

Tarpon River Civic Association
General Meeting Minutes
January 24th, 2019
Recorded and Submitted by Toni Ravelo

Mission: "To Improve the Quality of Life in the Tarpon River Neighborhood"

The meeting was held at the Southside Cultural Arts Center (SSCAC) and was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by President Allison Foster. The following Board of Directors and Associate Directors were present:

- Brucie Cummings, Vice President
- Allison Foster, President
- Jack Malloy, Director
- Toni Ravelo, Secretary
- David Rose, Director
- Steven Buckingham, Director
- Beverly Grant, Director
- Marie McLaughlin, Treasure
- Janet Scraper, Director

Fort Lauderdale Police Officer update:

- Police Officer Nick Cuevas & Police Officer Ivan Fernandez – Crime Stats from Dec 2018 to Jan 24th 2019:
 - 0 burglaries compared to 1 burglary same time last year
 - 5 auto break-ins this year, same time last year 10 auto break-ins
 - 0 residential break-ins this year, same time last year 2 residential break-ins
 - 5 property break-ins this year, same time last year 15 property break-ins
- Residents please continue to do what we do, keep car doors locked, doors locked, etc.
- Question from Steven – Fort Lauderdale Police dept is partnering with Ring Door security – anything that may be shared with how that program is going?
 - Police dept has partnered with Ring Door and devices were donated to police dept– 100 were raffled off 20 arrests were made from ring door device surveillance – Rind Door also comes with an app called “neighbors by ring” – videos from app are uploaded with permission from resident, video is shared with local detectives who compile all the videos and use them as evidence in arrests. “Neighbors by Ring” – app specifically for crime and it’s free. For every 2000 downloads of app in our neighborhood, police get 100 Ring Door devices to raffle off to residents

Updates from Allison

- Allison asked members to speak with their neighbors and encourage those around them to join TRCA.
- Marie will need an email address in order to register you or any new member of TRCA onto tarponriver.org so members may receive our latest info.
- Allison mentioned that on March 12th – vote will take place on two bonds, one for police and one for parks, please educate yourself and vote. Allison mentioned that she did a tour of the police department and is willing to share pictures from her phone on why the police dept needs a new headquarters
- Brucie is available to answer any questions regarding park bonds because she is on the parks board.

- Allison mentioned that the price tag for bonds is high however please keep in mind that money will be given over time.
- Allison mentioned that Enrique from TRCA just added a new little library to neighborhood little libraries, this new little library will be located at 8th Street & 6th Ave

Update from Allison on ongoing projects –

- Sidewalks – SW 9th Ave from Davie – waiting on final steps from City
- Swale Trees – Please contact Jay if you are able to help with planting these trees, they require a really big hole to be dugged up.
- Lighting – is being worked on, Janet is leading that with FPL
- CERT – Marie will have more info to come on this
- Adopt A Street – Happens twice a year during winter and spring – important to participate so we may obtain points to improve where we live.
- Party In the Park – more info to come soon
- Building Developments – board is staying a breast to any new buildings in the city
- Quiet Zone – update to be announced

This is what we are working on so far, please let us know if there's something you would like for us to look at or may be missing.

- Upcoming Events and Dates calendar for 2019 is out and asterisks are placed next to events that need volunteers. The more folks involved the better! Please stay involved. (you may find the 2019 calendar of events and dates within our tarpon river website: <http://tarponriver.org/cgi-bin/documents.pl>)
- St. Patrick's Day – all are invited to walk in parade with us.

Update from Treasurer, Marie

- So far for 2019 we have 61 members
- At the end of 2018 we had 197 members
- We raised our membership fees from 10 to 15 for individual members and from 20 to 25 for couples
- \$3647.31 – balance in our checking account however, we spent money on party in the park and adopt a street
- Money market account – \$25,845 we want to use on something that will benefit an entire area, we don't want to arbitrary use it.
- Neighborhood leadership Academy – if interested in our city and neighborhood and how things work, attend, deadline to register is a week from today.

Questions –

1. From attending member: When is sidewalk going to get started?:
 - a. Answer from Allison, President – working on finalizing design for sidewalks with public works, finalized by Jan and get in construction this spring, no date announces but city is working on it.
2. From attending member: When I went to park graffiti was found all over Lewis Landing park specifically on benches – pictures have been taken – and email sent to superintendent of park –park maintenance came out to clean and take down however some graffiti is still there, police needs to monitor park at night. Also, lots of liter found in the park.
 - a. Answer from Allison, President - will share with police.
 - b. Follow up answer from Steve, board member – Parks are managed by park rangers – will notify them – still on picnic tables and still on benches – Steve can ask for increased presence of park

rangers so these incidents don't happen again and ask people the perpetrators are. Patrol is needed after dark and police need to be notified.

- c. Additional info from Deputy Parks Director, Enrique – Park rangers are on duty from 7am – 12am and cover all 105 parks, they are on after 9pm. **They have a non-emergency line 0 954-401-0800 – please report any incidents that include people sleeping in park, etc**
3. Comment from member on recent raccoon attack – We haven't found the raccoon that was provoked and attacked a neighbor's dog and owner was bitten by raccoon.
- a. Comment from Steve – nuisance animals are a problem – the most important thing is to contact Broward County animal control, use flash lights at night when walking dogs, don't feed nuisance animals and if you are feeding outdoor cat, pick up food at night.

Update from Vice Mayor and Commissioner – Ben Sorensen

Scooters – Ben's Update – we have given scooter company's a trial period of 3 months for scooters – and now Ben believes they need to be ban, and why is because they are detrimental to our city and are a liability for our city – the state law regarding scooters in Florida states:

- Scooters can not be on roads or bike paths or streets or bike lanes or sidewalks. They can only be on private roads and sidewalks if municipalities allow them to be on sidewalks.
- Fort Lauderdale ordinance states – you can ride on sidewalks with scooters but scooters can not be anywhere else because it's illegal per state law.
- Because scooters can only be on sidewalks and we don't have sidewalks everywhere in Fort Lauderdale this makes scooters an unviable mode of transportation in our city.
- Another reason why they need to ban – City of Fort Lauderdale is sued quite often, we have a team of 14 lawyers on staff and the #1 suit filed against the city are trip and falls on sidewalks therefore sidewalks are a significant liability.
- 3rd reason why we need to ban scooters – Fort Lauderdale granted a 3 month trial period to scooter companies with very low licensing rates. Whilst the city granted these scooter companies this, the scooters companies simultaneously have been calling state reps and lobbying through a person named Jackie Toledo from Tampa to pass a bill which will preamp municipalities from regulating scooters period. Municipalities will have to treat scooters as bikes. Scooters may go anywhere they want, and you won't have to have a license to rent a scooter along with no cap on number of scooters within our city.
- This is the time to move aggressively as a city to pass significant restrictions on scooters or a ban on scooters because if this bill passes we are preempted to deal with scooters.
- There is a chance that they will try to make this bill retroactive – will need to ban this now.

Questions / Comments from members on topic:

- When does 3 months period end?
 - Remains till we change it
- Who is sponsoring bill?
 - Jackie Toledo in Tampa
- Are there other options for scooters such as raising licensing fees?
 - We could, however, if this bill passes that higher licensing fee will puts us in bad legal position.
- What are the hospitals stats regarding scooters?
 - So far 1 fatality
- Question from Steve board member – there is a need for this form of transportation due to it's reduction of carbon footprint, adoption rate has been tremendous and taking scooters away is going to deny a lot of people who can't afford cars. If we are going to turn scooter companies down what will be alternative we will offer?

- Over 200,000 rides have been accounted for from scooter companies in our city.
- Yes there is a need, yes this is taking cars off the road,
- An alternative would be electric small vehicles that run around downtown, as on demand electric vehicle service.
- Janet, board member suggests that maybe at least in the verbiage within our ban of scooters, we don't ban forever, but until there is a designated scooter path that is perhaps created.
- What about putting speed limits on them?
 - Ben - The providers will receive a profit dip so they don't want to slow down scooters.
- Ben also reminded us that officers are not equipped to enforce scooter issues
- In the event that lobbyists win is there an opportunity for city to profit from this to offset?
 - No because state law will only allow reasonable licensing rates.
- How fast can we pass law to ban scooters?
 - Attorneys are working on it now, by beginning of March.
- What can citizens do to help?
 - There are 5 votes on commission - we need 3 votes to pass this law – Ben encourages you to contact other commissioners and mayor and share your thoughts with them so they may vote and pass this law to ban scooters.
- Email or call state reps as well – Bobby Debose: ebony.pardo@myfloridahouse.gov – Bobby's admin assistant - 954-467-4206
- When will state bill for scooters be voted on?
 - In a few months or two it will go up for vote in the State of Florida

Next update from Ben: Quiet Zones

- Find and follow Ben on Facebook or Twitter for latest updates and info on quiet zones.
- Brightline quiet zone projected completion date is Feb 15th, 2019
- Side note – the life safety dept has been freelo'd

Questions / Comments from members on this topic

- When did you get this latest info?
 - Yesterday from FPO
- Comment from Steve, board member – please stay on top of this to ensure deadline is met
- Where are quiet zones going to be?
 - Through the entire of stretch of the City of Fort Lauderdale and trains will not be pulling horn unless there is an emergency or through the train station.

3rd topic- Park Bonds, Police Bonds and FLL Chapter proposal - March 12th, 2019 voting date.

1. First Parks Bond – a proposed 200 million bond to improve existing parks, the creation of new parks and a savings account for future property acquisition for parks

Side note: Bonds are like a credit line – you aren't charged interest on that which you don't use. We would use this bond on small increments, and we are only charged interest on the money we use.

There was a 2016 parks master plan that was created – a 45 page doc identifying improvements – when you add all this you get 200 million, some parks have since gotten upgrades, what this bond will do is cover the top priorities in each district – we won't do things you don't want or that don't make sense.

Questions / Comments from members:

- How is this charged to us?
 - Through our Property tax bill - for example, if your house is 300k you will be paying \$3 a week - \$152 a year combined for the parks and police bonds.
 - How will it get allocated on tax bill?
 - Separate line item
 - It was informed that much money will go towards Holiday Park and another park?
 - There will be a signature project in each district
 - Including Lockhart Stadium – redoing so we may get more events there
 - District 3 – Carter Park
 - District 2 – Holiday park
 - District 1 – Tunnel top park North of Federal and Las Olas
 - Comment from Enrique, Deputy Parks Director – lots of money will also go towards seawall enhancements along river wall for residents
 - Completion of area south of Esplanade from 4th Ave south?
 - Ben – it's private property
2. Second Police Bonds – Police Station is in very poor condition if there is a category 2 hurricane police station needs to be evacuated. Police are asking for a 100 million bond, just a credit line – we are confident that ticket price will come in cheaper in the end.

Question – Will there be a police station location change?

- No, police station location will stay the same.
3. Third FLL charter proposal - We are the only city that has primaries in Jan and then general elections in March – having them separate costs the city money, city has to pay for entire costs of any elections. If we are able to move our elections to one date in each year we save money. So the charter change is asking that we move our city commission elections from March to November 2022 during the same time as our presidential elections. This will save us half a million, bring out more voters, and move our term to a four year term and we would be aligned with the presidential election dates.

Questions / Comments from members

- Are we still going to have a primary?
 - No, the non-partisan element remains the same, whoever has the most votes wins.
- All will be yes or no votes, along with some additional charter clean up questions and there will be a 4th piece to vote on that will be regarding the grammatical piece of our charter.

Additional Questions / Comments from members

- Question from Marie, Treasure – What happened to the fire station on 17th Street and Andrews? Why hasn't it happened yet?
 - A week from Saturday will be the ribbon cutting and breaking ground - Feb 2nd at 10am
- What happened with the wiki property?
 - Ben has heard nothing

- Question from Steve, board member – At last board meeting it was discussed that in the City of Fort Lauderdale projects in that will take place in the downtown regional center, the only approval step in this process that these projects need to go through is through the DRC, it does not need to go before city commission or PNZ, and 99% of time it's not called out. Is there is any thought that you or other commissioners have in changing this process or public opinion in anyway to have more oversight on uncontrolled growth in city which is now creating overgrowth?
 - Ben, yes – there is only one commissioner, Ben that has been the only one that has called up on all significant projects to be voted on. No one wants to join Ben or vote on this with him. There's a lot we can be doing.
 - 1 we have the master plan that was created in collaboration with neighbors – The city commission took master plan and put on shelf and uses it as a guideline and that's it. Codification process is coming, and a review of on-site plan is coming as well.
 - It's a change in UDLR which we will be doing.
- Comment & Question from Janet, board member - To Steve's point, Janet would like to see process changed soon. Why can't we do a process first?
 - Commission wants to do a holistic approach
- Question from Marie, Treasurer – why does the staff have so much power?
 - DRC is a group of 15 – 20 people a department of sustainable development, they can only say this complies with code or doesn't.
- What do you have anything in place now to defeat the AHF project?
 - Currently no, because, it's with DRC right now, then it comes to city commission, and then 3 total votes are needed to call it up and then 3 more votes to defeat it.
- Question from Steve, board member – Did you, in your conversations about making sidewalks a priority, discuss about making the city liable for sidewalks?
 - Yes! We need to assume full responsibility
- Follow up question from Steve - Is this something that the city needs to pass a vote on to assume this liability so we can sell this idea to neighbors?
 - No, but the city attorney is working on that ordinance. On Ben's to do list is to continue to expedite that.

Additional comments from Ben: Ben lead the effort to terminate the prior city manager, we now have a new city manager, Chris. Ben is Chris' boss, so Chris gets things done. Ben wants to be part of making sure things get done in a quick matter, so include Ben in your conversations so he may advocate them for us. Business card with cell phone on it were handed out to members.

Closing remarks from Allison

1. March 12th – voting, please take brochures and encourage neighbors to vote!
2. Rio Vista has invited us on Feb 25th to talk more thoroughly on police and park bonds - please attend this meeting if you can
3. John – from South Side Cultural Arts Centers thank you for being here.
 - a. John is the new recreation supervisor for the building, any programs you want, he's your point person, you can reach him at **954-828-6250**

If there other things you want to hear about let us know.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:48pm