

**2015 Annual Meeting
February 12, 2015**

2014 Overview

In preparation for this report, I reviewed what I said last year at this time as to what to expect in 2014. I am always amazed at how long it takes for issues to wend their way through the various bureaucracies. You would think that I would know better by now!

While many of us were, and continue to be. consumed by the large regional issues of the Indian River Lagoon and the potential effects of All Aboard Florida over the year, the very local issue of Mobile Food Vendors slowly made its way to, and through, the City Commission in September. While there were a few voices in favor of such trucks and carts on the beach, the overwhelming majority of you were opposed based on safety and support for our local establishments. We were successful in that trucks and carts can only be on privately owned commercial property and have to be 300 feet away from any park throughout the City. At that time in September, Commissioners asked for a review of how the Ordinance was working to be scheduled at their second meeting in January. That review was subsequently moved to the February

Conference/Workshop meeting that occurred this past Monday February 9th. These meetings are more informal

and are not televised. I can report tonight that the Commissioners did not recommend any substantial changes to the ordinance. There are a few minor corrections to be made, for example, a missing definition, that will require the Ordinance to come back before the Commission for two readings. But, no other changes will be made. A potential vendor can apply for a waiver of distance to the Commission and we will follow any such applications on a case-by-case basis. So, for now, there are virtually no opportunities for mobile food vendors on South Beach.

Of the 8 email Newsletters over the past year, 5 mentioned or were almost wholly devoted to this subject of the Mobile Food Vendors.

See Peggy Arraiz or a City Commissioner at the end of the meeting if you have questions or comments.

I mentioned All Aboard Florida earlier. Very few of you have asked if there is a South Beach Association position on this issue although we are aware of widespread opposition to the project as presented. I am not going to attempt to summarize or add to the multitude of comments on this issue at this time. You would have to live on another planet not to have some

idea of what is being proposed. So, for the record, let me ask our members now, by a show of hands, how many of you are in favor of the AAF project as proposed? Opposed?

(For the record - The members present were unanimously opposed to AAF as proposed.)

We had forecast that there would be significant movement regarding activities at the Port. While there were meetings of the Harbor Advisory Committee over the year, there is not much to report. You may recall that the HAC was designated to make recommendations for infrastructure improvements, which they did and those were sent to the State as amendments after both City and County Commissions approved. Then last year they were to come forward with yet more infrastructure recommendations, revisions for the Port Master Plan and plans for the Maritime Academy. The HAC has done its work but everything has been on hold until a joint City/County Commission meeting is held and the State issues its report on Maritime Academies in Florida. We had hoped for the joint meeting in December but now they are trying to schedule it for March. It is still a long way from completion as revisions of the Port Master Plan are changes in the County Comprehensive plan that require public hearings and there are other areas in Florida

that may want to submit plans for a Maritime Academy – the latter is not a slam/dunk for Fort Pierce. If this sounds confusing – well it is. We will keep you informed as information becomes available and try to make it clear as to what is happening.

If you have questions or concerns please see me or a City or County Commissioner at the end of the meeting.

Now for some developments that have begun during 2014 and will carry over to 2015.

Oculina Bank is developing plans for a stand alone, drive thru facility on the SW corner of Seaway and South Ocean Drives – you have all seen the signs. They are working with the City to try and help ease the parking problems in that area. The bank property will not take up the entire corner. We hope to see ground breaking this Spring.

Just across from the new bank on Seaway, plans have been submitted and approved for the Square Grouper – a Tiki style bar & Restaurant. The original Square Grouper is in Jensen Beach and has been very successful. They have also submitted a proposal to the City to extend their parking lot to include the temporary dirt parking lot owned by the City just west of the roundabout. This is in the negotiation stage. It would provide some additional parking and the lot would be surfaced as it is in Jetty Park. We'll let you know if this progresses.

As you may or may not be aware, in season all day and, particularly Thursday-Sunday nights we have a real parking problem in the area of Jetty Park and nearby businesses. In a sense we have thought of this as a “good” problem – people want to be there – it has become the “in”

place to go. But it has now escalated into what I am calling a “nightmare” of a problem that is almost out of control. The Fort Pierce Police Dept will increase their presence and some temporary short-term solutions are being planned. This problem will take some creative thinking to solve.

The City and current 4 businesses in the area have been working together to create an “Entertainment District” for the area. This is still in the development stages with the police dept, planning and code enforcement departments meeting with business representatives. They now recognize the addition of the Square Grouper to the mix and will attempt to come up with recommendations for Special Events and sidewalk cafe permits such as exist in Marina Square downtown. Any such events would exclude Jetty Park itself – it is not to become a “drinking” area and would need to be some form of security to prevent spillover into the park. This is still in the development stage and we will keep you informed as it progresses.

See Chief Frank Amandro at the end of the meeting if you have questions/concerns/suggestions regarding parking or the entertainment district.

We continue to have an active group of volunteers who pick up and clean up in our parks and on our beaches. They are now under the leadership of Charlene Adair the new SBA Beach and Parks Chair. Arden Peck who began this group years ago and served as Chair through the rebuilding of our parks has retired from that position. Arden please stand up and take a well deserved bow. The Public Works Dept.

sponsors the group with equipment and supplies and response to problems. This group averages about 100 hours of volunteer time per month. If you wish to join the group see Charlene at the end of the meeting.

Last, I must mention the SBA Holiday Lights during the month of December. We expanded them this year and plan to expand even more next year. Thanks should go to Christine Coke and our Public Works Dept for their great collaboration