

CONA Newsletter

The Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County

November 2010

President's Message: A Lot to Be Thankful For

Sometimes we get so caught up in the day to day needs of city and neighborhood life that we lose sight of all that we have to be thankful for. With the Thanksgiving season upon us it is good to take a few minutes and reflect on some of the great things we have to be thankful for in our community.

In my own neighborhood of Bahama Shores I am thankful for a well functioning neighborhood association that helps to connect people and looks out for our quality of life. We have eight blocks of neighborhood plantings and a neighborhood owned park that are the responsibility of the association. While it is a continuous challenge to provide proper care for these assets we are thankful for them and for the volunteers that turn out for work parties and the many neighbors who provide support with their association fees and occasional special donations. We also have an active Crime Watch group made up of many volunteers that works seamlessly with the association. Multiply the energy of this one neighborhood association by the 77 or so other active neighborhood associations throughout the city and we do have a lot to be thankful for.

As a city we are blessed with a great climate (for most of the year), nearby world class beaches, and waterways; 125 city parks covering more than 2,300 acres, including our wonderful Downtown Waterfront Parks; landmarks such as the Skyway Bridge (largest cable suspension bridge in the Western Hemisphere), the Pier, and the Snell Arcade, and neighborhood places too like the Chattaway, Coney Island Sandwich Shop, Atwater's, and Spartan's; a great tree canopy, including the flamboyant Royal Poinciana and purple Jacaranda, thanks in large part to the leadership of former Mayor David Fisher; bird and nature sanctuaries and preserves thanks to

such visionaries as Katherine Bell Tibbetts and the local Audubon Society; the first officially recognized Green City; an advanced city Comprehensive Plan; a good mix of architecture in the downtown area; a growing appreciation for historic resources; a pedestrian friendly downtown; great museums and festivals such as the Saturday Morning Market, Circus McGurkis, First Night, and the Festival of the States; and an economy that is reducing our reliance on tourism by moving towards new sectors such as marine science, medical technology, and financial services with their better paying jobs.

All of this is not to negate the fact that there are still many significant challenges to overcome, but that we do have much to both celebrate and protect. There are approximately 78 active neighborhood associations now in the city. They are a key part of the mosaic that helps to make our city, hold it together, and generate new growth in the quality of life for all. CONA's job is to support and strengthen these associations and serve as a collective spokesperson on their behalf.

Finally, I am also thankful for all who actively support and volunteer their talent and time for CONA. Your investment is very much appreciated. As always I am available to talk with association presidents and CONA representatives about your needs and concerns. I may be reached at 420-9195 or wmichaelscona@tampabay.rr.com.

Will Michaels

CONA Board Meeting Wednesday, November 17, 2010

The **SUNSHINE CENTER, 330 5th St. N.**
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7:00 p.m.

Agenda Items:

Citizen of the Month--Lorraine Margesson
Nominating Committee Report--Judy Ellis
Festival of the States Parade--Aaron Sharpe
Downtown Waterfront Vision--Marilyn Olsen
Proposal for Bench Advertising--Rick Kriseman and Andrew Moos
African American Baseball--Thomas English
Downtown Intermodal Plan--Gary Grooms
CONA Committee Reports

Important Upcoming Events:

Nov. 19, 9AM--City Hall Hearing on Mayor Blocker Home Landmarking
Nov. 22, 5:30--Dist. 1 Sector Meeting, 3200 1st Ave. S.
Nov. 23, 5:30--Dist. 3 Sector Meeting, 691 43rd St. S.
Dec. 15, 7PM--Regular CONA Meeting, Elections, & Brag Night
Dec. 16, 5:30--Dist. 2 Sector Meeting, Roberts Community Ctr

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CONA Newsletter Deadlines

Copy Deadline: 25th of each month
In Hand: 2nd Wednesday of month
Coordinator: Mike Gulley 244-8374,
Layout: Mo Eppley - meppley@gmail.com

Bus Bench Advertising

by Travis Jarman

The Council of Neighborhood Associations Land Development and Executive Committee was approached by Rep. Rick Kriseman, representing Mr. Andrew Moos of Metropolitan Systems of Tampa, with a proposal to place up to one thousand benches in the public right of way at bus stops and in park areas throughout the city. These benches would be installed at no charge to the city, in exchange for the privilege of Metropolitan Systems to put advertisements on those benches. Restrictions would be placed on commercial advertising in neighborhood and park corridors, however, signs for non-profit organizations such as the Lions Club, Boys and Girls Club, etc. would be permitted.

After a thorough review of the information provided the Land Development and Executive Committees have recommended against supporting adoption of this proposal for the following reasons,

- ***There is no compelling public need for additional bus or park benches.***

The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) uses several criteria to decide when bus benches are required. These include automated ridership counts, recommendations from transit bus drivers, and requests from the public. According to Janet Rocca at PSTA, there is adequate provision for their identified annual needs for amenities (bus shelters, benches, bike racks, and ADA complaint pads) within the currently available federal grant funding.

There is no identified demand for additional benches in the city's park system.

- ***The proposed benches are not in keeping with the city's Comprehensive Plan Vision (appearance) element.***

Vision 2020 noted this existing negative appearance component: "Visual blight, especially associated with many large roads, extensive asphalt parking without trees, unattractive newspaper boxes and bus stops, sign proliferation....". It also noted that results of a successful Vision 2020 would include a "Revised/renewed commitment to appropriate codes and standards of design for architecture, signage, landscape and site planning to ensure quality and beauty". The proposed placement of additional benches in our opinion would not be in keeping with the intent of Vision 2020 and in conflict with our Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Development Committee concluded that any benefit gained by the placement of the proposed benches would be more than offset by the blight of additional commercial advertising in other areas of the city.

- ***There has been no competition for the transfer of advertising rights in the public right of way.***

We have concerns regarding an exclusive franchise for placement of advertising in the public right of way without hearing from other companies that may have a similar interest.

The Executive Committee will be asking for your ratification of their position at our December meeting. Mr. Moos has asked for some time at our November meeting to first present his proposal directly to the general CONA membership, so please plan to attend and hear for yourself what he has to say.

Career Offender Tracking and Apprehension (COTA) Unit St. Petersburg Police Department

In September, 2010, the St. Petersburg Police Department organized a new group within the agency called the Career Offender Tracking and Apprehension (COTA) Unit.

COTA's mission is to reduce crime in our community by tracking all habitual offenders – juveniles and adults – in the city by tracking and analyzing their patterns of criminal behavior. The formation of the new unit was based on the success of two pilot projects last year. One involved the tracking juvenile offenders and the other focused on adult habitual criminals.

We based these projects on the generally-accepted premise that a small percentage of offenders are responsible for most crime. By disrupting or dismantling the criminal pursuits of these habitual offenders - and to do so in an expeditious manner - we believe that we can help to reduce crime in our community.

When appropriate, they also work with parents, youth and young adults and refer them to social service agencies with the hope that they can change their criminal behavior.

COTA is supervised by a Sergeant and comprised of detectives, officers and intelligence analysts. They work closely with other units in the Department to develop cases against habitual criminal offenders and to quickly apprehend them when they run afoul of the law. They work a flexible schedule which allows them to respond quickly, which hopefully limits the effect of these crimes on our community.

COTA monitors habitual criminal offenders, tracks their arrests and court appearances and develops intelligence on their daily activities. They also conduct home and school visits, develop relationships with offenders and their families and monitor the court imposed sanctions (juveniles) and probation terms (adults) of these offenders and work closely with the Pinellas- Pasco State Attorney's Office, Probation and Parole, school officials and community leaders to help them complete their mission.

By concentrating our best efforts on career criminals, we hope to make our community an even safer and more enjoyable place to live and work.



CONA Leadership 2011

Council of Neighborhood Associations of South Pinellas County
Application Form

Completed applications and tuition must be received by November 15, 2010

Name _____ E-Mail _____

Home Address _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Other Phone/Fax _____ Cell _____

Neighborhood _____

Education/Training/Employment

Special Skills/Talents

On what boards, committees or groups have you been or are you currently active?
What have you accomplished in these activities that you think is important?

What do you consider the greatest issues facing our neighborhoods today?

What would you like to learn from the CONA Leadership Program?

How did you learn about the CONA Leadership Program?

Participants should attend all classes, including the historic bus tour, and complete all assignments, projects or requirement in order to graduate. Classes are held from 6-9 p.m. on Jan. 10, 31; Feb. 14, 28; March 14, 28; April 11, 25; May 10, 19 &

Historic Bus Tour: March TBD from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Tuition for the program is \$125.00. This includes all classes plus the bus tour with lunch and the graduation dinner with diploma and CONA pin.

Completed applications and a \$125.00 check payable to CONA Leadership should be sent to:

Ingrid Comberg
620 Fifth Street North
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

*Questions or additional information, please contact:
Ingrid Comberg 727-894-3048 & Leave Message*



CONA Codes Committee Update

The latest news from Codes Compliance is their just rolled out yard parking program. Their inspectors are able to post a violation notice and issue a citation now. What we don't know is how it's working. Drop us a note if you've filed a yard parking complaint and let us know how well you think the program works in your neighborhood.

The CONA Codes Committee has been working behind the scenes helping neighbors with individual issues this year. So far, we've managed to help bring about the demolition of an abandoned, partially constructed home in one neighborhood and we're working on two more cases now. One is an absentee landlord owned residence with both codes and crime issues and the other is an eyesore of a commercial property.

We'd like to help you with codes issues in your neighborhood too. Just send us an email with the address of the property and a quick recap of the situation. We'll do our best to get things moving for you and we'll also show you how to deal with the next one.

We're working on a virtual Codes Compliance document library that we hope to post on the CONA website shortly. We'll provide links to the various Codes pamphlets on a number of subjects and a link to the Codes database so you can run codes histories on properties in your neighborhood.

Our committee could use more members - especially from the north and west sides of the city. Most of our business is conducted by email so if you have a computer and a few hours to spare, we'd love to have you join us!

Cathy Wilson,
CONA Codes Committee Chair
catgwana@knology.net

Kai Warren, Co-Chair

Negro Baseball is back!

Ever since August 20, 1999, when the Tampa Bay Devil Rays hosted a Salute to The Negro Leagues, and when I met with John "Buck" O'Neil, who Passed The Torch to continue The History of African American Baseball Over To Me, I have been Reviving, Recruiting and Reuniting old BlackBall Players, Teams and Leagues along with The Next Generation of Multi-Cultural and Co-Ed Baseball Players from across the nation, to participate in this African American Baseball Production called The Big Experiment II "Return of Negro Baseball", to be hosted at the Al Lang Stadium.

I have already hosted a Weekend BlackBall Doubleheader at the Al Lang Stadium on May 29 & 30, of this year, and I am now preparing for the 2011 Big Experiment II Project, that will feature Monthly or by- Weekly Weekend BlackBall Tournaments or Games, such as The Kansas City Monarch vs Anybody in Tampa Bay (possibly the Dunedin Railers), Old Negro Baseball Classics, Vintage East vs West World Series, Storytellings by The Old Timers, a Museum and More.

I am trying to generate a New Negro RNBI Baseball Fan-base called the 7227 Fan Club, (because Al Lang Stadium only seats 7227 people), which will allow the 7227 Fan Club Members discounts on tickets and other benefits or please consider a CONA Fan Club, only the CONA Members get

discounts and other benefits.

I will be making a short presentation at the Sunshine Center on Wednesday November 17, @7:00pm, to introduce this New, Historic and Exciting era for the city of St. Petersburg, CONA and Al Lang Stadium, and I hope to create a Community Partnership, that will help Raise Funds for the CONA.

I hope to see you there at the meeting on Nov. 17, @7:00pm.

Thank You So Much
Thomas M. English

Mike Gulley
Financial Services Professional

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CONA BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING MINUTES

The Sunshine Multi-Service Center - September 15, 2010

- President Will Michaels opened our meeting with an invitation to join in a brief prayer for Leslie Curran of City Council who was recently injured in a bicycle accident.
- Will then led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag.
- There was appreciation for First Vice President Mike Gulley who filled in for Will at our Board and Executive Committee meetings.
- We heard a brief report from Vel Thompson, speaking for the Midtown Committee a sub-committee of the CONA LDR & Historic Preservation Committee. They are working to improve seamless cooperation between St. Petersburg neighborhoods.
- Ingrid Comberg then made the presentation of the CONA Citizen of the Month Award to Armanda Lampley of Childs Park.
- Our next speaker was Mayor Bill Foster. Noting his 10 years of service with City Council, he cited several progressive steps achieved in his 8 month tenure as Mayor: 1) The new Police Pursuit Policy, 2) The restriction on roadway solicitations, 3) His new initiative for homeless housing.
 - The Mayor spoke proudly of the new training program to alert all city employees to crime prevention, recently expanded to include postal workers on our streets and field crews of Progress Energy.
 - He cited the "Reverse Trade Show" as an important initiative to support St. Petersburg's small business community.
 - Several Mentoring Programs are enhancing local school's offerings.
 - New Sports, Arts, and Cultural Programs are lifting our status as a cultural and entertainment hub among mid-sized cities of this country.
 - The Mayor emphasized his commitment to the Broken Window Theory of Police Enforcement, "We sweat the small stuff".
 - All residents were encouraged to attend any of the new Sector Meetings providing an opportunity to meet your local Police Officers as well as Supervisors of many City Departments on hand to address your issues.
 - The Mayor responded to numerous questions from the floor.
- Our following speaker was Raul Quintana of the city Engineering Department. He made a presentation describing an improvement project for Mirror Lake Park.
 - The planning for this 2012 development includes a \$200,000 federal grant application. A new sidewalk will connect to the Pinellas Trail.
- Jay Morgan, Manager of the Office on Aging distributed a new brochure that lists services available to our Senior Citizens. All street patrol Police officers will be carrying this brochure "No Senior Overlooked".
- Two speakers, Tim Martin, (President Historic Kenwood), and Derek Kilborn, (City Development Services), offered a Mission Statement for the proposed Artist's Enclave Ordinance. We learned many details of the so called "Overlay District" that will augment the existing Land Development Regulations, (LDR's).
 - Fundamental to these revised Codes Restrictions will be an opportunity for resident artists to develop, display, and sell their artistic creations in their homes situated in a zoned residential district.
 - Moved, (Rohr-Historic Kenwood), CONA endorses establishment of an Artist's Enclave, premised on a two-thirds approval of the adjoining neighborhood residents. [Motion Approved]
- Speaking for our CONA LDR & Historic Preservation Committee, Chair, Maureen Stafford made an appeal for support of the preservation of the Historic Blocker Home on Fourth Avenue North. A prime example of the 1926 construction with classic Queen Anne Architecture, the structure was more recently known as "The Mansion by the Sea".
 - There will be a CPC Hearing of the historic preservation status of this important old structure on October 18th.
 - Moved, (Stafford, Hist. Old N.E.), CONA appeals for the historic preservation of the Blocker Residence to remain at its historic address. [Motion Approved]
- As Chair of CONA Leadership, Ingrid Comberg described some of their plans for their forthcoming 19th Year. They will hold an Alumni Reunion, at City Hall, on September 30th at 6 p.m.
- Steve Corsetti, Chairman of the CONA Public Safety Committee provided a review of their August Crime Watch/Public Safety Workshop which was attended by Police Chief Harmon, 32 Neighborhood Crime Watch Coordinators, and invited neighborhood association leaders.
 - The program was developed to identify the most successful crime watch concepts as well as those that have not worked well in practice. All participants were encouraged to list areas where they needed help.
 - It was recognized that greater resident participation is needed at the Police Sector Meetings.
- Cathy Wilson, (Greater Woodlawn), introduced a motion of CONA support for a grant application by our Florida Holocaust Museum. [Motion Approved]
- We heard brief introductions from three current election candidates.
- Our President reminded us of a City Council Hearing tomorrow, (9/16/10), that will consider the proposed revised Comprehensive Land Use Plan Map. CONA's position has been to defer this map proposal until after the November elections have decided approval of Amendment 4 of our State Constitution.
- The NAACP is planning a workshop addressing high school dropouts.
- All were invited to a Grand Central Neighborhood October Fest, October 9th, at a Central Avenue Block Party from 20th to 23rd Street.
- Will expressed our appreciation for tonight's refreshments provided by Barbara and Jim.

Our meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

CONA Board of Directors's Meeting Minutes Sunshine Multi-Service Center - October 20, 2010

- President Will Michaels led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to Our Flag.
- Ingrid Comberg and April Gausman, (Historic Uptown), introduced Theresa McEachern, (Harbordale), to award her the CONA Citizen of the Month Plaque.
- Judy Ellis, Chair of the Nominations Committee encouraged nominations for any of our CONA Officers or Committee Chairs. Nominations from the floor will be called for at our November meeting and then closed by the President. Balloting will be in December.
 - Moved, (V.P. Gulley), to affirm the Executive Committees appointment of Jean Corsetti to be the Chair of our CONA Membership Committee. [Approved]
- Jean Corsetti noted that addressed CONA Membership Invoices were available at the registration table for all current members- Please hand carry to save postage.
 - Mike Gulley also moved to ratify the motions of the Executive Committee to affirm, to City Council, CONA support of two recent Council motions: (A) Motion by Councilman Karl Nurse to enact a lobbying registration ordinance, and (B) Motion by Councilman Steve Kornell to establish an endowment to support arts, social services, and youth development programs. [Both motions approved]
- President Will Michaels then introduced Sec. V.P. Cathy Wilson as the Moderator for our Candidate's Forum. She briefly reviewed the procedures for this part of our program.
 - The candidates will be seated in 3 separate panels to facilitate questioning.
 - Each candidate will be allowed 3 minutes for their personal statements.
 - Questions from the floor, (maximum duration 30 sec.), will be limited to 3 per candidate to the extent time permits.
- Our first panel of Candidate: Rep. of C.W. Bill Young, and Charlie Justice [for Congress Dist. 10], Rep. of Jack Latvala, and Nina Hayden [for State Senator Dist. 16], Norm Roche, and Calvin D. Harris [for C. Comm. Dist. 2 At large]
- Our second panel of Candidates: Larry Ahern, and Janet C. Long [for State Re. Dist. 51], Representative of Jeff Brandes, and Bill Heller [for State Rep. Dist. 52], Thomas R. Cuba, and Rick Kriseman [for State Rep. Dist. 53]
- Our third panel of Candidates: Patricia "Trish" Muscarella, and Kathryn Marie Welsh [for 6th Cir. Judge Group 18], Keith Meyer, and Jeff O'Brien [for 6th Cir. Judge Group 27], James "Jim" Jackson, and Lewis "Lew" Williams [for School Brd. Dist. 7], Mike Prendergast, Rep. of Kathy Castor [for Congress Dist. 11]

With mutual appreciation from the candidates, our CONA Forum concluded at 9:20 P.M.

Conrad Weiser, Secretary

CONA Leadership Reunion

Lots of hugging and smiles were going around at our First CONA Leadership Reunion on Sept. 30th at City Hall. Mayor Bill Foster graciously opened the first floor for us, Cafe 1001 provided delicious snacks and almost 100 Leadership Alumni met old and made new friends.

We are proud to announce that this has been the kick-off for our Alumni Association "CONA Leadership Alumni Forever."

Special thanks to Monica Abbott, our Planning Chair, Mary Darling, Mayor Bill Foster, Barbara Heck, Click Hollingsworth, Donna and Dave Hoover, Greg Karpinsky, Tom Killian, Will Michaels, Melissa Seixas, Tonilynn and Aaron Sharpe, Pat Tierney and our Police Department for watching over us!

Please remember: it's sign up time for Leadership Class 2011.

Ingrid Comberg, CONA Leadership Chair.
Photos by Monica Abbott



C

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**2010 Executive
Committee Members**

President

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

First Vice President & Audit Committee Chair

Mike Gulley - Coquina Key
244-8374 - jmgulley1@hotmail.com

Second Vice President

Cathy Wilson - Greater Woodlawn
455-9546 - catgwna@knology.net

Secretary

Conrad Weiser - Edgemoor
522-5008 - conrad33702@verizon.net

Treasurer

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

CONA Leadership

Ingrid Comberg - Historic Uptown
894-3048

CourtWatch Committee

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

Membership

Barbara Hawkins - Greater Pinellas Point
642-5035 - be.hawkins@verizon.net

**Land Development & Historic
Resources Committee**

Maureen Stafford - Historic Old NE
488-8154 - MJSPeterburg@aol.com

Nominating Committee

Judy Ellis - Lakewood Estates
864-3957 - jellis5610@tampabay.rr.com

Public Safety Committee

Steve Corsetti - Riveria Bay
576-1506 - tranquilitysouth@verizon.net

Barbara Heck, Snell Isle
Immediate Past President
894-6020 barbara@theheckhouse.com

OTHER CONA COMMITTEES

City Budget Review Committee
Mike Gulley - Coquina Key
244-8374 - jmgulley1@hotmail.com

Code Enforcement Committee
Cathy Wilson - Greater Woodlawn
455-9546 - catgwna@knology.net
Kai Warren - Historic Roser Park
821-9609 - kaistpete@gmail.com

Energy & Environment Committee
Jason Diviki - jdiviki@hotmail.com

CONA Board Meetings
3rd Wed of each month
CONA Executive Committee Meetings
2nd Wed of each month

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

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

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CONA ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP!

The Nominating Committee is presently putting together the slate of those who wish to run for office for 2010. If you've never been part of the Executive Board, perhaps this is the time to consider pitching in to help run this very important organization. Consider running for:

- President
- First Vice President
- Second Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Or consider heading one of the committees:

- Public Safety,
- Land Development
- Membership,
- Audit,
- Nominating,
- Leadership.

The slate of candidates will be presented at the November meeting, and the election will be at the December meeting. The Board meets at 6:00 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month.