

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

June 2008

CONA Membership push

Please join CONA (Council of Neighborhood Associations) by paying the annual dues for 2008. We need your support as a member to strengthen our voice when speaking for the neighborhoods. We want to hear your voice through your vote on issues. Voting is a privilege for Members only. Please join in membership with other neighborhoods to help keep our City the best place to live.

CONA membership offers many advantages:

- Networking with other Neighborhoods
- Sharing mutual problems and solutions
- Assistance and Mentoring on Neighborhood issues
- Contacts and Resources to accomplish activities

Join your neighbors to socialize prior to the monthly CONA Meeting. We offer a friendly forum for speakers, discussion and vote at our meetings in The Sunshine Center at 330 5th Street North.

We are relying on you to become a member and join the efforts to improve our city and neighborhoods. Please complete the membership form (www.conastpete.org) and mail it with your check for \$35 to be a 2008 Neighborhood Member of CONA.

For more information or conversation, please contact me or any Board Member. Remember the fun and friendships are free!

Barbara Hawkins
CONA Membership Chair
Phone: 866-1747

CONA Board Meeting

June 18, 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
Hurricane Preparedness
Public Safety

Important Upcoming Events:

June 26-28 FL Neighborhoods Conference
July 4 Independence Day
July 16 CONA Meeting

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Parking In Residential Neighborhoods

There are city codes that govern where you can park vehicles and equipment on your property. In residential areas, the rules vary for passenger vehicles, motorcycles, boats and trailers. It is easy to become familiar with the basics of the code and park or store your vehicles and equipment accordingly.

The parking codes were designed for several important reasons:

- When cars are improperly parked, grass and plants are unable to grow. Without live plant material to hold the soil in place, excessive soil erosion can result.

Soil from damaged yards is washed into storm water drainage systems and impairs their effectiveness.

- Underground utilities, curbs and sidewalks are often damaged by the weight of vehicles parking or driving over them.
- Improperly parked cars, boats, or other equipment can cause visibility and safety problems for motorists

Where can I park passenger vehicles and motorcycles?

Depending on the orientation of your lot, other rules may apply, but in general:

Passenger vehicles and motorcycles can be parked in the front of the house or in a street side yard provided they are on an approved legally recognized parking area or driveway. Legally recognized parking areas and driveways are approved by the City's Development Review Services

Division.

The construction, location and size of the parking area must be reviewed; call (727) 893-7471 for information. Parking is never allowed on the right-of-way area between the paved street and the private property line unless the vehicle is parked on a driveway apron that has been installed with the required permit.

Where can I park boats and other Domestic equipment?

Domestic equipment includes motor homes, trailers and utility trailers.

To be considered domestic equipment, the item cannot be designed or intended to be used for commercial purposes.

- Up to two pieces of domestic equipment may be parked on certain areas of a residential lot.
- Parking or storage of domestic equipment is not permitted in a front yard, on a corner lot within a street side yard, or in a waterfront yard.
- You may legally park domestic equipment in the rear or interior side yard of a lot. Domestic equipment may only be parked in the front on weekends. Depending on the arrangement of your lot, other rules may apply.
- Domestic equipment may be up to 35 feet long, up to eight feet wide and up to 12 feet high.

Nomination for First VP

Mike Gulley

Thanks for the confidence in my being able to serve as CONA Vice-President. My wife Carolyn and I have been together for almost 40 years. We have 2 sons and 3 granddaughters all of whom live in Kansas City.

Since coming to Florida in 2001, I have been active in the Coquina Key Neighborhood Association as a Board member (2003-2004), Treasurer (2005) and President (2006-2007). I have shared the Coquina Key newsletter editorship with my wife Carolyn since 2003.

As a CONA Leadership graduate, my focus has been to build the neighborhood from the grass roots up. I am active in the Rotary Club and am also a member of the Florida Citizens Emergency Response Team through the Lealman Fire Department. I am one of very few in St Petersburg

trained as a CERT responder in case of natural disasters.

Most of my business life has been in wealth management of one form or other. For about 35 years I was in Investment Operations/Customer Retention at UMB Financial in Kansas City. After coming to Florida, I originated mortgages and worked in retail banking as I was finishing up my Bachelors Degree and obtained the necessary securities licenses to help people meet their financial goals as a Financial Services Representative and Compliance Officer at Levin Financial. I gained a significant amount of insights in the 501(c) world as well as methods in building society participation to accomplish bigger goals.

I will do everything to step up to the plate and contribute to CONA's progress.

Yard Maintenance Standards

Private property owners are responsible for routine maintenance of plant material on their property and in abutting right-of-way areas.

Yard maintenance standards were adopted in the City Code:

- for public safety purposes
- to maintain visibility along streets and intersections
- to improve the general appearance of the City's neighborhoods,
- to protect the environment
- to preserve sewer and other utility systems.

Requirements

Home owners can use this checklist to perform yard maintenance that will comply with the City Code:

- Mow the lawn so that grass is ten (10) inches or less in overall height and maintain ground cover plants at an overall height of twenty-four (24) inches or less.
- Edge or remove growth from driveways, sidewalks, curb lines, and gutters.
- Trim hedge heights to 5 feet or less in front yards on residential property (hedges on private property are only regulated within 5 feet of the property line.)

Contact the department for more details on hedge regulations in side yards, rear yards, non-residential property or waterfront property.

- Shrubs and trees over the public sidewalks must be trimmed up to a height of eight feet to allow motorists to see past them and to allow pedestrians to walk under them.
- Remove vegetation which is a hazard to public safety, such as vegetation with thorns, from the right-of-way area.
- Trim trees over the street or alley to a height of fourteen feet above the street or alley surface.
- Provide vegetative ground cover, such as grass, for all exposed sand or soil areas. Grass helps hold soil in place that might otherwise wash away. This erosion harms the property and can block City storm water sewers.
- Take grass clippings, tree trimmings and other vegetative material to the City brush sites. Disposing of such material on streets, right-of-ways, waterways, other people's property, or in the City storm water system is prohibited. The use of mulching lawn equipment is encouraged
- If a tree must be removed, please contact the Parks Department to inquire if a permit is required.

President's Message

By Barbara McCormick Heck

What do Andrew, Charlie, Katrina and Wilma have in common? There were all uninvited and unwelcome hurricanes that caused catastrophic damage to the Gulf region and to the state of Florida. It is June and our 2008 hurricane season has just begun.

For those new to Florida and for those who have resided here for quite some time, there are several things that have to be in place before a tropical system can form:

- Ocean temperature of at least 80 degrees down to a depth of 150 feet
- High humidity in the troposphere (lowest layer of our atmosphere)
- Light wind
- Organized complex of thunderstorms

Most hurricanes begin as tropical waves off the west coast of Africa. However, many hurricanes in June and July normally form in the Gulf of Mexico because the eastern Atlantic waters are too cold still to allow a hurricane to form. Pinellas County is the most densely populated county in Florida. With water on three sides of our peninsula, we are at risk not only from the winds and rain, but also from a storm surge.

Dr. William Gray, Colorado State University, forecasts a 2008 hurricane season similar to 2007. The NOAA 2008 information just released predicts the following (60-70% accurate):

- 12 - 16 named storms
- 2 - 5 major storms

Please attend our June Hurricane Program and any other hurricane-related programs in your area. Learn the quick and easy ways to be prepared. We hope and pray that we have another mild season free of hurricanes this summer. But we only need to look at the devastation of Katrina from the flooding to understand we all could be at great risk. There is so much you can do right now to increase the odds and make your family safe. A few hours now may pay off later this summer if we get hit hard.

Let's prepare for the very worst. If we make it through another season unscathed, then we can celebrate at the end of November with a special "CONA Picnic" using our stored canned food and bottled water or better yet, we can make generous donations to the local food banks.

Be prepared, develop a plan and start your preparations . . . now !!!

Keep your cool this summer and lower your power bill

Summer temperatures may be heating up but that doesn't mean you need to work up a sweat – especially when it comes to your electric bill. To help manage energy use and lower your power bill, Progress Energy Florida offers these cool tips:

- For central air conditioning systems, keep the fan switch on your thermostat in the "auto" position when cooling. Having the fan switch "on" continuously could cost an extra \$25 a month on your electric bill.
- Set the thermostat a little higher and save more. Most people can be comfortable with a setting of 78-80 degrees Fahrenheit, plus you'll save up to 7 percent of your cooling costs for each degree above 78.
- Using a ceiling fan or portable fan to supplement your air conditioning can make you feel three to four degrees cooler – and only costs a half-cent per hour to operate. So set your thermostat a few degrees higher and save on cooling costs. But remember: fans cool people, not rooms. When you leave home, turn off the ceiling fans and set the thermostat up a few degrees.
- Clean or change your air filters monthly. Dirty filters can increase operating costs by 20 percent. And, don't block registers and vents with furniture or drapes.
- If you suspect your air conditioning system is not cooling properly, have it checked promptly. A unit that is having operational problems can cause extremely high bills.
- Close blinds, drapes and shades during the hottest part of the day. This keeps the sun's rays from heating your home.
- Use your microwave oven to cook food. Microwaves use less than one-half the power of conventional ovens, and they don't heat up your kitchen.
- Make sure your home is properly insulated to keep the cool air in and the warm air out. With proper insulation you could save up to \$175 a year on your heating and cooling costs.

Using energy wisely is always important. In fact, energy efficiency is the quickest, cleanest and most economical way to reduce your energy use and save money on your energy bill. Along with these low- and no-cost ways to save energy and money, Progress Energy also offers programs to help customers manage bills and avoid seasonal spikes by equalizing payments throughout the year.

For more information about these programs or to learn more about energy-efficiency improvements visit www.savethewatts.com.

Managing energy use

Progress Energy Florida offers some free programs designed to help manage energy use. Some of these include:

Free Home Energy Check:

This program provides residential customers with a personalized analysis of their energy consumption with tips and home improvement recommendations on to help save energy and money. There are several ways to participate in the Home Energy Check: online, mail-in, by phone or in your home with an Energy Advisor.

EnergyWiseSM: When you sign up for EnergyWise, not only will you be making a real difference while you help manage Florida's Energy usage, you could also save over \$145 per year on your energy bill. During high periods of community energy usage, Progress Energy will temporarily cycle off and on power to selected appliances in your home. Cycles are limited in duration and time to of day to help maintain your comfort. Participation is free, so sign up today.

For more information about these and other programs, customers should visit www.savethewatts.com or call 888-302-8348.

LOOKING AT POWER IN A NEW LIGHT



Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant FY-09

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE, NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM?

The Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant Program is designed to provide grant awards to neighborhood & business associations, organizations or groups of residents for specific improvement projects and strategic plans that build relationships and improve the community.

The improvements are categorized into several areas. They include: decorative lighting, general improvements, neighborhood plans, public art and youth initiated.

WHAT GRANT AMOUNTS ARE AVAILABLE?

Applicants may apply for up to \$25,000 for all improvement categories. For each project, applicants must provide a "match" which equals or exceeds the amount of the funds requested from the program. Identifying the match is a requirement of all projects applications and shall be shown in the budget table. The required match may include any or all of these: (1) cash (2) volunteer labor (3) donated materials and supplies and/or professional services and (4) maintenance.

WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE FUNDED?

Projects or plans that improve & enhance a neighborhood, business area &/or the city-at-large and comply with the parameters of this grant program are evaluated. Previous grant award projects included landscaping, identification signs, neighborhood plans, public art, and youth initiated neighborhood improvements.

CHANGES FOR FY 2009

- 1) \$100,000 is proposed for the upcoming grant round
- 2) \$25,000 of the \$100,000 has been designated for landscaping projects; the remaining \$75,000 must be used for other physical projects (e.g. signs, lighting, neighborhood plans, public art, etc)
- 3) One (1) Volunteer hour is valued at \$20.00/hour
- 4) You may only use approved vendors only for landscaping, wooden signs, and decorative lighting projects.

Full application available on the City's website - www.stpete.org/neighborhoods/pdf/Neighborhood_part_match_09.pdf

Deadline for full application Friday, 5 pm September 5.

For more information contact:
Neighborhood Partnership Department at
(727) 551-3249 or e-mail terese.hilliard@stpete.org.

Police Department launches Safe Summer

On May 28, 2008, Chief of Police Charles "Chuck" Harmon launched "Operation Safe Summer" – a summertime initiative aimed at reducing youth-related crimes during the school break.

The City's Uniform Crime Rate (UCR) is down 10.1% during the first four months of 2008, when compared with the same period in 2007. That's good news for all of us.

But we also know that juvenile related crimes, such as auto theft and vehicle burglary, tend to go up when schools let out; because it is a time when many teenagers have less access to structured activities.

Major Donnie Williams, Youth Resources Division, is overseeing a core number of supervisors and officers dedicated to the project - day and night - throughout the summer. The OSS officers include many of our School Resource Officers because they are familiar with many youth and young adults in the city.

The citywide program will use a two-pronged approach to reducing crime. Officers will use traditional law enforcement methods to track repeat offenders and arrest individuals who disregard the laws, but they are also referring individuals in need of human services, such as substance abuse education, conflict resolution, employment and education issues or other needs.

To accomplish the human services aspect of this initiative, we formed a partnership with several organizations in our community dedicated to engage our youth and young adults, and they will provide them with services, training or counseling necessary to help them find the support they need to succeed in life. These partners include the Pinellas

County Urban League, Police Athletic League, City of St. Petersburg Parks and Recreation, NAACP, Pinellas Technical Education Center, Boys and Girls Clubs of America and local faith-based institutions to name a few.

You can help us reduce youth related crime, too, by remembering a few simple crime prevention tips: always lock your car, never leave it with the engine running and the air conditioning on because it is too hot out, use anti-theft devices, and never leave valuables in plain sight inside a vehicle, especially electronic items such as cell phones and GPS devices.

CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - May 21, 2008

- President Barbara Heck called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. She extended a welcome to all of our visitors, recognizing City Council Members: Jim Kennedy, Karl Nurse and Herb Polson.
 - The Chair then called for a show of hands from our current CONA Leadership Class. Then we saw the hands of all CONA Leadership Alumni present.
 - Barbara then made a brief account of our ongoing efforts to achieve 501(C)3 tax exempt status from the IRS. She thanked those who have invested many hours of effort to support and file our application.
 - April Gausman gave her Treasurer's Report with a current balance of \$1,747.13. This tabulation is exclusive of the Leadership Class funding which will be reported separately next month.
 - Barbara next introduced Gypsy Gallardo, presenting her with our Citizen of the Month award plaque.
 - Jeff Frank, Chair of our Public Safety Committee, added his appreciation of Gypsy's leadership in organizing the Childs Park Slamm & Jamm Project that CONA supported to reduce crime.
 - Cass Rael Sr., praising her organizing skills, noted that Gypsy has a Harvard Degree.
 - City Councilman Herb Polson then offered a review of Council's several hearings and discussions relating to the Ray's proposals for redevelopment of Tropicana Field and to build a new waterfront stadium.
 - Question was raised, from the floor, if the yellow "Position statement" cards carry more weight than e-mail or FAXES. Mr. Polson insisted that all were carefully reviewed.
 - Councilman Polson noted that 3 minute statements can be offered at the hearings, questions cannot be responded to.
 - Councilman Karl Nurse sought to open a discussion of an issue before Council, so he was compelled, (due to the Government in the Sunshine Rules), to ask that the other Councilmen absent themselves from our meeting.
 - Karl distributed a letter describing the 50% reduction in the City Code Enforcement office, leading to a failed prioritization that addresses the easy complaint cases first. He urged that the city establish a prioritization criteria for case handling.....and that neighborhoods should also establish codes enforcement criteria that reflect their peculiar needs.
 - The Housing Services Committee will address the issue May 29th.
 - Though Karl was commended for his Codes Enforcement proposal to Council, he noted that his first motion, since being elected, was an effort to fore stall the many threatened mortgage foreclosures in our city.
 - Three commenters from the floor appealed for a greater diversity of neighborhoods' priorities being reviewed as Codes Enforcement priorities are being codified.
 - It was urged that the issue of Codes Priorities be tabled until a later CONA meeting.
 - City Councilman Jim Kennedy spoke briefly of his procedure to review all e-mails to his office in the sequence of which they were received, [suggesting that if such letters begin with profane condemnations, they are less seriously considered].
 - Question from the floor asked of a S.P.P.D. response to the Police Performance study submitted some months ago by Matrix? Councilman Kennedy assured that a workshop has been scheduled to review the Matrix Report. [The President promised to announce these meetings on our CONA Listbot.]
 - We then heard brief résumés from two political candidates:
 - From Robert Walker, Candidate Judge, Circuit Court, District I
 - For Darden Rice, Candidate County Commissioner, At Large, District 3.
- [It was noted that Darden Rice has resigned as a CONA Officer.]
- Theresa McEachern, Chair of our Nominations Committee, introduced her fellow committeemen, David Hoover and Kia Warren, announcing that nominations for CONA First Vice President are now open and will remain open until May 31st.
 - Current applicants include Judy Ellis, (Lakewood Estates), and Travis Jarman, (Bayway Isles).
 - The June CONA Newsletter will list the candidate's slate compiled by the Nominations Committee.
 - Our CONA website, (www.conastpete.org), will include a job description for our CONA officers.
 - We next hear a presentation from Rhonda Sanborn speaking for the Pinellas County Visitor's Bureau.
 - Pinellas tourist revenues amount to \$7 M annually. [They pay 35% of our \$40 M Penny for Pinellas tax revenue.]
 - There are four major categories of visitors: (1) Convention Attendees, (2) Tourist Travel Package Clients, (3) Short stay Movie Industry Teams, (4) Athletic Event Attendees, (professional & amateur).
 - There are currently 85,000 local workers in our tourist industry.
 - We then heard from Mary Elena Wisterman E.F. Home Stay Programs. She acquainted us with a voluntary program of hosting French High School students who come here for the Summer.
 - Local hosts are asked to provide: (a) A bed, but not a private bedroom, (b) Table meals, (c) Transportation to their Learning Center. Their stay is from July 21st to August 10th.
 - 45 hours of Community Service Credits are awarded to hosts.
 - Students need not be entertained. All are fluent in English.
 - Ms. Wisterman would be delighted to present her program to local neighborhood and church/club groups.
 - We next heard a presentation by Jack Parker speaking in behalf of a group of Tierra Verde residents who are seeking to stave off annexation of the northern tip of their island by St. Petersburg. [The President acknowledged that there is a group seeking to promote the annexation, but could not arrange to be here tonight to balance.]
 - There have been two previous attempts to annex the north tip in '03 and again in '05.
 - There are 22,000 residents impacted by the annexation proposal.
 - Provisions of the County Comprehensive Plan originally excluded Tierra Verde from the annexable areas but new

legislation is currently being drafted. Urging: "Wait till law is approved."

- The main concerns of the residents are plans to build to higher densities and to higher structures- incompatible with island's character.
- A Developer, (Sembler), and the Marina Owner are the leading proponents of annexation. St. Pete. would welcome the additional tax revenue that annexation would collect.
- Motion, (Shaeffer, OSE), for CONA to convey to the Mayor and City Council our urging to defer further annexation efforts, at Tierra Verde, until the County Study Committee issues its findings. [Approved]
- Susan Ajoc, Director of Neighborhood Partnership, announced that the 2008 Grant Program is now accepting applications until the Sept. 5th deadline.
 - Application forms can be obtained from Teresa Hilliard or as PDF file on-line - www.stpete.org.
 - The max this year is for \$100,000, with the landscaping maximum of \$25,000. [There is no "Penny for Pinellas" funding this year.]
 - Matching labor contributions will be calculated at \$20.00 per hour.
 - Project budgets will be closely monitored this year.
 - Susan urged breaking down long projects into grant segments.
 - CONA Mentors are available to assist in grant preparation
- Contact your City Council to recommend neighborhood awards.
- The June State Neighborhood Conference may be the last! Continued funding is very uncertain.
 - Hosting the program here, next year, would require in the range of \$120,000 to \$150.00.

Our meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.
Conrad Weiser, Secretar

City of St. Petersburg Garbage Pick-up Holiday Schedule

City of St. Petersburg Garbage Pick-up Holiday Schedule Holidays will sometimes change your scheduled garbage pick-up day.

Here is the schedule for the week of July 4, 2008.

Friday, July 4th

- Thur, July 3rd collection will be on Wed.
- Fri, July 4th collection will be on Thur.
- Monday and Tuesday collection will not change.

Brush Sites will be closed only on Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

You can also access this information at www.stpete.org/sanitation

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 - barbara@theheckhouse.com

First Vice President

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

Second Vice President

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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@earthlink.net

CONA Leadership

Ingrid Comberg - Historic Uptown
821-2192

CourtWatch Committee

Carole Griffiths - Disston Heights
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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

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