



## General Membership Meeting October 14, 2014

- 1) **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Marilyn Mammano, President at 7:25 PM
- 2) **Roll Call:** Ron Centamore, First VP called attendance and declared a quorum.
- 3) **Motion to accept minutes:** Betty Shelley made the motion to accept the September 9, 2014 General Meeting Minutes and seconded by Chuck Black. The motion was accepted unanimously.

- 4) **Welcome:** A special welcome is extended to several that we don't see too often:

Juanita Grey, Interim President of her Association - Gwendolyn Clark Reed, Florida House of Representatives, representing the 92nd District, which includes northeastern Broward County, stretching from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale, since 2008. Who is up for re-election and asked for your vote on November 4<sup>th</sup>. She sponsored a bill to put forward regulations for commercial parasailing which passed that has been in the works since 1997. Fred Carlson, representative for the beach area thanked Gwendolyn and stated that parasailing is something the tourists love to do and makes their trip memorable.

- 5) **Acceptance of Minutes:** Betty Shelley made a motion to accept the minutes from the September 9, 2014 general meeting. Chuck Black seconded the motion and they were approved unanimously.
- 6) **Treasurer's Report:** Deferred.
- 7) **Police Report:** Shift Commander of District 2, Lt. Steve Greenlaw one of the 3 persons from the police department that will attend our meetings. He stated that he would be meeting with the HOAs in District 2 within the next week, and announced topics to discuss: Formation of the Community Resource Unit (CRU) which consists of 1 Captain and 2 sergeants and 10 Officers, the unit is going to be mostly assigned to the Downtown Sector and the Beach. The unit is not made up of existing patrols and they will remain the same. It was made up by reallocating resources. The Mounted Unit and Bike Unit will also be involved. The effort is being made to strengthen police protection for the businesses and visitors Downtown and on the Beach. All are now being certified for their positions on the unit and should be working within the next couple of weeks. Chuck Black asked what the purpose was for the unit. Lt. Greenwall stated that it was in response to the events on last Memorial Day. The City Manager brought forth the idea to have a unit comprised of officers that are trained to work as a group together instead of pulling officers from all areas that normally do not work together and not specifically for the type of duty they normally perform. Marilyn Mammano

asked if anything will change with the Neighborhood Action Team and he replied no. Lt. Greenlaw discussed the new ordinance – Solicitation in the Right of Way. Panhandling, selling candy bars, water, firemen with a boot, etc. is now unlawful. The reason the ordinance was put in place was a decision based on the record of accidents involved with soliciting: 2012-140, 2013-154. Most of those accidents were caused by people stepping off the curb into traffic. The only caveat is that there is a map showing where the ordinance is enforced. It is a misdemeanor offense and are working with individuals giving warnings for persons not creating dangerous situations, directing homeless to shelters, but multiple warnings, situations that create a hazard or cause accidents are cited. Fred Carlson stated that he called the non-emergency number to call in donations being taken at Oakland & Federal and the call center was unaware of the ordinance. Lt. Greenlaw asked that the non-emergency number should be used for that type of purpose, but in instances that person(s) are creating danger to themselves or to vehicle traffic the 911 number should be used. Luis Castillo stated that he also has trouble with the non-emergency number and is told that they don't know or not acting on calls. Lt. Greenlaw stated that the police know you have concerns when you call and need to react. By all means, if you are having any issues call your contact office or ask for a supervisor and give them the information. The police department can't act on issues that they don't know about. They are working and investigating complaints of the new BSO call center as an improvement tool only, not as a he said, she said. Marilyn Mammano stated that the new ordinance prohibiting camping in parks and on the beach has been enacted it has only created another issue, the homeless are moving out into our parks and neighborhoods outside of downtown and a Commissioner told us not to worry the police will take care of it. Lt. Greenlaw stated that when the homeless leave downtown or are released from jail, the first thing they do is migrate to neighborhoods and has been going on for 27 years and there is an attempt being made to improve the situation. They use discretion with enforcement of the homeless on their contacts with them and attempt to educate and get the homeless off of the street to a shelter, Salvation Army, etc. and we feel that is a much better solution.

**8) School Bond Issue:** Betty Shelly, Education Advisory Board Member attended the recent meeting that was held at Northeast High School and had the opportunity to speak to the Superintendent Mr. Runcie and asked if he would speak to our group and let us know what is happening. Mr. Runcie thanked us for the invitation and stated that he has lived here for 3 years and is proud to serve and raise a family here. Today, I would like to express how we can continue that legacy. On June 9<sup>th</sup> the school board voted unanimously to ask for the \$800 million bond issue. It will be decided on November the 4<sup>th</sup> and will address the many critical resources, safety and technology issues. Mr. Runcie was born in poverty in Jamaica and came to Florida in the late 1960's at 6 years old with no previous education and his family was in pursuit of the American dream. His family worked hard, had little entertainment and worked his way up in honors classes and with the help of great educators and administrators and people like yourselves, I was able to get financial aid and scholarships and attended Harvard. The reason I mention this is that if we give our students the right education they have the ability to accomplish the same as I have. This past year we had 16,000 students graduate. And those students earned \$125 million in scholarships. They were ranked #1 in the state in advanced placement, honors and awards. They also took 12,000 courses at colleges such as Broward College, University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University, they earned 6,100 Industry Certifications, and attend 600 universities across the United States. 92% of our schools are rated A & B rated. Broward schools are rated top in the state and by US News and World Report. The main objectives that I had on arriving here three years ago was to regain and restore the trust of the citizens and strive to give our students a high quality education

experience. On the operations side we have many deficiencies that we are working on. We no longer lease office space from private owners. As an example the largest lease in Saw Grass @ \$2 million/year with several hundred employees were spread out into existing district owned properties. Healthcare is our next biggest expense outside of payroll at a cost of \$225 Million/year with 30,000 employees and it was growing about 10%/year. To address that we went to a self-insured model, we competitively bid all of our contracts and reduced our administrative cost and urged our employees to use generic drugs whenever possible saving \$18 million this year. Since I have been here transportation has greatly improved and the best it has ever been according to teachers and parents. We now have GPS on the busses so we know where they are, improved logistics and routing and we have significantly reduced overtime and have purchased 98 eco-friendly busses that use propane and save about \$1 million/year in fuel and maintenance cost. In total saving \$7 million/year on transportation. We are instituting a debate program in every high and middle school, the largest in the country and every debate team has the support of a local law firm. In middle school athletics we have reinstated volleyball and flag football. We have expanded our dual language courses from 4 to 15 schools with English-1/2 day and either French or Spanish-1/2 day. We are in the process of introducing the courses to the K8 schools also. On the capital funding side we have lost \$1.8 Billion due to the 25% reduction by the state of our millage rate and coupled with lower property taxes. We have gone to the legislature year after year asking for funds and have been told that what we needed to do, as other school districts have done, the millage rate is not going to be restored and Broward County needs to ask our citizens to invest in our schools. We invest capital dollars in aging and outdated computer equipment, athletics, music and the arts. On renovation of our facilities we have 32 million sq/ft of school facilities around the district that need to be maintained. A needs assessment was recently done and noted that we needed \$3 billion dollars across the district in the next 5 years. Some of the issues we face are deterioration of roofs that cause flooding, like Northeast High School where students have to walk around puddles in the school, hot because the air conditioning does not work. Our infrastructure is now in the emergency room so to speak and a lot of patch work is being done. There are a lot of improvements that can be made if we had the funds to do them. For example, shortly after I got here I was approached concerning poor attendance and morale at Dillard High School which is a technology magnet school that was not working. Since then they have acquired assistance from companies like Motorola, and have an award winning robotics program and now a A rated high school for the first time. Fort Lauderdale High just completed a \$50 million addition, state of the art aquatic system and they rank in the top 5% of schools in the nation. On the elementary level Southern Park had D's and F's every year for a decade. We made numerous changes and they moved from a D to an A in one year. No company or family moves into our area without asking about the quality of our schools. Fred Carlson asked if it is wise to spend money for aquatic facilities and sports equipment before the fundamental education and computer equipment is upgraded. Mr. Runcie stated that he was in complete agreement and what they have done at Fort Lauderdale High was a holistic approach addressing all the needs of the school at once. Facility, technology, etc. He continued to explain how the \$800 million would be used. Going by the assessment of \$3 billion needed in the next 5 years, we cannot ask for or could we spend that much. The money we are asking for is to address the most critical issues that include all buildings and equipment repairs and includes technology and bring every school in the district up to standard. Bringing Fort Lauderdale approximately \$80-90 million to Fort Lauderdale. For the average homeowner who now pays approximately \$300/yr. in school taxes will increase to about \$350/yr. They are looking at these expenditures to stretch out over a 7 year period. We feel that we can

effectively manage and execute about \$150 million/year in projects and we could not execute \$3 billion dollar worth of work in that period of time. We have brought in a project manager, outsourced our construction management component, we also have a new chief of facilities. Our procurement process has changed, all contracts will be competitively bid out, open to the public and a Bond Oversight Committee will be put into place made up of a cross section of individuals across the county. The economic impact of the bond issue will create 8,800 jobs and a direct impact of \$1.2 billion to the economy. Marilyn Mammano asked if the Education Advisory Board are in favor of it. Betty Shelley stated that the Board has approved the bond issue. Mr. Runcie said that Fort Lauderdale provides 19% of the tax dollars they receive and 10% of the funds from the bond issue, but defended by stating that the spending is based on critical needs across the entire county. The school board is having a difficult time carving up \$125 million to address \$3 billion worth of work. The deferred maintenance increases every year due to small problems creating larger issues. There has been a huge increase in the number of work order requests and the maintenance department can't keep up. Chuck Black asked how some schools such as Northeast High have been allowed to get in such bad condition while other schools have be upgraded. Mr. Runcie explained that we are experiencing a huge increase of students that must be addressed and that the maintenance issues for which there were no dollars to address have been deferred year after year and that the bond issue will be used to address mostly the older schools, but all will receive technology upgrades. 217 out of 238 schools are going to receive HVAC work. We need to sacrifice for our kids for a better education.

**9) Landscape Ordinance:** Gene Dempsey, City Forester stated that we are in the process of Phase 1 of the revision of the landscape ordinance that promotes Florida friendly landscaping. The main objective of the ordinance is to conserve water and have a more sustainable environment. We are using a lot of the wordings from the Broward County ordinance and is based on 9 principles, the right plants in the right place, watering efficiently, fertilize appropriately, mulch, attracting wildlife, controlling pests responsibly, recycling yard waste, reduce storm water runoff, protecting the waterfront. There are many areas that have moved toward Florida friendly landscaping and have reduced the amount of turf grass. To learn more about Florida friendly landscaping go to [floridayards.org](http://floridayards.org) All government agencies are promoting conservation of water. We are also changing the terminology from Xeriscape to Florida friendly, increase native plants in landscaping from 40% to 50% and turf grass to 50% and private homes 60% and irrigation designed in zones to meet individual plant needs. This is for all new landscaping, not retro to existing landscaping. We will be reducing the diameter of 12" being able to cut down without a permit to 8" which saves about 6 years of growth. Promoting fruit bearing trees to landscaping. Kimberly Pearson with the Department of Sustainable Development is working with online information and issues permits for private owners. Fred Carlson pointed out that he is the president of his condo association and have a company that takes care of their landscaping and asked how those companies are going to be educated on the new ordinance. Adrienne Ehle, Public Works Dept. mentioned that the ordinance would be before planning and zoning on November 19th and the commission during December or January. If you have any questions or concerns you can contact her at 954-828-5798 or [aehle@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:aehle@fortlauderdale.gov)

**10) Code Enforcement:** Sharon Ragoonan, Code Compliance Manager discussed the things they are working on, what we are accomplishing in neighborhoods and things that we might be able to help them and keep the city beautiful, attractive and safe. There are 4 main areas that we are concentrating on are: To address most of the complaints within 2 days with our

16 code officers, mitigate blight in our city, realigning 4 code zones with a contact person for each neighborhood and they are working to get all the information on the website, and outreach to the citizens and the city for input and educating citizens and helping them understand the purpose of code. Deanglis Gibson is a new addition to the department who works mostly out of the Melrose Park area is formerly from corrections and gives us a different perspective on dealing with all citizens and their complaints. Marilyn Mammano stated that in her neighborhood they have complained about noisy a/c units on top of buildings making outrageous noises and asked if anyone else had similar instances that they wanted to discuss. Rochelle Golub stated there is an eye clinic that has equipment on the roof without any screening or noise abatement. Ms. Ragoonan replied that there is no ordinance stating that equipment must be screened, however the equipment must operate according to the noise ordinance. Peter, from Coral Ridge Country Club raised a question concerning boats and trailers on property and Marilyn stated that the questions are questions on individual interpretation of the law. Donna asked a question concerning confidentiality. She asked if a problem is given to them will their name and location be given to the person named in the complaint? Ms. Ragoonan replied that the best way to maintain confidentiality is by phoning in to the call center and reporting the issue, but if an e-mail is sent it becomes a public record and if anyone does a search of public records the information must be given to them. We strive to maintain confidentiality and avoid creating conflicts between neighbors. Sometimes persons retaliate on the reporting person by calling in complaints about the caller. We do not get into disputes and only respond to matters that are not in compliance with code.

**11) Children's Services:** Cynthia Busch, Executive Director, made everyone aware of a critical item on the upcoming ballot, for reauthorization of the Children's Council. They provide \$62 million for family intervention programs annually. \$0.96 of every dollar goes to programs and services. The program must be reauthorized or it will be dismantled, monies not put into a pot for the Commission, but lost.

**12) Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Steve Stahl, Recording Secretary.