

2019 ANNUAL MEETING 2018 OVERVIEW

Every year, I attempt to summarize what has happened over the past year of interest to those of us who live, work and play on South Beach. I begin by reviewing my projections at the end of last year's meeting for the year 2018.

The first was regarding the Port of Fort Pierce. You may recall that Stan Payne, Port and Airport Director, was our guest speaker last year and presented a rosy picture. The County finally did select a Mega Yacht firm and we are still waiting to hear that a contract has been finalized. There is much infrastructure work to be done before we see ships coming and going into this section of the Port. Luckily, the other firm, with local ties, that was not selected by the County, purchased land just to the North in the Port and are going it alone and we already see activity there. They will be a smaller operation but they are showing the way. A win-win for all of us. See any County Commissioner at the end of the meeting for more information.

I had thought that we would see positive movement on a project downtown for a hotel, conference center, residential and retail by the end of last year. Unfortunately, I missed the boat here (pun intended). Again there was talk and more talk. Would there be a train station with accompanying development? Would another developer or developers submit acceptable plans? I confess to be impatient – everything seems to take much longer than it needs to 😊

Then something happened last week! We finally seem on the right road to positive development. But that has happened in 2019 and this is the 2018 Overview. I'll save further remarks for later when I preview 2019. I am sure that Mayor Hudson will have something to say on this pending landmark decision.

I was not positive about movement on the Wastewater Treatment plant and I wasn't disappointed. Again some talk – no action. How many years have we said that!

I saw parking as a continuing issue on the beach and, again, it remains as the number one problem as voiced by local businesses on the beach. We have yet to see the “pay to park” lot filled to capacity. I suspect that there is resistance to having to pay to park. Does that mean that some people may stop coming? See Mike Reals at the end of the meeting.

I predicted that the Dogs on the Beach and Golf Carts on our streets would remain unchanged from our current regulations. On this I was right on the money. The very capable City Parks Committee studied these issues, sought input and brought forth recommendations to continue the policies of no dogs on our beaches and no golf carts that have not been converted to road use on our streets. No matter what was done – or not done- some people have been disappointed. Let me remind you that there is a dog friendly beach just south of the City at a County park. Dogs and beachgoers are just not a good mix. And, yes it is expensive to upgrade a vehicle meant for recreational use on a golf course but that is what is required. In both cases,

enforcement is the key. Please be a responsible dog and golf cart owner. Your individual “wants” are not more important than others “rights”

Another issue that was given to the City Parks Committee for study and recommendation was the increasing use of commercial vendors and activity at or ever popular Jaycee Park. I believe that this took on a life of its own when a few alleged that there was racism involved in the problem. The rules and regulations for our beach parks were revised back in 2011 and have not been changed since contrary to what some have said. There have been well documented instances of jet skis encroaching on swimming areas and violating the no vendor policies. This is still a work in progress and I will say more later.

Vacation rental applications for Conditional Use in the R4A zone continued at a slow pace. We hope most have gotten the message – either rent for 6 months or longer – apply for Conditional Use for shorter periods – or cease renting the property. Very late in 2018, a Conditional Use application was submitted for the R2 zone. There has not been one submitted for the R1 or R2 zone since 2015/2016. You all received an email Newsletter item on this subject. The Planning Board consideration of the application occurred just last week. So it is really a 2019 issue but I will cover it to date now. The SBA along with nearby residents strenuously opposed the Conditional Use to allow rental for less than 6 months in this owner occupied residential neighborhood. The Planning Board Staff recommended denial and the Planning Board voted unanimously 6-0 to

recommend denial to the City Commission. Next it will go to the Commission, hopefully sometime next month. We trust that they will be consistent and vote to deny as they did in the similar situations in the past. We will continue to oppose this application and ask residents to join us before the Commission. You cannot put a dollar amount on such a quality of life issue. See me at the end of the meeting if you want more information.

There has been movement on developing the commercial property in front of Harbor Isle. This property has been designated and, a section approved for limited retail operations for many years. There is more to come, probably in the near future. It is premature to speculate on what is planned – all there is right now is rumor what the developer may have said at some point in time. We recognize that some residents in Harbour Isle had hoped that nothing would ever happen on those parcels – that they could continue to gaze upon uninterrupted grassy areas. But that never was to be.

We were concerned that the State Legislature in its infinite wisdom, might pass some absurd bills that would further erode home rule for counties and municipalities. Fortunately it did not happen but that doesn't mean that the spectre has gone away. Keep your eyes and ears open. There are some crazies out there and some of them are in our State Legislature.

Finally, we hope that you all noticed and enjoy our project for 2018 – wraps on electrical boxes at selected beach parks.

We hope that others with boxes on their properties will step up and get theirs wrapped. There are many different colorful choices and they are scheduled to last for 10 years. See Charlene at the end of the meeting for more information.