



Indian Beach
Sapphire Shores
Association

NEWS & VIEWS

A Publication of the Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Association

SUMMER 1999

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Beautification News

By Alan Lillie



Our committee wishes to thank Nancy Stewart, now living in Merrit Island, for the donation of a Bottle Brush tree in honor of her mother, Eleanor Robinson who lives on Winsor Drive. The tree was planted in the circle on Winsor just west of Trail Plaza. A neighbor, Charlie Purdy, did the planting. Eleanor is watering it (absolutely necessary these days).

The project for preservation and landscaping of the bluff/beach at Indian Beach and Bay Shore Rd. continues to progress with a consultant having been selected and design work to start shortly. The project should be completed in 10 to 12 months. While this is totally a City project, our committee will be involved throughout the design phase. We expect that this small park will be a beautiful addition to the south end of our neighborhood. We now have a landscape plan for the triangles at Bay Shore/Mecca.

JoJo Lindquist, a landscape architect specializing in native plants, prepared the plan. After a final review of the plan we expect to proceed with ground preparation and planting with (hopefully) a completion date in time for the rainy season. It may be necessary to depend upon immediate neighbors to assist in watering in order to get all plants and trees established. The entire project encompassing two islands will be a cooperative effort between the City and our neighborhood association. Jane Shea is project manager for the committee. Plans have been developed and some work has started on the right-of-way between 45th and 47th Streets at Sarasota Avenue. This is another co-op effort between the City and our association. Sharon Miller and June Haley are project managers from our committee who are working with immediate neighbors and city staff who have been very helpful.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (PDC)

By Burt Polishook

The Spring IBSSA General Meeting is scheduled for June 8, 1999. At that time the entire neighborhood will have the opportunity to raise and discuss neighborhood and city issues. Many of the issues that will probably be raised were identified over the last few years via continuing neighborhood input, including several neighborhood-wide meetings. The PDC was established to "field" such issues, as the IBSSA board believes that the solving of problems and taking advantage of opportunities will significantly enhance the quality of life in our locality in an immediate and tangible way. The PDC also seeks to develop policy positions regarding the long term growth and stability of our neighborhood and the city. **Listed below are current PDC issues. We invite neighbors to discuss issues and to participate in their resolution.**

1. Tamiami Trail Redevelopment

The North Tamiami Trail remains a significant problem and presents a great opportunity to the city. There is no comprehensive redevelopment plan to upgrade this gateway to Sarasota for the benefit of the abutting neighborhoods and the city. Redevelopment has been intermittent, some good and some not so good, but all without coordinated planning. The outcome remains uncertain, especially for the area north of MLK Boulevard. City interest and support of redevelopment has been positive, but no organization is in place to assume leadership in developing a plan or vision for re-

development.

A subcommittee of the PDC, the Tamiami Trail Committee, chaired by Charles Hegener has been focusing on this issue. *See the related article in this newsletter, page 5.*

2. Adult Business Control

The city commissioners passed adult business ordinances in 1998 that were directed towards controlling these businesses and restricting their location away from homes, schools and places of worship. Exercising an aspect of these ordinances resulted in the permanent closing of one of these unwanted businesses, the Blue Video. Unfortunately, Pleasures II and Sheer Sensations continue to operate, adeptly finding loopholes in the ordinances. Some motels also continue to be a problem and have been able to sidestep enforcement of nuisance abatement regulations. While the city has been effective in controlling criminal activities of these businesses that are visible from the street, we are not assured that enforcement regarding criminal activity behind closed doors is an active policy. IBSSA members believe that continued operation of these businesses has an extremely negative impact on the safety, security, and property values of nearby homes and is a major impediment to redevelopment of the North Tamiami Trail. IBSSA members desire that the city follow up and, if necessary, enhance applicable ordinances to ensure that these businesses move from our neighborhood to the appropriate locations available to them in the city. *The PDC has been following*

up with City Code Enforcement and the Police to ensure EFFECTIVE maximum application of city ordinances.

3. Bay Shore Rd. Enhancements

In order to ensure that state and city funds related to or earmarked for enhancements to Bay Shore Road and its feeder streets were used to enhance the neighborhood, IBSSA members developed a neighborhood plan for enhancements and obtained support for staff review and action from the commissioners. The city engineering response has not reflected our plans and we are seeking changes that will achieve the standards set by the neighbors. *The PDC is currently awaiting responses to the neighborhood plan.*

4. Neighborhood Pocket Park

The integrity and stability of a neighborhood is increased significantly when there is a central meeting or gathering place, particularly where children can play. Two public locations exist in our neighborhood where people can gather, Sapphire Park and Indian Beach. While lovely because of their bay vistas, both are inadequate for children to use as play areas because of their size and location. IBSSA has requested city assistance in providing a centrally located pocket park for the neighborhood. Neighbors abutting a potential site have been polled and are generally positive that this site is usable for a minimal park. *Continued on page 3*

PDC continued

5. Mega-house Development

IBSSA members are concerned about permeable surface coverage and the development of mega-houses within our neighborhood. Such houses are often incompatible with the profile, scale, character, and design norms of the neighborhood. The impact of towering, disproportionate structures, squeezed onto insufficiently-sized lots, diminish opportunities to see the bay, block the natural flow of breezes with a curtain of structures, cause drainage problems to adjacent properties and polluted runoff into the bay, and minimize sunlight on the surrounding properties. *The PDC voiced these neighborhood concerns while the city comprehensive plan was being revised and is participating in on-going planning board workshops on the subject.*

6. Large Mega-Dock Development

IBSSA is opposed to the building of large docks on the bay front in our neighborhood. We believe that docks that exceed the limits of the current ordinance would diminish the character of our neighborhood and adversely affect the ecology of the shallow bay. The association wishes to protect the water quality of the bay, the natural shoreline of the bay, its aquatic plants and animals, and to retain the beautiful vistas that have become an integral part of the character of our neighborhood. We believe that zoning laws should be enforced.

Neighbors have organized to state their position at Board of Adjustment hearings on large dock variance requests. IBSSA is assess

ing possibilities of the bay front being designated as a conservation area.

7. Traffic Concurrency Exception Area (TCEA)

IBSSA members share the concerns of most Sarasotans regarding traffic (as noted in the Financial Sustainability Study) and expressed this in a presentation and letter to the City Commission. While we are not necessarily opposed to the TCEA, we have requested assurance that proper and balanced analyses are being done of both the benefits and risks of suspending state standards for traffic, and that impact fees are fully assessed. We have also requested that the city explore growth management strategies that would foster prosperity without impinging on Sarasota's quality of life. *The PDC is following this ongoing issue.*

8. City Responsiveness and Follow-up

The structure of city government, ie. elected representative commissioners but a non-representative and semi-autonomous continuing operational staff, can easily impact lines of responsibility and communication between the city and neighborhoods. Specifically, staff actions occasionally seem unresponsive, or independent of neighborhood wishes and interests. There appears to be no aggressive policy of communication and seeking of input from neighbor-

hoods by the staff. While the city has recognized some of this problem by establishing a Neighborhood (and Redevelopment) Department, resources for this department are currently very limited and organized procedures for neighborhood input on problems and opportunities are ad hoc. Furthermore, we believe that this department should not be involved in operational problems, but rather focus on long term neighborhood planning and development

The PDC is raising this issue in discussion with city officials and recommending a procedure be established to ensure continuing direct staff communication with neighborhoods including a formalized follow-up process on issues. Furthermore, we recommend an annual opportunity for residents and neighborhoods to rate the services provided by city staff so that benchmarks of customer satisfaction can be established for improvement purposes.

9. Rental Property Management

While our neighborhood has some problems with rental homes in disrepair due to lack of owner interest and absentee ownership, we believe this to be a significant problem in nearby neighborhoods. *The PDC is supporting various actions being considered by the city to solve this problem.*

Pat J. Taylor, REALTOR, knows the Museum Area

She has lived in the neighborhood 22 years & sold approximately 80 homes in the area during her real estate career.

If you would like a current complimentary market analysis, please call.

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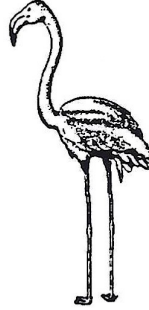
Indian Beach Sapphire Shores Association

Spring General Meeting

Tuesday June 8th

6:30 pm

Sudakoff Center
FSU/New College



Please plan to attend. Several important issues will be discussed. (Look for details in PDC article, pg. 2)

Gardeners Notes

Sarasota County has established a web site covering back yard composting at:

www.compostinfo.com.

This is an excellent source of information on all aspects of composting (providing of course that you are on the internet.) Also we wish to remind you of our plant exchange event at the annual Fall Picnic. Start saving your plants. If any of you would like to participate sooner contact Sandy Polishook, 358-9513, with ideas

and suggestions. We'd like to support a program if there is interest. Sorry to report that there has been some vandalism on the sculpture "The Lovers" at the north end of Sapphire Shores Park. While this is the first serious damage to any of the artwork, we are very concerned and have entered a police report. We ask neighbors to watch for any late night activities and to phone the police. The park officially closes at 11:00 pm and violators can be arrested.

Membership and Dues

1998 was a busy year for our Association, and as you can see from the first two newsletters of this year a lot is happening in our neighborhood this year also. Since the more Members we have the more representative we are, we encourage:

- New neighbors to join our Association
- Old neighbors who are not Members to join!
- Current Members who have not paid their 1999 dues to renew using the form on the back of this newsletter.
- All who can contribute above the \$10 dues level.
- All neighbors to become active in Association projects and committees.

If you have a question about your dues status, please call me.

Frank Zimmerman, Treasurer
351-2925

The Knaggs Family invite their Indian Beach Sapphire Shores neighbors to stop in soon for lunch or dinner.

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Jack Voorhees

The North Trail Committee NEWS

by Charles
Hegener

The Tamiami Trail Committee, a consortium of neighborhoods and institutions abutting the North Tamiami Trail, has been moving forward in evaluating the current condition of the Trail and the mechanisms that might be available to bring Sarasota's "Gateway" up to an acceptable standard. As we indicated in a previous article, there has been widespread dissatisfaction with the appearance of the Trail and the limited number of businesses there that add to the quality of life of our neighborhood. The NT is symptomatic of both the successes and failures of urban and economic planning in our city. It has been striking to review the work of previous planners on the Trail and to see the same goals we have today expressed in documents dating back 20 years. We hope to build on this earlier work. What has been missing? Our committee's preliminary finding is that the shortfalls of the NT are due not to a lack of ideals, or urban design standards, but to the lack of a progressive economic development plan for the city, and the absence of a political context in which decisive changes can be made to achieve long-term goals. We also believe that the private sector could be more effectively utilized to achieve planning objectives. How can an urban upgrade plan succeed if you don't know what kind of future economy you seek, or how to attract appropriate new businesses?

Our discussions with various

planning experts and officials suggest that the NT "problem" is a particularly sophisticated one. First, the Trail has a "bipolar" configuration, with strong entities at either end, not particularly well related to each other, and not much of economic or social benefit to the surrounding neighborhoods in between. At the south end, large tracts abutting the waterfront and downtown have attracted large scale commercial, office, assisted living and hotel projects. At the north, regional institutions proceed with their activity. In terms of the neighborhood interests, however, there is very limited progress. The post office has closed, as has the Granary. Eckerd's, though an improvement over its previous location, and convenient, has been constructed without regard to urban design or Cepted (safety and appearance) standards. In sum, given current conditions, we have found no one to articulate a case as to why businesses of value to the neighborhood would locate between MLK and the Airport. The current policy of liberal commercial zoning to encourage new business isn't working. And the neighborhoods have negligible influence over outcomes.

The key point is that there is no operating vision to guide the development of this vital area in our neighborhood. The key question is whether a vision, with appropriate implementation mechanisms, especially an economic plan, can be developed. The follow-up question is whether political support can be rallied to get something done. Our

consulting planning experts suggest that only a value-added economic development approach, plus a complementing urban design plan, will prove effective. The alternative outcome is likely to be driven by short-term economic forces, which means that new businesses would likely be those relying on the drive-by, strip-area market currently available on the Trail. Planning, policy, and politics typically track potential revenue. The good news is that communities throughout the country provide lessons on how to successfully deal with urban development challenges of this kind. Though beyond description here, valuable insights into local planning matters are available in Sarasota's recent "Financial Sustainability Study" and in consulting studies commissioned by the Committee of 100. These sources indicate we are not likely to find an "off the shelf" solution. However, we are hopeful that a "combination of ingredients", plus access to the right expertise, may prove effective. We are very encouraged by the support we are receiving from institutions and city officials.

Susan Burns of our committee has developed a draft vision document, which is posted on our IBSSA website at www.sarasota-online.com/ibssa/. The term "draft" means that we are interested in incorporating the ideas and wishes of our neighbors. We are currently seeking to identify appropriate models and "best practices" examples to guide us in articulating an effective NT plan. Our particular thanks to Frank Folsom Smith and Bob Einsweiller for their valuable insights and visits with us.

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Happenings

Community Events and Information

By Sylvia Knight

The Happenings page at the Indian Beach Sapphire Shores web site www.sarasota-online.com/ibssa has been updated for May. I hope you will visit soon and check it out. Some highlights are as follows:

- Did you know that Comcast Cable has an email newsletter that is free and arrives at your computer on Fridays? If you want to try it just send an email to <tmatrullo@comcastpc.com> and type "subscribe" in the Subject line. It contains a lot of interesting info for the week as well as websites you may find useful. Tom is the webmaster for Comcast. You can check his page at <http://www.InSarasota.com> for more interesting stuff. Also Comcast now offers cable internet service in our neighborhood.
 - **Ringling Museum** has two Super FREE events coming early in June so I put them up in May so you can mark your calendars. You don't want to miss either one.
 - Check out the FREE Late Night Series over at the FSU/Asolo Performing Arts Center in the Conservatory Theatre. The remaining production is titled *Savage Love*, by Sam Shepherd and Joseph Chaikin will be Friday, Saturday and Sunday May 14, 15 at 11 pm for night owls & May 16 at 7:00 pm for sleepy heads.
 - More FREE events at the Ringling School of Art & Design
 - Have you ever visited the USF/New College library web site? It's got a lot of interesting stuff including the virtual library and much more.
 - **Sarasota Visual Arts Center** continues with new exhibitions, demo workshop, classes for adults and children.
 - Ever think of becoming a tour guide? Here's your chance. **The Crosley Mansion** at Seagate is going to start giving tours in the fall. You can sign up and become a Charter Member of the Crosley Docent Corps.
 - **The Childrens Zoo** has a new feature (which isn't described on the web page) It's a special pool with fountain so I understand. They need volunteers to help with the children who visit on Saturdays.
- *All of the foregoing are FREE events...donations accepted but not mandatory. Go check the Happenings page out and then go have some FREE FUN!*

Docents WANTED by the Ringling Museum

The Ringling Museum is starting a new Docent Class in the fall, the first Docent class in five years.

If you have an interest in becoming a Ringling Museum docent, please contact:

Susannah Michalson, Docent Coordinator 359 5680 or

Julie Kummer, Docent 355- 2586 email, jukummer@home.com

Sylvia Knight is a Docent at the museum and can also answer most questions you might have regarding the upcoming class. Call her at 355-8335 or email at camirad@gate.net or camirad@home.com



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A Doggie Bag, Please

Those of you who like taking your dogs for an evening walk are probably familiar with the lovely Sapphire Shores Park and have made use of the "doggie-pick-up bags" which are provided by the association in an effort to keep the area clean for us all to enjoy. The bags do not appear by magic..... over the years several kind souls have volunteered to replenish the 3 boxes when needed. This should not be a lifetime job and it is time for a "changing of the guard". It would be wonderful if some of you who use the park so much would jump in and take over the task for a while. Bart Cotten will be happy to continue securing the bags and make them available to the "bag person". If you can help, please call him at 351-3236. If no one volunteers, it is likely that we will just not have this convenience anymore, and that could become rather messy. Dog owners also please obey the leash law!

• Neighborhood Watch News •

SEE IT! HEAR IT! REPORT IT!

CRIMES REPORTED

Mail theft has become a problem in our area recently. Several neighbors have had out-going mail stolen from their mailboxes and in most cases, the stolen mail contained checks written by the owner. Residents are encouraged to take their out-going mail to the post office drop box. If you do mail from your own mailbox, be sure to wait until it's almost time for your letter carrier to arrive before putting the mail in your mailbox and raising the flag. Report all cases of mail theft to the police and the post office.

Regrettably, we have also had reports of residential and auto burglaries in our neighborhood. These incidents of crime should remind us of how very important it is to be aware of what's going on in our area and to report any and all suspicious persons or activity to the police immediately.

Please obey the 25 MPH speed limit!

REPORT IT!

1. Call the Police 316-1199 or 911
2. Inform your Block Captain or Coordinator
3. Alert you neighbors

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH COORDINATORS

SAPPHIRE I:

58th Street to 47th Street

Debbie Muller 355-5743

SAPPHIRE II:

47th Street to Myrtle Street

Paul Hoyt 355-6324*

SAPPHIRE III:

Myrtle Beach to Indian Beach Drive

Don Kraft 359-3576*

SAPPHIRE IV:

Indian Beach to Whitaker Bayou

Dianne Underwood 924-5129

UPLANDS:

Sargeant Dave Hart 951-5051

*Coordinators are needed in SAPHIRE II and SAPHIRE III. Please call Paul Hoyt or Don Kraft if you would like more information on becoming a coordinator.

For more information about Neighborhood Watch or if you have any questions or concerns about police related business call Officer Debbie Rossnagle at 954-7057 or Lieutenant Bill Spittler at 364-7317.

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Membership Application and Dues Renewal Form**

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email Address: _____ Occupation/Hobbies _____

Are you interested in volunteering for neighborhood projects? _____

* If you have a question about your dues status please contact the Treasurer, Frank Zimmerman at: email, afzim@home.com phone, 351-2925 ?

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Total Enclosed _____

Make checks payable to IBSSA. Mail to: PO Box 49673, Sarasota, FL 34230

*Indian Beach
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