

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

March 2008

Seeking Home of the Year Award 2008 Nominations

One of the activities of the City Beautiful Commission has been the City Beautiful Awards Program. This program seeks to recognize building design. Categories vary from year to year, and generally include businesses and professional offices, places of worship, multilevel dwellings and annual categories such as neighborhood streetscape or special beautification projects.

Last year a new category of "Home of the Year" was added. This landscaping award recognizes outstanding achievement in residential properties for exterior curb appeal, landscaping design and yard maintenance, and overall contribution to the character of the neighborhood. Each Neighborhood Association may submit one nominee from within its boundaries to the City Beautiful Commission for consideration. Entries are due by July 15, 2008. The award will be given at the City Beautiful Annual Beautification Awards held in October.

I. Basic Rules

- A. Property must be within city limits
- B. One home can be submitted by each Neighborhood Association
- C. Landscape must be in place for one full year
- D. Judges must not be local residents

II. Judging Criteria

- A. Overall curb appeal
- B. Professionalism in landscape, design, color, and balance
- C. Quality of landscape and building maintenance

- D. Preservation of trees and natural amenities
- E. Contribution to character of the neighborhood

Last year there were nine nominations. The winner was Alice Roess, 401 Appian Way NE, Snell Island. There were also two award of merit winners. They were Wendy Wesley and Kevin Bailey, 1819 12th Street N, Euclid-St. Paul and Alan and Sharon Pulnik, 163 20th Avenue S, Old Southeast.

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This year we are hoping to expand on the number of entries. We are asking for your assistance in supporting this program and assist us in distributing the information to all neighborhood associations.

An application is attached. Additional copies may be made or you may contact the St Petersburg Parks Department to have some mailed to you. You can also print an application from the City of St Petersburg Web's site: www.stpete.org/parks/citybeautiful.htm .If you have any questions, please call the Parks Department at 893-7335.

CONA Board Meeting

March 19, 2008

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 - Updates
CONA Citizen of the Month
Preserve Our Waterfront and Wallets - Steve Lange

Important Upcoming Event:

April 13 - CONA Nite at the Trop
April 16 - CONA General Membership Meeting
May 3-4 - Pinellas Living Green Expo (PLGE)
June 26-28 - FL Neighborhoods Conference

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CONA's 2008 Mentoring Program

CONA wants to help your Neighborhood Association overcome some hurdles you might face as you grow. We have a wonderful group of very knowledgeable people who are ready to help you. Over the past years, each Association has faced similar issues and found solutions appropriate to their needs. Below are just a few of the topics we cover:

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Neighborhood plans | Grant writing |
| Crime Watch | Codes issues |
| Annexation | Zoning issues |
| Traffic calming | Qualifying as a 501 c (3) – tax exempt |

Now, we won't be doing the project for you. However, we will give you sound advice on how to proceed. We can help you identify your options. We can provide appropriate City and business contacts. We will help you monitor your progress and we can review and proof your submissions.

Please call Tom Killian (727-343-2041) or e-mail him at tomkillian@netzero.net today to start the Mentor Program process for your neighborhood. Remember, we want you and your Association to be the very best it can be. CONA can help. Together, we can do anything.

Committee Update

The Historic Resources & Land Development Committee's primary current project is review of the Ray's Stadium Proposal. Our focus is on Downtown Impact, Redevelopment of the Tropicana Site, and Financing. We are conducting research and hearing from knowledgeable persons about this. To date the committee has made recommendations regarding possible redevelopment of Tropicana Field (regardless of whether a new stadium is built on the waterfront or not) and developed recommendations to the City regarding assessment questions for proposals received by the city for Tropicana redevelopment. The Committee hopes to have its report ready for the full CONA Board in April or May. The Committee has also made recommendations regarding the "glitch" ordinance and other related issues dealing with the Land Development Regulations (LDRs), and on historic resources such as the neoclassical First Baptist Church facing Williams Park. There are representatives from 10 neighborhood associations now participating in the committee

Neighborhood Nite at Tropicana Field Sunday, April 13, 2008 at 1:40 PM Ray's vs. Baltimore

\$7.00 per ticket (upper deck behind home plate)
or \$15.00 Family Fun Package includes Outfield seat in left field, Pepsi, hot dog and snack.

Parking: The Ray's have changed their policy on parking for 2008. All vehicles that enter their lot with 4 or more people park for free. Their standard parking fee is \$10.00 for all vehicles with 1 to 3 people. There is \$5.00 off lot parking available.

- Collect the ticket money from your association membership.
- Write a check to CONA for your tickets.
- Mail check before March 26 to CONA Treasurer at CONA, P.O. Box 13693, St. Petersburg, FL 33733-3693.
- Tickets will be delivered to each Association President who will distribute them to their own members.
- For further information contact Program Chair Tom Killian at 343-2041.
- Remember – the Association that brings the most members will get introduced on the field.



So sell lots of seats everyone !!!

President's Message

By Barbara McCormick Heck

Budget Cuts – What Can Neighborhood Associations Do?

We are in for some very challenging times ahead. Slowing growth and lowered tax revenues will necessitate additional changes in city, county and state activities. With a potential \$2 billion shortfall, the Florida Legislature is faced with painful and necessary cuts to balance its budget.

Florida runs on growth and the sales tax revenue is the largest source of money funding our approximately \$70 billion budget. With our population growth slowing, housing starts dropping and consumer spending declining, the signs are there. Without that growth and the tax revenues generated, we are forced to cut back. The “where and how” should be major concerns to everyone, especially to all our neighborhood associations.

Our Legislature and our own County and City governments are working on their proposed budget reductions right now. Political advocacy groups have formed to lobby our elected officials. Where do our neighborhood associations fit into this picture and what can you do to be heard?

Realistically assess your neighborhood's needs. Meet with all your neighborhood residents. Decide and vote on your priorities. Be smart. Utilize existing (city, county) programs with proven success records. This is NOT the time to start up new programs requiring additional or new city resources.

Let your elected officials know your neighborhood's needs.

Talk, call, e-mail and write to your Council Member, County Commissioner and State Representative. Let them know exactly what your priorities are and ask for their help and guidance to obtain your goals.

Speak up and speak out – often. Attend the public budget meetings and speak. If you are not a good speaker, send a letter from your association telling Council, Commission, Legislature what help you need. It is up to you to get your message to them, not the other way around. Every letter is documented and so are the calls. Best bet – do all three, speak, call and mail (e-mail) your concerns.

Sensitize elected officials and their staff to your needs. Ask your elected officials to help you understand

their budgetary or staff limitations. Ask them to help you craft your request to align with those limitations and also to take advantage of any opportunities they see.

Be soft spoken. Be kind. Be respectful. Shouting only gets you a sore throat and makes the other person usually block you out. Remember, everyone will be asking for something. You need to have all the facts, the option(s) you are asking to be implemented and a realistic time frame. Then listen very closely to their response and suggestions.

Be open to other options or compromises. Be realistic and be very flexible. There just is not enough money or employees to complete everything every association wants done this year. Be open to suggestions or compromises. Break your request into phases. Complete the first phase and then lobby for the next. Be willing to partner with other associations or provide volunteers for your project to help out.

Enlist CONA's help and experience. Do not wait to the very last minute to involve CONA. We have many mentors who are very experienced and have much success in what you want done in your neighborhood. Listen and learn.

Acknowledge the help you do receive . . . even if you did not get what you wanted. Write thank you letters to your elected officials for listening to your concerns, trying to help OR actually providing help. Remember to thank the crews actually doing the work. It is amazing that something as minor as a “thank you” goes such a long way. Just acknowledging their help makes all the difference. They will come back next time even more willing to help a neighborhood that “cares” instead of a neighborhood that “complains.”

Be a “do-er.” Remember that “glass” is only half full if you let it be that way. Take that glass and add to it until it overflows with the benefits your association is requesting. You can make the difference, but not by sitting around and complaining. We all should become “do-ers,” not “complainers.” So get up, speak up, get out and make that difference for your neighborhood association.

Together we can get through this budgetary challenge. Together we can and CONA will always be there to help.



2008 CONA Membership

2008 CONA Membership fees are now due. Please complete the form below and mail it to CONA, or bring it to the next meeting.

We will be using these forms to update our mailing list so be sure to include phone numbers and email addresses. Please include the names and addresses of people to whom we should be sending the CONA Newsletter.

Please make a copy for your records. This serves as your invoice and receipt.

2008 CONA Membership Application

Time to renew your CONA membership for 2008!

2008 dues are due January 1, 2008. Fill out this CONA Membership Application and mail it along with the Membership Fee to: CONA, 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: _____

Energy Check helps homeowner save the watts

When I bought my '70s ranch house 15 years ago, it had a decrepit air-conditioning system, questionable ductwork and less attic insulation than a baby blanket. Segue way to 2008, and little has changed. But in the spirit of being a better environmental steward, decreasing my carbon footprint and saving money, I decided to take the plunge and call in my energy provider, Progress Energy Florida, to take a look and suggest improvements.

Like Progress Energy, many utilities in Florida provide free home energy checks. These typically include an evaluation of your home's heating and cooling system, windows, water heater, attic insulation and ducts to make sure they are as energy efficient as possible. When I researched Progress Energy's Home Energy Check on its Web site, www.savethewatts.com, I also found the utility offers a variety of attractive rebates that can help offset the costs of making any necessary energy-saving repairs or improvements.

So, with the free Home Energy Check and Progress Energy helping to cover repair costs, what did I have to lose? I called 1-888-302-8348 for a consultation. The scheduler had a few basic questions for me: How old was my home, and how many square feet did it have? Did I have special concerns? Well, the master bedroom has always stayed warmer than the rest of the house, and there are those ducts.

A few days later, my Energy Advisor arrived for the Home Energy Check. He asked more questions about my home then outlined the evaluation's steps. He also showed me a two-year comparison of my monthly energy use and explained that most of it was going toward air-conditioning and heating.

He then suggested simple things I could do to lower my energy bill, such as adjusting the thermostat higher or lower, installing new weather-stripping around outside door frames, cutting down the time the pool pump runs and cleaning or replacing air-conditioning filters each month.

My Energy Advisor also showed me how much I could save if I upgraded my air-conditioning system to a high-efficiency heat pump unit. Progress Energy will even help offset the cost of the system by providing up to \$350 in rebates.

Then it was time for a closer look. With pencil and pad in hand, I followed him through the house jotting down his energy-saving tips as he looked at ceiling vents, windows and doors for clues to problems that were costing me money. When it was time for the attic, I shuddered. I knew the insulation there had been reduced to the equivalent of dust bunnies, and I had the feeling the 30-year-old air ducts were in poor shape. It turned out I was right.

The evaluation complete, my Energy Advisor prepared a Home Energy Check Report, which outlined his findings and provided energy-saving solutions and suggestions. Many are do-it-yourself projects, such as using compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of incandescent, cleaning the refrigerator condenser coils and caulking around windows.

When he estimated the cost of upgrading my attic insulation to R30, it was less than I thought it would be – especially after the Progress Energy rebate of \$100 for the first 1,500 square feet, then 7 cents per square foot after that.

Throughout the inspection, I was impressed with my Energy Advisor's thoroughness and professionalism. I've even scheduled a duct test. With Progress Energy paying half the cost of the duct test and the first \$150 of the repairs, my out-of-pocket expense will be a small price to pay for the energy and money I'll no doubt save.

Now I'm recommending the Home Energy Check to all my neighbors and friends. And if they say they don't have time to meet an Energy Advisor at their home, I tell them they can complete an evaluation online at www.savethewatts.com, and also check out the 100 energy-saving tips available on the site.

By Lisa Roberts

LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT



CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - February 20, 2008

- President Barbara Heck called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm., leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.
 - She welcomed all in attendance thanking them for their interest. She appealed to silence all cell phones.
- The Treasurer's Report was distributed, offering to e-mail copies for those interested.
 - We are in process of billing all members who are using our bulk mail permit.
 - Barbara thanked our former Treasurer, Keith Locke for his work in preparing the 501(C)3 certification and for assisting the transition to our newly elected Treasurer April Gausman.
 - We were told that the total expense for our Leadership Class has been \$450.00.
- Kai Warren, (Historic Roser Park), speaking for V.P. Darden Rice, presented our monthly award to four leaders of the "Downtown Saturday Market": Judy Staunko, Gail Eggeman, Mark Johnson, and David Cellon, [a graduate of our CONA Leadership Class].
 - Their group includes 300 participating vendors.
- There was a show of hands, first of the current Leadership Class, then hands of all Leadership Alumni present.
- V.P. Will Michaels Chair of our Historic Preservation and LDR Committees introduced the members of his team studying the Tropicana Dome and Waterfront Stadium proposals currently before the public and our city government.
 - His committee has attended a presentation by Michael Kalt speaking for for The Rays. They will offer a summary report of their research at our April CONA meeting.
 - Our next CONA meeting, (March), will hear a presentation by a group opposing the Tampa Bay Ray's proposals and advocating that we preserve our water fronts and avoid the costs of building a new stadium.
 - Will also commented on the concerns that our historic First Baptist Church, even though a designated Historic Landmark, is at risk of being demolished by the owners.
- Moved, (W. Michaels), CONA urges the City Council to consider all possible alternatives to the demolition of the Historic First Baptist Church. [Motion Approved]
 - The original city demolition permit has expired.
- Judy Ellis, (Lakewood Estates), told us of a new program developed by Neighborhood Partnership Office and our Police Department. The program is called "Soft Letters" for motorized nuisance noise makers.
 - Report cards will be distributed in a few trial neighborhoods. The anonymous cards are mailed to the Police Department, giving the time, date, and license number of noise offending vehicles.
- The S.P.P.D. Will issue a letter of notification regarding the reported situation,. There is no penalty or fine, or citation involved.
- This "Soft Letter" concept has proven very successful in other cities hoping to curb noisy drivers.
- We were reminded of a thrilling new exhibit at our Museum of History featuring gowns of Princess Diana.
- Speaking for our CONA Public Safety Committee, Jeff Frank reported on the success of the Slamm & Jamm Program we supported in Childs Park. There were 12 vendors involved and over 500 residents attended.
 - Jeff also reminded us Florida Crime Prevention conference, May 7– 9. The program will be at the Hilton Hotel. Please call Officer Chip Wells for reservations, (893-4993). One rep. per neighborhood can attend free.
- Our program then focused on a presentation by Michael Kalt, Sr.V.P. of Business Development for the Tampa Bay Rays.
 - He has had an opportunity to address over 50 local neighborhood groups in order to present their proposals for development of the Tropicana Dome Site and to build a new waterfront stadium.
 - The four most commonly expressed concerns that has heard have been:
 1. How will these two projects be paid for?
 2. What will be the impact on area traffic and parking?
 3. What prompts the Rays to promote these proposals?
 4. What is the environmental impact?
 - There are currently 100 acres devoted to Baseball in downtown St. Petersburg, yet the Baseball season is short. Redevelopment of those 100 acres will yield very significant tax revenues, now earning little.
 - These plans must all have voter approval before these projects can go forward.
 - Concluding his brief presentation, Mr. Kalt then solicited questions from the floor. [Our Chairperson had explained that comments from the floor were to be in the form of questions. That hecklers would not be tolerated].
 - Issues responded to included: Regarding traffic, the Rays have made a comprehensive study of available parking and anticipated parking needs. They have coordinated with the PSTA.
 - A new waterfront stadium would also be city owned and therefor, like Tropicana, would not bear property taxes.
 - Rays are prepared to invest 1/3 of the \$450M stadium construction costs.
 - Much retail sales tax is lost to Tampa that could be captured with retail development of the Tropicana site.

- Why a new stadium? The Rays have spent \$20M trying to improve the entertainment experience of fans at The Dome. An open air park is part is paramount to the Baseball Experience.
- How about other uses for the Dome? It is not a suitable venue for small groups and events. [The new waterfront stadium, with the canopy closed, could be used for many events.]
- What about struggling local businesses? Tropicana was a poor, insupportable. New development would be better year round.
- Tropicana did not boost local restaurants and bars, will stadium? Yes, foot traffic business and even area property values are always enhanced by a new downtown stadium.
- Where would new parking be provided? Mahaffey has its own, sufficient parking. Coordination with USF is planned to share their student parking at non-competitive times.
- Birds could be problem for seated fans? Not during our typical playing times.
- What about threat of lightning? We would not build it if we thought there was a significant risk involved.
- If so many oppose your project, why do you continue to promote these ideas? These issues will all be resolved with a public vote.
- How will the remaining debt on the Dome be resolved? That is part of our overall financial plan.
- Why not wait till the Rays have more winning seasons before building new stadium? Rays can't build a better team in that venue. The team could fail in the four years more at Tropicana.
- What is "Plan B" if Rays proposal is not supported by our voters? We will stay at Tropicana. The Dome has fundamental flaws that cannot practically be remedied- the roof design and the lack of drainage.
- How about some other sites- 1. New open stadium next to dome?, or 2. A site near Derby Lane track?, or 3. Building on the Toy Town Dump? We have studied these. All 3 have excessive ancillary development costs.
- Will you continue to play at your waterfront stadium for many years? Yes, we will sign a 30 to 35 year lease.
- If you stay at Tropicana what will happen to the Booker Creek Development? The Rays have already done some improvements, but private developers should be found to carry more forward.
- If these projects are approved, will the Rays share in the Tropicana development profits? No, we have no partnership contract with Hines. Our financial ties will be to the stadium.

Our meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

WE'RE LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT.

INTRODUCING A **BALANCED SOLUTION** FOR THE FUTURE.

At Progress Energy, we're using innovative and environmentally responsible solutions to meet our area's growing energy needs. We are expanding our energy-efficiency programs to help you save energy and money.

We are supporting advanced technologies like solar power and plants fueled by vegetation waste. We are investing in existing power plants to

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
STATE-OF-THE-ART PLANTS



ensure their safe, efficient operation while assessing the need for new plants and better ways to get electricity to you. The result is clean, reliable, affordable power – for today and tomorrow. To learn more

about our bright thinking,
visit progress-energy.com.





**2008 Officers and
Executive Board Members**

President

Barbara Heck - Snell Isle
894-6020 - bg@racerrex.com

First Vice President

Darden Rice - Old Southeast
560-2479 - Darden.Rice@hotmail.com

Second Vice President

Will Michaels - Bahama Shores
420-9195 - wmichaels2@tampabay.rr.com

Secretary

Conrad Weiser - Edgemoor
522-5008 - MAOA1999@aol.com

Treasurer

April Gausman - Historic Uptown
244-1896 - april@realestatebyapril.com

Audit Committee

Keith Locke - Disston Heights
644-2195 - rkeith1084@yahoo.com

CONA Leadership

Ingrid Comberg - Historic Uptown
821-2192

CourtWatch Committee

Carole Griffiths - Disston Heights
522-7206 - cgriff6721@aol.com

Nominating Committee

Thereasa McEachem - Harbordale
823-6390 - terre66@aol.com

Public Safety Committee

Jeff Frank - Live Oaks
kirstenjeffinn@yahoo.com

Frequently Called Numbers

Neighborhood
Partnership Office: 892-5141
Mayor's Action Line: 893-7111
Codes Office: 893-7373

SPPD Community Service Numbers:

District: 1 551-3181
District 2 551-3182
District 3 551-3183

CONA Newsletter Deadlines

Copy Deadline:
30th of each month.

Publication:
2nd Monday of month.

Mailing:
2nd Wednesday of month.

Editor:
560-2479 - Darden.Rice@hotmail.com

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

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

Forwarding Service Requested

Restoration of deteriorated sanitary sewer collection mains

The City of St Petersburg is proceeding with restoring deteriorated sanitary sewer collection mains at locations throughout St Petersburg. This work utilizes a Cured-in-Place Pipe (CIPP) lining process. Little to no digging is involved in this trenchless method versus the traditional "dig and replace" pipe repair. CIPP involves pump-around pumping, cleaning the existing pipe, closed circuit television inspection, pipe lining and restoration of right-of-way. Construction is scheduled to commence February 2008 and be completed February 2009. Construction schedule is subject to change based on weather and unforeseen conditions. The contractor, Reynolds Inliner, shall notify residents seven to ten days in advance of work in your area.

Please contact Mark Laney, St Petersburg Engineering Construction Div at 893-7671 with any questions.

Garage Sale Leftovers - additional help

Lisa Marie Carroll from Goodwill Industries has contacted me with the following suggestion for your neighborhood-wide garage sales:

"I was hoping that you would consider allowing Goodwill to participate in your next "Yard Sale". We would be grateful to pick up any unsold "leftovers" from your residents and provide a tax deductible receipt. Please call me so that we can discuss this. Thank you." Lisa Marie Carroll - Office 727-523-1512 x 1442 or lisa-marie.carroll@goodwill-suncoast.com

This service may be available from others, but Goodwill is the one who contacted us. Donating would be preferable to just discarding your unsold "treasures"

by Barbara Heck, CONA President