership Office to develop a neighborhood plan for their area.

A Neighborhood Plan is a map developed by residents and the Partnership Office for improving and realizing your Neighborhood's short and long term desires. The Neighborhood Plan consists of the following eight areas:

- Crime and Public Safety
- Housing, Community Codes & Appearance
- Commercial and Industrial
- Parks and Recreation
- Landscape and Neighborhood Identity
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Storm water Pollution Prevention and Aquifer Recharge.

The Neighborhood Plan is funded with a Neighborhood Partnership Grant. A consulting firm works with the Association and the Partnership Office to develop the plan. Once developed, the Planning Commission and the City Council must approve the completed Neighborhood Plan.

Developing your plan can take a year or longer. Committees meet for each of the eight areas and discuss suggestions from residents. Large charts of suggestions are hung on the wall at your meeting place and are voted on. The city will send out a survey to all residents in your area which will ask for suggestions on the eight categories. The survey also asks for residents comments about your area. The benefit of a Neighborhood Plan is that, when it is completed, all future Presidents and Officers will know what is wanted by the residents.

Once the Plan is completed and accepted, you will start having City Team meetings on a regular basis. The meetings will focus on your developed plan and you will start checking off the items in the plan that have been completed. The City Team will consist of your designated association members (Officers/Board members), your Neighborhood Planner and various city departments. At different times, your CPO, Traffic Manager, Public Service Representative, Codes Manager and others may attend.

The city wants to help you improve your area and these meetings give you the opportunity to speak directly to people who can help you achieve your goals. In addition, CONA can answer questions about Neighborhood Plans and provide mentors to help you through the process. Don't hesitate to ask.

Neighborhood Nite at Tropicana Field

By Tom Killian



250 neighbors from 15 associations attended the final Devil Rays home game on September 25. The Yankees defeated our Rays 16-1 before a crowd of 24,000. This was the CONA's (Council of Neighborhoods Associations) second trip this year to Tropicana Field. In July, we had 311 neighbors attend the Baltimore game.

An added feature is the new Stingray touch tank in center field which houses about 20 Stingrays. The public can arrange a 10 minute tour of the tank and hand feed the animals. This is a good opportunity for the whole family to learn about these interesting creatures. Take advantage of this new free attraction because the Stingrays will return next year.

Our city has a big investment in Tropicana Field and the Ray's. We should support them because they bring in people who spend money in our town and help our economy. This year we have seen a fan friendlier Ray's group this year who have given, free parking, allow certain food items to be brought into the stadium, spent money on stadium improvements, brought in the Ted Williams Hitting Museum and the new Stingray Tank. Let's fully support them in the future. They have made St. Petersburg a Major League City.

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2007 CONA Leadership Program – 15th Year!

Applications are now being accepted for the 2007 CONA Leadership program. Classes will begin in January and run thru May 2007, culminating in a graduation dinner celebration. This program was developed to ensure that St. Petersburg has a continuing base of knowledgeable and talented people ready to step into leadership positions.

The CONA Leadership Program consists of eleven classes, providing in-depth coverage of topics such as city government and city services, crime and neighborhoods, diversity, effective meetings and communications, historic bus tour, county government, and quasi-judicial hearings. Students have the opportunity to meet and converse with many community leaders throughout the program.

The program fee is \$75 which covers all classes, including the historic bus tour and lunch, and the graduation dinner. The deadline for applications is November 30, 2006. Checks should be made payable to 'CONA Leadership' and mailed with your completed application to:

Patricia Guaveia
Committee Co-Chair
945 Monterey Blvd NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33704
727-550-2012

For questions or additional information, please call committee co-chairs Ingrid Comberg 727-821-2192 or Patricia Guaveia 727-550-2012.

We encourage the CONA representatives to spread the word throughout their neighborhoods and to refer interested applicants.

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Candidate Forum

State Senate District 16 & State House District 52

Come hear candidate views on issues that are important to you.

When: Wednesday, October 25 7:00pm – 8:00pm
(Light refreshments will be served at 6:30 pm)

Where: Sunshine Senior Center
330 5th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701

The event is FREE! No reservations are required. For additional information, or to obtain a Voter Guide, call the AARP Florida state office at 1-866-595-7678, or visit us online at www.aarp.org/fl.

Nomination Committee

Your inputs are solicited:

- Volunteer to serve on Nominations Committee.
- Nominate a candidate for our slate of officers.
- Offer your name as a candidate for office

Nominating Committee Chair

Cathy Wilson

823-0863 or catgwna@tampabay.rr.com



CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center September 20, 2006

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

- ◆ Karl introduced our two political candidate guests, inviting each to provide a brief introduction to their political campaigns: Bill Heller, [for State House, District 52], and Pat Siracusa, [Circuit Court Judge, Group 32].
 - Moved, [Eppley], to hold a joint Candidates Forum with the League of Women Voters. [Approved]
- ◆ Greg Karpinski, (Magnolia Heights), gave an explanatory presentation about The CONA Leadership Program.
 - Application form is downloadable from our CONA Website.
 - December 15th is the application deadline for 2007.
 - Greg would welcome the opportunity to give his presentation to any of our association member's meetings.
 - We learned that many neighborhoods sponsor their applicants to the CONA Leadership Program.
- ◆ Cass Rael, (North Kenwood), informed us of the Drug Paraphernalia Task Force, urging us to attend a county commissioner's hearing, on October 10th and to contact the commissioners to express our support for this program, via FAX, Phone, or E-mail. [Commissioner Ken Welch -kwelch@pinellascounty.org]
- ◆ We next heard from Barbara Hawkins and Jeff Frank, (Greater Pinellas Point), about the fifth annual Boyd Hill Halloween Fun Trail, attended, last year, by over 5,000 participants. Extending over 3 nights this year, [Oct. 27-29, from 5 to 10 PM], there will be 5 "Haunted Houses" to visit. Contributions of Kid's Candy will be collected at our October CONA meeting.
- ◆ We then heard a presentation about our Featured Neighborhood, Live Oaks provided by Mariella Stevens, (Pres.), and V.P. Jeff Frank. Their impressive successes were well documented with a Power Point Slide Show.
- ◆ A trio of speakers, (Bobbi O'Malley, Dan Thompson, and Jack Tunstill), then invited all to attend the Albert Whitted Air Fest, October 21st and 22nd. The theme of this year's show will be "Salute To The Military" and will include participation of units from the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard.
 - We also heard a brief history of the airfield and of plans for a new 4.5-acre city park adjoining a new terminal building.
- ◆ Cathy Wilson, Chair of the Nominations Committee recognized the other committee members, Cheryl Greenwood, and Will Michaels, and appealed for nominations or for volunteers to assist her committee. They committee currently lists Darden Rice as a candidate for First V.P., April Gausman, and Keith Locke candidates for Treasurer, and Conrad Weiser standing for Secretary.
- ◆ Karl Nurse provided an update of our plans for the Pinellas Living Green Expo of 2007.
 - Again, the Expo is on Father's Day weekend, June 16th and 17th.
 - Most major sponsors have signed on in advance and will include St. Petersburg. New 501(C)3 tax-exempt status will help enlist sponsors and vendors for next year.
 - St. Petersburg is progressing with their efforts to earn "Green City Certification", and Dunedin has now applied to.
- ◆ Annie McWilliams, our Treasurer, gave her report of a current bank balance of \$2,365.45 plus undeposited revenue from ticket sales to the Devil Rays Game.
- ◆ The Chairman recognized City Council Member Leslie Curran, who spoke to us briefly and responded to questions.
 - Council has approved the 2007 Budget.

- There will be a hearing, tomorrow on new ordinances covering provisions for the handicapped.
 - Round 3 of the hearings on Penny for Pinellas revenue, [at Gulfport Casino], where residents can propose their favorite projects for “Penny” funding.
 - Council is very enthusiastic about the Albert Whitted airport developments.
 - The RFP for the Police Department review has been issued. At least six consulting firms are expected to reply.
 - It was noted how important the implementation of policy revision recommendations of this police review has become, for within 5 years, with current practices, scheduled retirements will leave the department with a large majority of inexperienced officers.
- ◆ President Karl Nurse, speaking from his position on the Board of the PSTA, [just appointed to another 4 year term], gave a brief insight of new bus routes being planned for Central Avenue.
 - ◆ Karl also appealed for volunteers to support a redraft of our CONA Bylaws. Currently, the committee includes Cathy Wilson, Ingrid Comberg, Theresa McEachern and Cass Real.
 - Revisions must include reference to our 501(C)3 tax exemption status application, [typically requires 6 months].
 - We hope to have the revised bylaws ready for voted approval at our December election meeting.
 - ◆ V.P. Tom Killian encouraged all to attend the joint CONA/Jungle Terrace Picnic on October 28th at Walter Fuller Park, 7891 26th Avenue North, Behind the Walter Fuller Center, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. He encouraged members to contribute door prizes.
 - ◆ Tom also reminded us that the next CONA Leadership class would begin in January for 11 sessions with a fee of \$75.
 - ◆ Will Michaels spoke briefly of the activities of our CONA Historic Preservation Committee.
 - ◆ Judy Ellis, (Lakewood Estates), spoke supporting the use of “Police Soft Letters”. Though not yet used in St. Petersburg, other cities have found this complaint report to offenders, involving no indictment or penalty, has been effective to reform citizens whose conduct detracts from “Quality of life” issues in a community.
 - ◆ We were invited to support the “Silent Auction”, charitable fundraiser, for the Sunshine Center on November 18th.

We adjourned our meeting at 8:40 PM to enjoy the ice cream dessert provided by Isla Del Sol Owners Association.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

CONA Neighborhood Picnic

Saturday October 28, 2006 - 11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Walter Fuller Park - 7891 26th Ave N



2006 Officers

President

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572-9311 Ext. 24
karl@baytechlabel.com

First Vice President

Barbara Heck
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Second Vice President

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Conrad Weiser
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Treasurer

Annie McWilliams
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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

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Featured Neighborhood – Bayou Highlands

By Mary Darling, President

Bayou Highlands was started by a group of neighbors who came together concerned about the crime in the neighborhood. They met with a city representative who sent out post cards to the neighborhood to see if there was any interest in forming a neighborhood association. The first meeting was in January of 2001. It was decided there was enough interest and Bayou Highlands Neighborhood Association was formed. Bylaws were set up and the association became incorporated with the help of CONA. Officers were volunteers until the first elections in December.

The following has been accomplished:

- A lower crime rate was reported by the police department.
- New sidewalks, streets, curbs and improved lighting throughout the neighborhood.
- Park benches along Lake Maggiore Blvd.
- People in the neighborhood are working hard to improve their homes.
- The Association applied for and received a city grant for neighborhood signs. Our beautiful signs were designed by artist Ed Mann who lives in the neighborhood.
- A newsletter was started and meeting notification signs bought with proceeds from a police forfeiture grant

The following are ongoing projects of our association.

- We now have an annual fun day/yard sale. The proceeds go toward running the association.
- Every December we have our Neighbors Helping Neighbors. At our dessert social we give a grocery check to a family in need for the holidays.
- We had a neighborhood clean up where members went to neighbors who were unable to clean there yards and cleaned them. The city now provides a yearly neighborhood clean up free to the residents.
- Last year we started Trunk or Treat on Halloween for the children in the neighborhood. It was a big success.

We are currently working toward a city grant to get decorative lightening along Lake Maggiore Blvd South. This is where we hold all of our functions. Our motto is to have fun. We hold informal yet informative meeting. The way we have been able to accomplish the above is by having an outstanding board and getting people from the neighborhood involved.

**The Council of Neighborhood
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