

THE SARASOTA

Vol. 2, No. 7 — November 1, 2013

News Leader

The Progressive Voice Of Southwest Florida

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SARASOTA NEWS LEADER

The Progressive Voice of Southwest Florida

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Welcome

A few months ago, someone responded quizzically when I mentioned that the County Commission never ceased to provide plenty of fodder for stories. That person pointed to all the issues that appeared to have been settled at the time. Truthfully, I could not have contemplated just how many others would arise. I am sure County Editor Roger Drouin shares that view.

Of course, the county is not the only good source of news. I feel sure the “Stan fans,” as I refer to the multitude of readers who gobble up Stan Zimmerman’s stories every week, would readily admit they have seen no let-up, either.

Beyond government, Associate Editor Cooper Levey-Baker regularly rustles up story ideas no one else has found.

The news just does not stop around here.

As for this particular week, our issue has a figurative smorgasbord of topics. A city-county conflict, a delicious Downtown Improvement District story Stan has been covering that everyone else seems to have overlooked, negotiations over the future of Little Salt Spring, the outlook for the new interim county administrator and a looming human rights ordinance discussion for the County Commission are just a sample.

Fortunately, again, we have a couple of lighter features to balance out all the hard news. A&E Editor Elinor Rogosin offers a delightful survey of the Sarasota Ballet’s opening performances, and Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel had some unexpected fun in the courtyard of the Ritz-Carlton.

See for yourself!

Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor and Publisher





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ABOUT THAT MEMO ...

The 1950s-era Sarasota Police Department was torn down in the spring of 2012. Photo by Norman Schimmel

AS IT CONSIDERS LONG-RANGE PLANS FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER AND THE TAX COLLECTOR'S OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN SARASOTA, THE COUNTY COMMISSION DEMANDS ACTION REGARDING A CITY PARCEL

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

It is ours; we want it; so make sure we get it. In short, that was the directive the Sarasota County Commission gave interim County Administrator Tom Harmer on Oct. 29 regarding the site of the former Sarasota Police Department.

When Commissioner Joe Barbetta asked about the status of the Ringling Boulevard lot during a facilities planning workshop,

County Attorney Stephen DeMarsh replied, "The city has not conveyed that parcel to the county."

"They're supposed to do that, right?" Barbetta said. "Part of the deal was that we took that in trade, so technically, that's our parcel of land."

"It should be conveyed under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding

“We either need to be doing something with that piece of property or put that on the market; one or the other.”

Joe Barbetta
Commissioner
Sarasota County



(MOU), in my opinion,” DeMarsh said. “I’m not sure the city shares that view.”

“That should be resolved,” Barbetta told him. “That’s a substantial piece of property next to the judicial center,” he continued. “We either need to be doing something with that piece of property or put that on the market; one or the other.”

About 10 years ago, in an effort to create more office and courtroom space, then County Administrator Jim Ley threatened city staff that the county seat would be relocated out of downtown Sarasota if the city did not surrender the land under its existing police headquarters. The City Commission capitulated, and it built a new Sarasota Police Department tower on Adams Lane — across from Payne Park — to replace the 1950s-era

facility on Ringling Boulevard, just down from what was then the new Lynn Silvertooth Judicial Center.

“We really ought to push for the resolution of that issue, and I don’t see that happening unless a formal motion is made,” Chairwoman Carolyn Mason said after DeMarsh and Barbetta offered their comments.

Barbetta then delivered a motion, requesting Harmer and DeMarsh work with city administrative staff on the conveyance of the parcel to the county.

“I think that would be helpful,” DeMarsh said of the motion, which won unanimous approval.

When contacted about the action by *The Sarasota News Leader* on Oct. 29, City



Ringling Corridor – Parking



An aerial map shows the location of the current and proposed county facilities on Ringling Boulevard in downtown Sarasota. Image courtesy Sarasota County

Manager Tom Barwin said he was unaware of the County Commission's action. "I'm anxious to continue the conversation," Barwin said, noting he had had earlier discussions about the property with DeMarsh and former County Administrator Randall Reid, who was fired on Oct. 23.

Barwin added that it was his understanding that only one or two of 10 provisions in the MOU ever were implemented.

"We look forward to the conversation and learning more of [the county's] plans and options and how we can continue to collaborate," Barwin told the *News Leader*.

The parcel's fate came up again later during discussions about proposals for the Criminal Justice Center on Ringling Boulevard, as

county Facilities Services Director Ed Gable presented options to the board during a facilities planning workshop. (See the related story in this issue.)

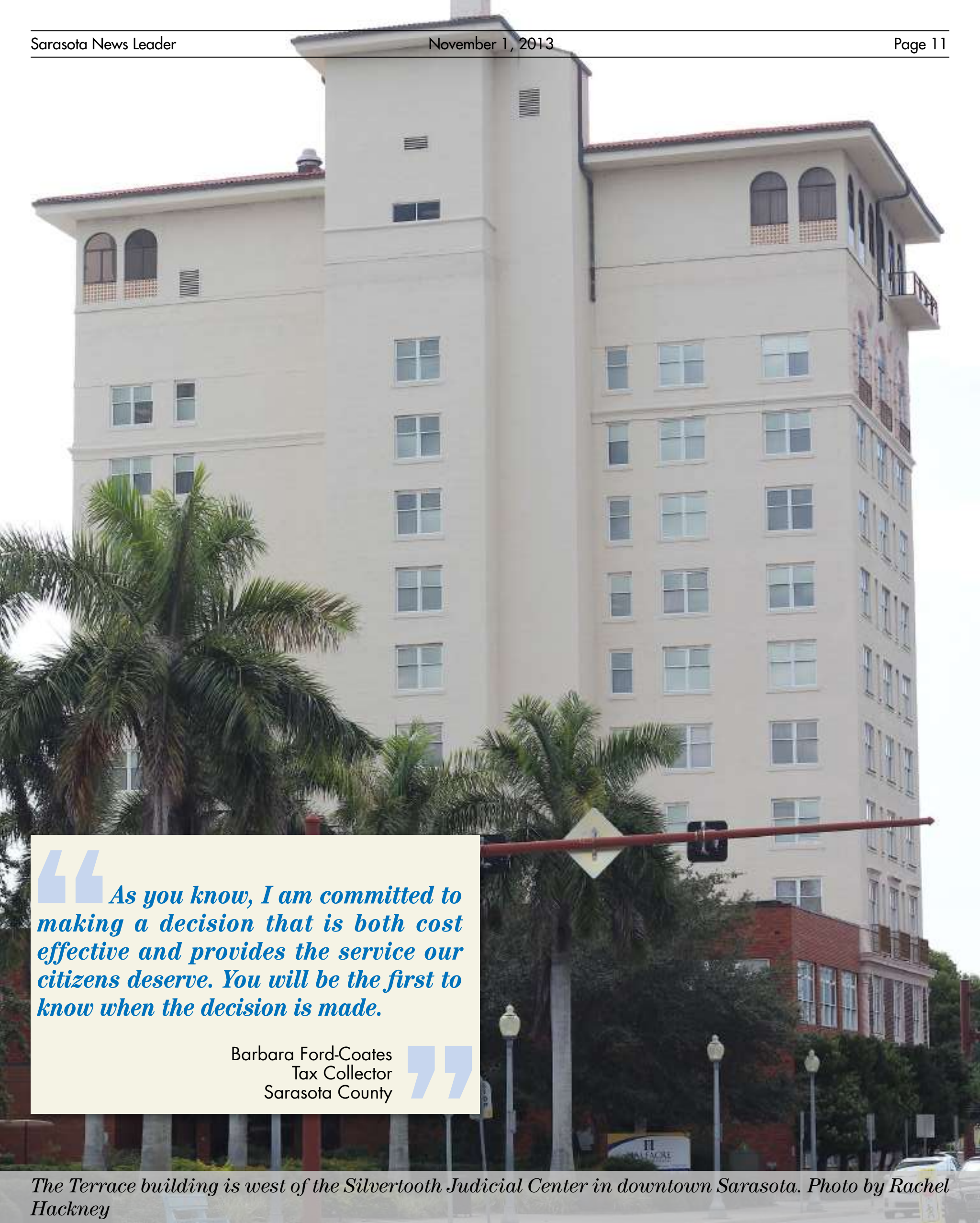
Gable suggested the site of the former police headquarters could be utilized for a parking garage. Between that new facility and two extra levels added to the existing garage on Ringling Boulevard, he continued, that area of downtown would gain between 300 and 400 more spaces.

However, Commissioner Christine Robinson voiced concerns about using that site for parking, because of the future need for more courthouse room.

"We've been certified for a long time in need of judges by the Florida Supreme Court," she



As of June 2015, the state no longer will handle driver's license matters at its 601 S. Pompano Division of Motor Vehicles office in Sarasota. Image from Google Maps



“

As you know, I am committed to making a decision that is both cost effective and provides the service our citizens deserve. You will be the first to know when the decision is made.

Barbara Ford-Coates
Tax Collector
Sarasota County

”

The Terrace building is west of the Silvertooth Judicial Center in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Rachel Hackney

noted, referring to the 12th Judicial Circuit in Sarasota.

At some point, Robinson said, the county would get those extra judges, and it would need space for the courthouse facilities to expand.

Commissioner Nora Patterson, who is in her fourth term on the County Commission, responded that the MOU with the city had focused partly on the need for a new courthouse tower. "I had actually forgotten that," Patterson added.

"I agree with Commissioner Robinson," Barbetta said. It made no sense to accommodate cars and not people, he continued. Instead of spending money on new parking garages, he pointed out, those funds could be

spent on public transit, including a "circulator" — or trolley — that has been discussed for downtown Sarasota.

Gable also noted that county plans developed years ago called for the relocation of the Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) transfer station from Lemon Avenue to Ringling Boulevard, in the Criminal Justice Center. However, Gable noted, "I don't believe that whole proposal is far enough along."

"Hopefully, we can move the SCAT transfer station there," Barbetta said.

When Barbetta asked whether Gable had seen "a huge demand for more parking" in that area of Ringling Boulevard, Gable replied that the city zoning code would necessitate the creation of more parking if the county



A graphic shows the area being searched for an existing facility that could be leased by the Tax Collector's Office. Image courtesy Sarasota County

added a new courthouse tower or expanded the jail, which is across the street from the Silvertooth Judicial Center.

Robinson reminded her colleagues that the Sarasota County Tax Collector's Office also will need more parking spaces when it takes over all the issuance of Florida driver's licenses beginning in June 2015.

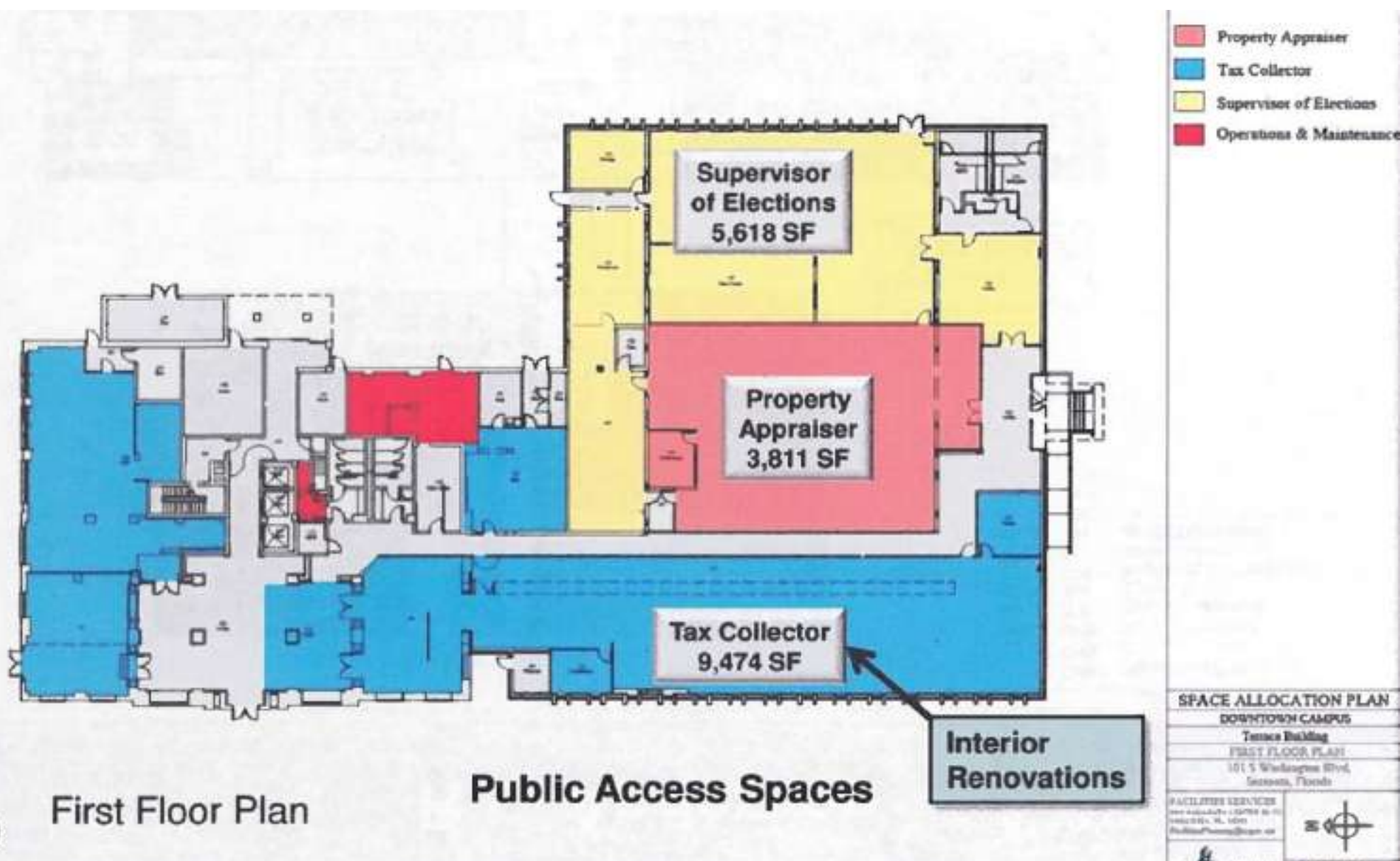
In June, Tax Collector Barbara Ford-Coates discussed with the commissioners **her need for expanded space** in the Terrace Building — located at the intersection of U.S. 301 and Ringling Boulevard in downtown Sarasota — to enable her staff to accommodate the number of people who will come to that office to apply for and renew licenses.

During a County Commission budget workshop in August, Liz Klaber, the deputy chief tax collector, explained that the office would expect to see an extra 137 customers per day at the Terrace Building once it took over that service from the state, as mandated by the Florida Legislature.

Barbetta countered that he could not see taking "a prime piece of property" and putting a parking garage on it.

THE DRIVER'S LICENSES CONUNDRUM

During an interview with the *News Leader* on Oct. 29, Ford-Coates said it already is too late for the county to purchase a parcel and construct new facilities to accommodate the



A graphic shows plans for remodeling space in the Terrace building to accommodate more driver's license customers starting in June 2015. Image courtesy Sarasota County

driver's license workload in a mid-county facility, as she had hoped when she addressed the County Commission during its June 21 budget workshop.

At that time, she pointed out, "The big issue is the 5,000 road tests that we will have to handle."

In August, Klaber noted that the office also would have to handle driver's license road tests for people with medical conditions, and staff had been advised it was preferable to offer those tests on site, instead of requiring the drivers to go out on the highway.

Regarding a new or leased mid-county facility, Klaber added, "Our goal is to do a closed course." State officials urge that practice, she added, for safety and security reasons. Moreover, that would be more efficient in terms of staff time, Klaber said. Members of the public could make appointments to come to the facility for those road tests.

Gable told the commissioners on Oct. 29 that staff members had been searching for a facility from Clark Road to Bee Ridge Road and from Beneva Road to Interstate 75 to lease space. Further, he said, the state Division of Motor Vehicles office at 601 S. Pompano Ave. is about 3,000 square feet on a 5-acre site. The DMV has not made a decision yet, on the future of that structure, Gable added; its lease with the county runs through 2023. However, Gable noted, "Our lease is pretty specific ... about what they can and can't use it for, if they don't use it for drivers' licenses anymore."

Patterson suggested that it might be a good interim site for the Tax Collector to handle driver's licenses, as it would be a less costly consideration than the \$4 million to \$5 million

Ford-Coates had broached in June as the potential expense for new and remodeled facilities.

"I think it would be a very viable option," Gable replied.


When contacted by the *News Leader* after the discussion, Ford-Coates — who said she had watched the meeting — pointed out that if she had to take over the Pompano Avenue site, that would necessitate expenses for more staff.

She added, "The goal is to come up with a long-term solution that will cost the least," and buying property to construct a new building might be the most efficient option.

"The Pompano facility is, well, adequate," she said. "It's not the quality we like to provide our customers and our staff."

In an email she sent to the county commissioners early on Oct. 29, Ford-Coates wrote:

"Since you are discussing facilities today, I wanted to let you know that I have not yet made a decision about the best way to proceed with the driver's license transition. I am still carefully reviewing and refining our options. However, under any of the possible plans, the workload will definitely increase at our current offices," which will require the expansion and remodeling of the Terrace building, more parking for that site and expansion and remodeling of her office's space in the R.L. Anderson Administration Center in Venice.

She added, "My staff continues to consult with your staff as we refine the alternatives. As you know, I am committed to making a decision that is both cost effective and provides the service our citizens deserve. You will be the first to know when the decision is made." 

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A DEAL CUT

THE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BOARD HAS FOUND A WAY TO PACIFY ONE OF ITS BIGGEST TAXPAYERS AFTER A BUILDING MANAGER THREATENED TO PULL OUT

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

“Hostage.” “Extortion.” Those were some samples of the strong language voiced by board members of the Downtown Improvement District on Tuesday morning, Oct. 29.

They were reacting to an offer from the manager of one of the largest buildings downtown. He threatened earlier this month to withdraw the structure from the DID unless

the organization paid for \$5,000 worth of concrete in front of his building.

That structure is at the northeast corner of Main Street and Orange Avenue; it is known as the Ellis building, last leased by Bank of America. It is owned by Benderson Development Co. and managed by Larry Fineberg.

(Above) The Ellis building most recently was home to Bank of America in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Two weeks ago, Fineberg threatened to pull out of the DID after he realized new landscaping would obscure some ground-floor windows. He wants to repurpose the building after the departure of his biggest tenant and put retail on the ground floor.

On Tuesday DID board member Dr. Mark Kauffman reported that he had called Fineberg to set up a meeting. "I said we need you in the DID," Kauffman told his colleagues. "I suggested the DID pick up the tab for changes to the engineering drawings," adding four parking spaces to the planned Main-at-Orange roundabout. "That would almost pay for what he's paying for the landscaping," added Kauffman.

Before agreeing to the deal, DID board member Tom Mannausa asked if Fineberg had put



City Engineer Alex DavisShaw asked the Downtown Improvement District board for direction on new outdoor seating requests. Photo by Norman Schimmel



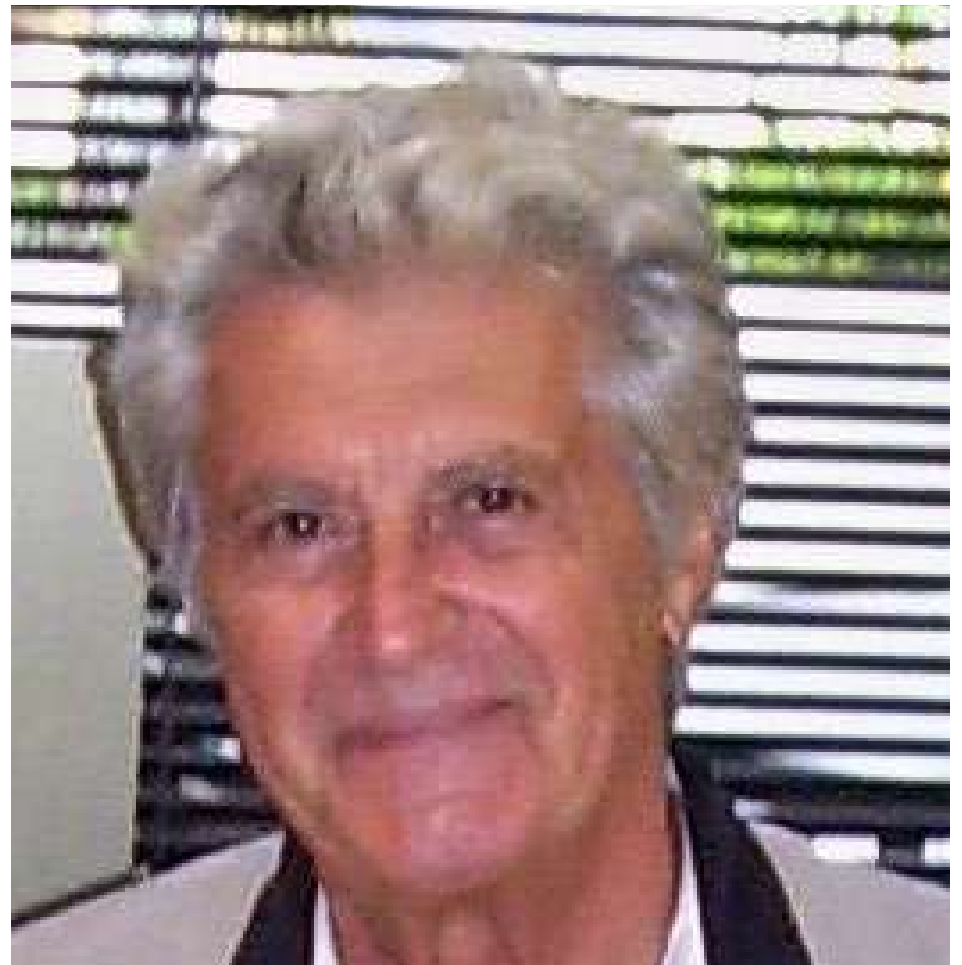
New landscaping has been planted in front of the Ellis building as part of downtown Sarasota improvements. Photo by Norman Schimmel

his “withdrawal of the withdrawal” in writing. Kauffman responded, “He will,” to which Mannausa replied, “I don’t like being held hostage. I’m supportive of the request, but it should not be a matter of him holding that as a hostage. “

“Larry is an honorable person,” said Kauffman. “He has to go through his corporate thing. He said he would rescind it, and that’s good enough for me.”

DID board member Eileen Hampshire noted Fineberg approved the early landscaping plans before Bank of America moved. “Did he change the use of the building, and this [landscaping] is no longer appropriate?” she asked.

DID Operations Manager John Moran admitted, “The 30-percent design plan was done



Ernie Ritz is chairman of the Downtown Improvement District. Photo courtesy City of Sarasota



The Gator Club and Parkers Books on Main Street both would like to see a city ordinance changed so they can provide outdoor seating. Photo by Norman Schimmel

when it was an office property. It did not anticipate the ability of a land owner to change the use of their building.”

Trying to keep the deal alive, Kauffman pointed out, “There’s plenty of blame to go around. Our oversight was incorrect; his oversight was incorrect. It was our project, and we should pay to correct it. This is a way of helping him.”

Moran was quick to note, “He will pay \$5,670 out of his own pocket. We cannot legally reimburse him for that.”

DID Chairman Ernie Ritz and Mannausa said some formal agreement was necessary. Mannausa added, “This letter sets a precedent, and other [property] owners could use it. I support this resolution.” Ritz was more blunt: “The alternative is not acceptable.”

Kauffman made a motion for the DID to pay for changes to the engineering plan for the traffic circle to include four additional parking spaces on Orange Avenue. “These are not his spaces,” noted Kauffman of Fineberg. The motion passed unanimously.

EXPANSION OF SIDEWALK USES SUPPORTED

The DID board also was asked to get the ball rolling on additional legal uses for downtown sidewalks. Right now, a café permit allows an establishment to serve food, and, if it has the appropriate license, alcohol as well. But the current ordinance is clear: No kitchen means no café permit and no tables and chairs on the sidewalk.

Two unlikely allies are seeking to change that. The Gator Bar and its neighbor, Parker Books, would like to provide sidewalk tables. For Gator patrons, the space would enable them to enjoy wine, beer or a highball outdoors. For Parker customers, the purpose is to allow games of chess or backgammon outside.

For those scenarios to become possible, an overhaul of the existing ordinance is required.

“Do we allow drinking without dining?” asked City Engineer Alex Davis-Shaw. “The city attorney would have to revise the ordinance; then, there would be public hearings. It would probably take a few months.”



Downtown Improvement District board members have said a bid for new lighting in Five Points Park is too high. Photo by Norman Schimmel

The current ordinance applies citywide, including on St. Armands and Hillview Avenue, where many Southside Village restaurants are located. Should the revisions apply only downtown? Fred Soto, head of a downtown business group, said the two issues — cocktails and checkmates — should be considered separately.

Mannausa urged a bit of caution. “Once you start, you can have the expectation every retail merchant will have something on the sidewalk.” Moran replied, “The more stuff on the sidewalk, the more interesting downtown becomes.”

Kauffman elicited a chuckle when he made a motion that the DID recommend to the City Commission that Parker Books be allowed tables for outdoor table gaming. DID board member William Pettey asked, “Texas Hold-Em on Main Street?” The motion passed unanimously.

Kauffman then made a second motion asking that the city consider eliminating the need for “food produced on the premises as a mandate to getting the approval for a sidewalk café permit.” It, too, passed unanimously.

FANCY LIGHTS AND OVERCHARGES

Do not look for creative lighting in Five Points Park over the holidays. Squirrels, rats and tree limb growth reduced the last set of lights to an \$80,000 shambles. The DID board recently received responses to a Request for Proposals for a second try at park illumination. The price was almost double what it found through its first attempt.

“I like lights,” said Ritz. “But I don’t want to spend \$150,000.” Mannausa did some mental math and added, “This is a lot of money.

When you look at \$1,000 per light, you have to scratch your head.”

In the end, the DID board asked the bid-winning vendor — Canella Controls of Winter Park — to set up a demonstration in the park. “I wouldn’t buy a \$150,000 item without seeing it first,” said Kauffman.

The DID board members then turned their attention to attempts by the City Commission to shift expenses into their accounts. In particular, they were upset with an \$8,437.50 legal bill for defense of a Sunshine Laws suit. Kauffman said he heard the city attorney on Friday, Oct. 25, say it was the city’s responsibility to defend its advisory boards.

“They were wrong to pass that on to us,” noted Kauffman. “The Public Art Committee didn’t pay,” referring to another recent Sunshine lawsuit.

In a similar vein, DID members challenged a bill for the organization’s annual membership in the Florida Redevelopment Association. While the DID meeting was under way, two city employees were at the association’s annual meeting in Tampa.

Mannausa said, “This should be prorated among various city agencies.” He noted the Downtown Community Redevelopment Agency and the Newtown Community Redevelopment Agency, along with the office of the city’s economic development advisor (who was at the Tampa meeting), should share some of the cost.

“Put it on the next agenda,” said Mannausa. “Find out why we are paying for the Florida Redevelopment Agency.”

Added Kauffman, “This should be a city expense.” 

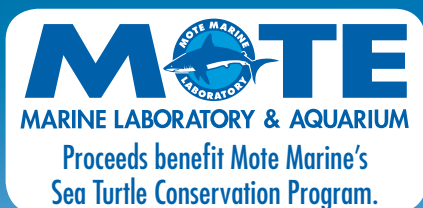


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NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN

The plan has been to try to operate Little Salt Spring — unlike Warm Mineral Springs, which opened in the 1960s as a health spa — as a protected, limited-access archaeological and ecological preserve. Image courtesy Sarasota County

SARASOTA COUNTY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI BEGIN TALKS ON THE SALE OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICALLY RICH LITTLE SALT SPRING, BUT THE TWO PARTIES DO NOT APPEAR CLOSE TO A DEAL

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

Negotiations between the University of Miami and Sarasota County over Little Salt Spring are under way.

The two parties, however, do not appear close to a deal that would transfer ownership of the archaeologically rich spring to the local government.

The County Commission voted 3-2 on Oct. 23 to extend an offer to the university. Under that proposal, the county would clean up the property and maintain and manage it if the university transferred ownership of it “as is” to the county at no cost. Commissioners Joe Barbetta and Christine Robinson and Chairwoman Carolyn Mason directed county

administrative staff to proceed with discussions on those points.

Commissioners talked about how little the county should pay upfront for the 112-acre spring and surrounding property, because the county, as the new owner, would have to cover annual costs of maintenance, upkeep and security.

“[The spring] was a gift to them,” Commissioner Charles Hines said on Oct. 23, referring to the university. “I know we haven’t negotiated a price. I don’t see why we should pay anything. There will be a cost to the county to maintain it.”

Robinson said she did not support “offering a large sum of money” for the property.

Yet, a media representative at the University of Miami sent *The Sarasota News Leader* a statement on Monday, Oct. 28, that read: “Discussions have commenced, but there have been no discussions between the parties as to purchase price.”

The statement continued: “The University of Miami remains committed to the successful conveyance of Little Salt Spring to the County of Sarasota as a potential steward to continue its preservation for future generations of Floridians.”

The university’s media representative did not comment directly on a question from the *News Leader* about whether the university was aware of the County Commission’s recent offer.



“From my discussion with local universities, there are no buyers there. Last spring, I explored the possibilities, and from those discussions I don’t think any university in the area has the faculty and infrastructure or the resources to do it.

Lawry Reid
President
Friends of Little Salt Spring

”

Researchers believe Little Salt Spring may hold keys to answering important questions about Florida’s history. Contributed photo by Steve Koski, University of Miami

Lawry Reid, president of the organization Friends of Little Salt Spring, remains optimistic about the future of the property.

“I am hopeful the two can come to some kind of agreement.”

Reid (no relation to former County Administrator Randall Reid) believes the university wants to transfer the property and its associated liability by the end of the year. And that could provide some motivation to strike a deal.

Reid sent an email this week to the county commissioners, encouraging them to try to work out an agreement and purchase Little Salt Spring’s “unique patch” of preserved property, using funding from the county’s

Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program (ESLPP).

ADDITIONAL RECURRING COSTS

Three county commissioners said they believed the county should not pay anything close to the \$2.11 million appraisal of the property.

That appraisal was provided by a firm hired by the university.

Robinson, a University of Miami graduate, called on university officials to work with the county.

“This was given to the University of Miami as a responsibility, not as a gift to make it more valuable,” Robinson said at the Oct. 23 meeting.



The University of Miami has owned and operated Little Salt Spring since 1982. Photo courtesy Friends of Little Salt Spring

So what will it take to make the deal happen?

“I think my alma mater will need to step up to the plate and recognize this is not a traditional real estate transaction,” Robinson told the *News Leader*, “and do the responsible thing and transfer to local government this historical, archaeological and environmental piece of property.”

Robinson said university officials told county staff before last Wednesday’s meeting that they were waiting on an offer from the county. And now they have an offer to consider.

Commissioner Nora Patterson agreed with Robinson and Hines: “I think our message back [to Miami] should be: We are not willing

to pay for it. Do you want to continue the negotiations?”

The spring comes with reoccurring expenses. At the outset, several trailers have to be removed from the property. Further, it would cost about \$11,000 a year to manage and maintain the land, according to Sarasota County staff.

Another uncalculated cost would be hiring a caretaker, or security, to keep an eye on the spring, which is closed to the general public. The spring is known for its well-preserved ancient organic material.

The land surrounding the spring and a creek cannot be developed because of its



Little Salt Spring encompasses 112 acres near North Port. Contributed photo by Curt Bowen

classification as a protected site for geological or environmental use only, causing several commissioners and county staff to question the \$2.11 million appraised value obtained by the university. Certain facilities for educational use or scientific research can be added to the property, and tours of the spring may be conducted, but any additional development is prohibited under the agreement in which the University of Miami acquired the 112 acres in 1982. Little Salt Spring was donated to the university in 1982 by the developer who platted much of North Port.

County staff also had concerns about the restrictions on the property. For instance, restrooms cannot be built on the land near the spring, even though only the spring and creek are considered environmentally sensitive property.

“With the deed restrictions intact the potential uses of the site are limited,” wrote Amy Meese, director of natural resources for the county, in agenda paperwork for commissioners. “The commission has voiced [its] interest in ensuring public access to ESLPP sites. No unmonitored access would be available for public access and recreation.”

A BIG UNKNOWN

Because of cuts in funding to the university’s Rosenstiel School’s Division of Marine Affairs program — which managed research at the spring — the university is looking to sell the property.

University of Miami officials have not commented publicly on what sale price they are seeking.

Initial media reports after the university announced its intention to sell the spring quoted university officials as stating that the impetus for finding a buyer was the Rosenstiel School’s decision that it no longer could afford the \$100,000 annual cost for a full-time caretaker and maintenance of the property.

Commissioners seemed perplexed at the possibility that the university could be seeking something in the range of the \$2.11 million appraisal.

That amount would drain nearly a quarter of the remaining funding in the county’s Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program.

According to the University of Miami’s Oct. 28 statement: “At this time, we are in the process of complying with the requirements of the Environmentally Sensitive Land Acquisition Program (ESLAP), for which the County Commission unanimously recommended the land.”

County staff told the commissioners that a state organization would have to oversee transfer of the property from the University of Miami to the county, because of stipulations in the 1982 transfer of Little Salt Spring to the university.

Robinson noted she did not want to see the state take over permanent control of the spring.

“I do not believe the state of Florida will come into North Port and look at the needs of the community. I believe local government knows what’s best [for the spring]. I am adamantly opposed to the state taking it over.”

Robinson said if the county is able to acquire the spring, that could be a “legacy moment.”

If an agreement is reached, the county could work with other organizations to manage the spring and bring to it an educational mission.

Patterson said she wanted to see whether Mote Marine Laboratory was still interested in helping the county manage the property, as former County Administrator Reid indicated to the commission earlier this year. The Florida Aquarium has also voiced an interest in helping the county run the site.

The plan has been to try to operate Little Salt Spring — unlike Warm Mineral Springs, which opened in the 1960s as a health spa — as a protected, limited-access archaeological and ecological preserve.

SUPPORT FOR THE SPRING

In his email to the county commissioners this week, Lawry Reid, president of Friends of Little Salt Spring, advocated for the county purchasing the spring and surrounding land.

“This place has not been disturbed ever, except for a few trailers and the driveway in,” Reid told the *News Leader*.

He suggests using funds from the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program to purchase the site. “There is a significant amount of money left there — not that Sarasota County should pay a lot of money for the spring.”

The county has the expertise to respond quickly to local issues and to maintain the property, he pointed out. “Sarasota County has shown itself to be a responsible, trustworthy sensitive land homeowner,” Reid said.

If the county does purchase the spring, The Florida Aquarium would be an ideal partner to help the county run research activities at the spring, Reid indicated.


Although Sarasota County does not have the expertise or means to run an underwater archeological program, “Florida Aquarium does,” he pointed out. “They have been doing underwater archaeology at a shipwreck off Tampa,” Reid said.

Additionally, the county’s purchase of the spring appears to be the only option for saving it, Reid added.

“From my discussion with local universities, there are no buyers there. Last spring, I explored the possibilities, and from those discussions I don’t think any university in the area has the faculty and infrastructure or the resources to do it,” Reid said.

Rick Jameson, a member of Friends of Little Salt Spring, also wrote an email to the county commissioners this week.

Jameson noted that artifacts dated back about 12,500 years have been found in the spring, and some finds may be integral to answering questions about the significant large mammal extinction event that occurred roughly 10,000 years ago.

“Although significant preservation of [environmentally sensitive] lands has occurred around the County,” he wrote, “frankly, very little of this preservation has occurred within the City of North Port.” Jameson continued, “And here we have one of the most unique properties in the nation having a mixed response from our County Commission.” 



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APPEAL SESSIONS

County Commissioner Carolyn Mason examines one of the Sarasota Housing Authority and the Sarasota Housing Funding Corp.'s King Stone Townhomes in January. Photo by Cooper Levey-Baker

HOUSING AUTHORITY WIN MEANS JANIE POE REDEVELOPMENT COULD BE FINISHED SOON

By Cooper Levey-Baker
Associate Editor

A recent victory in Tallahassee for the Sarasota Housing Authority means the completion of the final phase of the stalled Janie's Garden redevelopment project may finally be within reach. And with that will come the demolition of the last 60 units of Newtown's Janie Poe complex, notorious for its extreme disrepair and a "horrible mess" in the words of County Commissioner Nora Patterson last year.

But it took a fight to make it happen. The Authority had applied for federal tax credits for three straight years

with no luck. The Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, also known as the 9 percent program, is really the only major affordable housing initiative left at the federal level, Housing Authority Executive Director Bill Russell tells *The Sarasota News Leader*. And it had been structured to the disadvantage of housing authorities: The application process was weighted to favor proximity to public services such as bus routes and schools.

“It's been a long, arduous, hard-fought process.”

Bill Russell
Executive Director
Sarasota Housing Authority



“Developers would read that and go around the state and

try to find parcels of land to put under contract to maximize their profits,” he says. The Authority doesn’t have that flexibility. “We are really focused on redeveloping a specific property. So we’re kind of caught because we can’t pick up and move.”

But this time around, the Florida Housing Finance Corp., which administers the tax credits in Florida, put out a specific Request for Proposals for housing authorities. The Sarasota Housing Authority placed second out of seven, qualifying it to receive the credits. But, problem: The Authority’s application did not specifically identify the manager of The Michaels Development Co., the developer working with the Authority on the project.

“This one staffer, who was responsible for looking at the corporate structure — she

threw out five of the seven housing authorities,” Russell says. He understands that it’s important for the state to know all the key players in a deal, he adds, but to throw out the whole application over that was “silly.” So the Housing Authority appealed the decision, and on Oct. 1, it made its case in Tallahassee.

Russell was on “pins and needles” after that hearing, until he got some very good news last Friday, Oct. 25. “Assuming the [Florida Housing Finance Corp.] board accepts the hearing officer’s recommended order (which is standard), Janie Poe III will FINALLY be awarded 9% tax credits and we can shortly begin developing the final phase of the Janie Poe redevelopment,” Russell wrote in an email to stakeholders. “This is tremendous news.”



Elected officials and project managers celebrate the opening of King Stone Townhomes in Newtown in January. Photo by Norman Schimmel


In his recommended order, Christopher McGuire, a hearing officer for the state Housing Finance Corp., wrote that the case “demonstrates” that Florida Housing “did not have a clear policy” in what was expected of applicants. The dismissal of the Sarasota application was done “without support of facts or logic, and was thus arbitrary.”

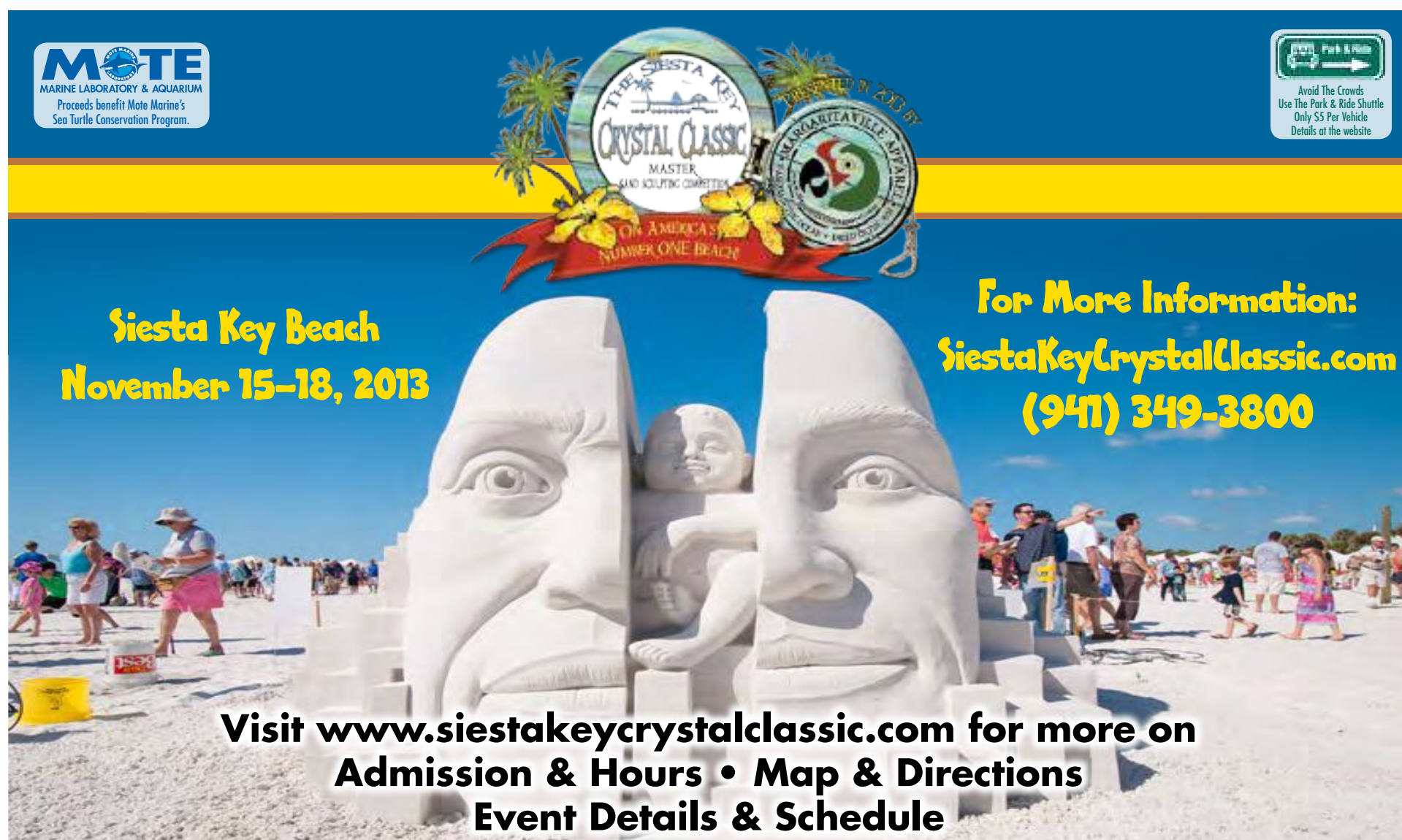
The Housing Finance Corp. board, made up of Gov. Rick Scott appointees, meets this Friday, and Russell expects them to ratify McGuire’s filing. According to a board agenda posted online, staff is recommending that the board “issue a Final Order in accord with [McGuire’s].” No one has contested McGuire’s ruling.

Assuming everything goes as expected at the board meeting, Russell says the next step is demolition, tearing down the final 60 Janie

Poe units that have sat, abandoned and derelict, at Central Avenue and 22nd Street for years. After that comes underwriting, then closing. Russell says construction work could start as early as next March or April.

The Authority is planning to build around 70 new units, with about half set aside for subsidized housing for very low-income families. The tax credit program stipulates that rents remain below the market level and that all residents must earn 60 percent or less of the local median income for a family of four. In Sarasota, the median income for four is almost \$60,000, which means only those families earning around \$36,000 or less would qualify.

“It’s been a long, arduous, hard-fought process,” Russell says. Last week’s win felt terrific. “It was really gratifying.” 



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ONE DOWN, FOUR TO GO



County Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Mason prepares for a board meeting to start. File photo

COUNTY COMMISSION CHAIRWOMAN SAYS SHE WILL ENDORSE A HUMAN RIGHTS AMENDMENT TO PROTECT GAYS AND LESBIANS

By Cooper Levey-Baker

Associate Editor

At least one county commissioner is now on board with a proposal for an ordinance that would bar discrimination against gays and lesbians in housing and employment: Carolyn Mason.

Florida Statute 760, which covers civil rights, specifically prevents discrimination on the basis of “race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or marital status,” but it leaves out categories such as sexual orientation and

gender identity. So cities and counties around the Sunshine State have crafted their own so-called human rights ordinances, which protect against discrimination based on the categories above, as well as sexual orientation, gender identity and more. The cities of Sarasota and Venice both offer such protec-

tions, but the county has so far declined to take them up.

But that may be changing. County Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Mason tells *The*

“*I can talk a long time about discrimination, having grown up here in the '50s.*”

Carolyn Mason
Chairwoman
Sarasota County Commission



Sarasota News Leader she will support such a measure and will bring up the idea at the commission's next meeting, on Nov. 5. Mason met with the leading local activist on the issue, Julia Nowak, two weeks ago, after Nowak spoke at four separate public meetings about the ordinance.


Nowak is the Englewood Realtor who first discovered discriminatory language in condominium association documents at Venice's Casa Di Amici. The organization had limited condo ownership to just married couples and individuals, effectively banning gay and lesbian couples. After extensive media coverage, the association reversed its decision, which a consulting attorney said was "inadvertent."

While the Casa Di Amici language was eventually fixed, Nowak argues the situation shows the need for a comprehensive anti-discrimination policy at the county level, and she has repeatedly pushed the County Commission

to act. She told the *News Leader* in August that she'd speak at every commission meeting held in South County till the board did something.

Mason, at least, is. She served on the Sarasota City Commission when it passed its ordinance, she emphasizes. "I just don't want to see anybody discriminated against," she tells the *News Leader*. "I can talk a long time about discrimination, having grown up here in the '50s."

Mason says she hasn't delved into the language used by other counties and cities, or any of the finer points of how the ordinance would work. As she told Nowak, "I'm one of five commissioners."

But she has pledged to bring up the issue soon: "I'm going to bring it to my [local government] body and see how they want to deal with it." 



The County Commission will meet in Venice on Nov. 5. Photo by Norman Schimmel



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TRANSITIONAL START

The County Commission conducts an Oct. 29 facilities planning workshop with Tom Harmer as its interim county administrator. Photo by Norman Schimmel

INTERIM SARASOTA COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR THOMAS HARMER LED A SIMILAR TRANSITION IN TITUSVILLE IN 1999 AFTER THE CITY MANAGER WAS FIRED THERE

By Roger Drouin
County Editor

During his first full day as Sarasota County's interim administrator — Monday, Oct. 28 — Thomas Harmer was busy. And he will stay busy over the next few months.

"I sat down to eat lunch at 2, and by 2:03 I was done," Harmer said.

Harmer met with some of his staff Monday, already identifying more than 40 priorities. The interim administrator sent a memo asking all county employees — from the "front lines to support staff" — to focus on their day-to-day activities. The former fire chief and Titusville city manager ended the memo

READ TOM HARMER'S RESUME



Click image above to download

Tom Harmer has 26 years of experience in local government, including almost eight years as city manager of Titusville.

with four guidelines that he said he follows as he strives to meet challenges:

- “Be responsive.”
- “Offer solutions.”
- “Actively communicate (internally and externally).”
- “Think ‘team.’”

A facilities planning workshop already scheduled for Tuesday, Oct. 29, was the commissioners’ first meeting with Harmer in command as interim administrator. They named him to replace Randall Reid after they fired Reid on Oct. 23. And Harmer was

already looking ahead to everything that has to be done before the next regular County Commission meetings take place on Nov. 5 and 6.

Harmer will also be meeting with the county commissioners in one-on-one sessions. “I want to talk to them about what projects are a concern,

what projects are a priority,” Harmer told *The Sarasota News Leader* during a break in the Oct. 29 meeting.

Budget matters are also a likely topic for those “one-on-ones.”

I cannot adequately describe the change in employee morale.

Christine Robinson
Commissioner
Sarasota County

General Fund - Projected Revenues & Expenses

	Amend. BUDGET FY13	Prop. BUDGET FY14	PROJECTED FY15	PROJECTED FY16	PROJECTED FY17	PROJECTED FY18
Revenue	\$237,600,525	\$214,845,589	\$220,208,090	\$227,543,603	\$235,559,048	\$244,070,117
Budgeted Fund Balance	\$35,980,681	\$46,998,659	\$45,976,705	\$17,638,586	\$18,323,061	\$19,024,190
Revenue	\$273,581,206	\$261,844,248	\$266,184,795	\$245,182,189	\$253,882,109	\$263,094,306
Expenses	\$273,581,206	\$261,844,248	\$269,135,851	\$275,646,381	\$278,608,738	\$284,506,851
<i>Fund Balance Calculation: Amount budgeted (above) less projected over-collections & under-spending</i>						
Over-Collections (3%)	\$6,254,421	\$5,695,407	\$5,856,282	\$6,076,348	\$6,316,811	\$6,572,143
Under-Spending (6%)	\$11,686,170	\$12,121,301	\$12,565,554	\$13,010,795	\$13,456,581	\$13,902,361
Estimated Fund Balance Usage	\$18,040,090	\$29,181,951	\$27,554,869			
Shortfall	\$0	\$0	(\$2,951,056)	(\$30,464,192)	(\$24,726,629)	(\$21,412,544)

Shortfall line is the amount that cannot be funded using the assumed revenues & expenditures. The shortfall is only created after the Economic Uncertainty Fund is depleted, but the Hurricane/Disaster Reserve always remains fully funded. Does not include Sarasota CRA extension (payments end in FY16). Not reflective of the one time \$8M available cash due to reserve policy change (90 to 75 Days).

Changes since 8/20 include:

\$412,807 ongoing increase for Sheriff's Office

\$507,411 ongoing increase for Tax Collector's Office

Transfers to HHS in FY15-FY18 plus

\$100K for Legal Aid of Manasota

A graphic presented to the County Commission during its Sept. 6 budget workshop indicates how the Economic Uncertainty Reserve Fund could be used up as early as the 2015 fiscal year. Image courtesy Sarasota County



“ *I’m trying to focus on the day-to-day — what do we do as a leadership team.*

Thomas Harmer
Interim Administrator
Sarasota County

”

Tuesday’s County Commission workshop was the first meeting with Thomas Harmer in command as interim administrator. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Harmer was hired by Reid in July 2012 to serve as deputy county administrator. As he settles into his post as the county's top staffer, Harmer already has earned the accolades of at least two county commissioners.

"I cannot adequately describe the change in employee morale," said County Commissioner Christine Robinson. "It has been amazing."

The mood has been quite different this week at the County Administration Center in downtown Sarasota, Robinson pointed out.

"I had a constant stream of employees in my office [Oct. 28] updating me about various projects, talking freely," Robinson said. "I have not experienced that since the days of Terry Lewis."

Lewis was interim administrator for several months — from shortly after County Administrator Jim Ley resigned in May 2011, in the midst of a Procurement Department scandal, until Reid came on board in early 2012.

In an email response to local business executive Phil Chmielecki, Commissioner Nora Patterson wrote last week that she prefers to bypass the typical national job search for a new administrator.

She added her belief that Harmer should be given a chance to win the position.

"He is already working well with the business and development community and is very well thought of by everyone I speak to," Patterson wrote on Oct. 24, the day after the commissioners appointed Harmer interim administrator. "He is our current deputy administrator and has the respect of the county commission,"

Patterson continued. "Perhaps if he works well in the next few months we will feel comfortable with him as administrator. He has had both private sector and public sector experience and would probably cause as smooth a transition as we could possibly ask for."

It is notable that both Robinson — a Reid detractor towards the end of his tenure — and Patterson — a Reid supporter — are both happy with Harmer so far.

They were among the more vocal commissioners during a prolonged period of criticism and conflict involving Reid, emanating especially from the time the board members conducted their first public evaluation of Reid, on March 19. Robinson was one of the three commissioners who gave low marks to Reid during his most recent evaluation; Patterson supported Reid for overcoming big hurdles and was the sole vote against firing him.

THE 'DAY-TO-DAY' RESPONSIBILITIES

Harmer told the *News Leader* he will try not to focus on whether he could become the county's next full-time administrator.

"I made a conscious effort to say I don't want to be distracted by that," Harmer said. "My motivation is to facilitate a transition as smoothly as possible."

He added, "I'm trying to focus on the day-to-day — what do we do as a leadership team. The board [of county commissioners] will decide at some point how they want to fill the position."

On Tuesday, the commissioners voted unanimously to hire Harmer as interim administrator for half a year; they will evaluate his

performance in three months. During that time, they will not search for anyone else to replace Reid, they agreed.

NOT THE FIRST TRANSITION

Harmer has 26 years of experience in local government, including almost eight as city manager of Titusville, where he also was executive director of the Community Development Agency. Additionally, he served as fire chief and emergency manager in Titusville.

Prior to that, he was deputy fire chief in Tallahassee.

Before coming to Sarasota County, Harmer was senior vice president of the Pizzuti Companies in Orlando, “a high-quality company developing industrial and commercial projects in the Southeast,” according to a news release from the county in July 2012.

Harmer assisted with and facilitated projects and public-private partnerships to promote economic development, including a new office and research park at Kennedy Space Center.

While Harmer was in Titusville, he oversaw a similar transition to the one precipitated by Reid’s termination in Sarasota County.

Harmer was fire chief when the Titusville city manager was fired in 1999. At that time, the


City Council called on Harmer to take over as interim city manager, a post he held for six months before being named manager.

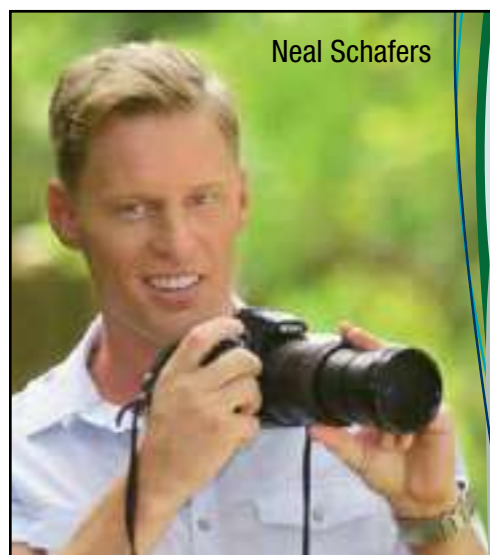
In Sarasota, Harmer emphasizes long-term planning, including a close look at upcoming budget projections and needs.

“From my time as a firefighter, I learned to pace myself,” he said.

A projected revenue shortfall in 2016 and rising expenses will continue to draw board scrutiny. The budget was one focal point for three commissioners’ criticism of Reid in his last evaluation. Robinson took a number of opportunities during budget workshops this year to point to the fact that the county has continued to draw from its Economic Uncertainty Reserve Fund instead of reducing expenses.

Harmer said it is important to “think out” the next couple of years when it comes to the budget process.

In December, the County Commission will hold a pre-planning budget workshop that was scheduled during Reid’s tenure. That discussion will include “how to match resources we have to service priorities,” Harmer notes. 



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HOW MANY STORIES?



A proposed site plan shows how four Sarasota County Sheriff's Office structures could be built on the county's Cattlemen Road property. Image courtesy Sarasota County

THE COUNTY COMMISSION SEEKS MORE FINANCIAL DETAILS IN COMPARING PROPOSALS FOR NEW SHERIFF'S OFFICE FACILITIES ON CATTLEMEN ROAD

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

The plans for new Sarasota County Sheriff's Office facilities probably lie somewhere between a collection of four two- and three-story buildings and one 11-story tower on the Cattlemen Road site of the new Sarasota County Emergency Operations/911 Center (EOC).

That was the indication of county commissioners on Oct. 29 during their third formal discussion of the plans since January.

During a workshop presentation, Ed Gable, director of the county's Facilities Services Office, pointed out that the Sheriff's Office staff had indicated in discussions with county representatives that they preferred the plan with multiple lower buildings, primarily for security reasons.

“There's a lot of steps between the two extremes I've used here.”

Ed Gable
Director
Facilities Services
Sarasota County

However, Commissioner Joe Barbetta — who has argued in previous discussions about the need to sell part of the adjacent Cattlemen Road

property under review for the Sheriff's new structures — noted that configuration “is using a lot of footprint.”

If a revised plan incorporated two buildings with four or five floors each, Barbetta said, “You'd save a ton of land and it would seem to be much easier to build.”

Gable responded, “There's a lot of steps between the two extremes I've used here.”

Barbetta also pointed out that numerous condominium complexes — as well as banks — in downtown Sarasota have parking garages attached to them. That could be a model for part of the Sheriff's Office facilities on the Cattlemen site, he added. Then at least one of the county's parcels that fronts on Cattlemen Road could be put on the market, Barbetta noted. “That's prime land that will help pay for the construction of these two [Sheriff's

Office] buildings, he said of the Cattlemen Road frontage, indicating his preference that both county lots be put up for sale.

“It's about commercial redevelopment of those two parcels, which creates jobs,” Barbetta said. If a 200,000-square-foot office building is constructed on that part of the Cattlemen Road property, for example, he continued, “It's gonna generate quite a lot of tax revenue for many years to come. We have to utilize that property better.”

Moreover, Barbetta noted, the difference between two stories and five stories was much less than the difference between two stories and 11.

He added that his concern remains government's inclination to use all the land it owns. “We have buildings we could probably sell and lease back much more efficiently than us

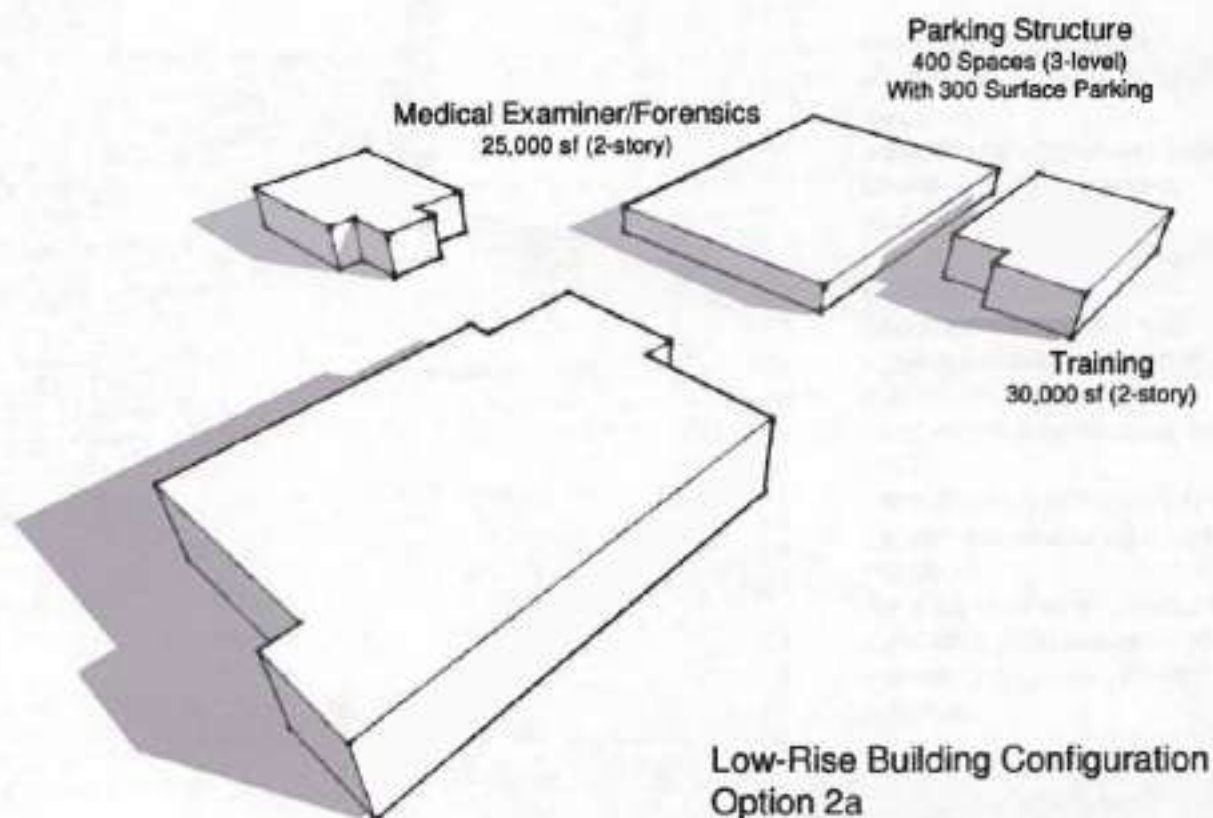
Comparison to High-Rise Configuration

Benefits

- Allows for phased construction
- Keeps critical functions at grade level for increased operational efficiency
- Reduced hardening costs due to reduced wind speeds at lower height
- Allows for independent usage and security of facilities
- Separate parking garage can use economical, precast structural system
- Structural loads spread over larger area allowing for conventional foundations
- Simplifies community access to services
- Building height consistent with neighboring structures

Challenges

- Larger building footprint requires more useable land area
- Added impervious surface requires larger stormwater area



Low-Rise Building Configuration Option 2a

Structured parking is required if campus is built in one phase, otherwise garage can be built at a later phase.

A graphic compares the low-rise Sheriff's Office building approach to an 11-story tower plan on the Cattlemen Road site. Image courtesy Sarasota County

owning [them]. To say we have a big piece of land and should put buildings on it, I don't think is the right way to do it."

When Commissioner Christine Robinson asked if he had appraisals of the two county parcels that would be freed up for sale if the 11-story tower were built, Gable said no recent figures were available. The only ones he could find, he added, covered just slivers of those parcels — about 100 to 120 feet of depth in them.

One parcel encompasses 4.1 acres, while the other is 2.7 acres, according to the PowerPoint presentation Gable showed the board.

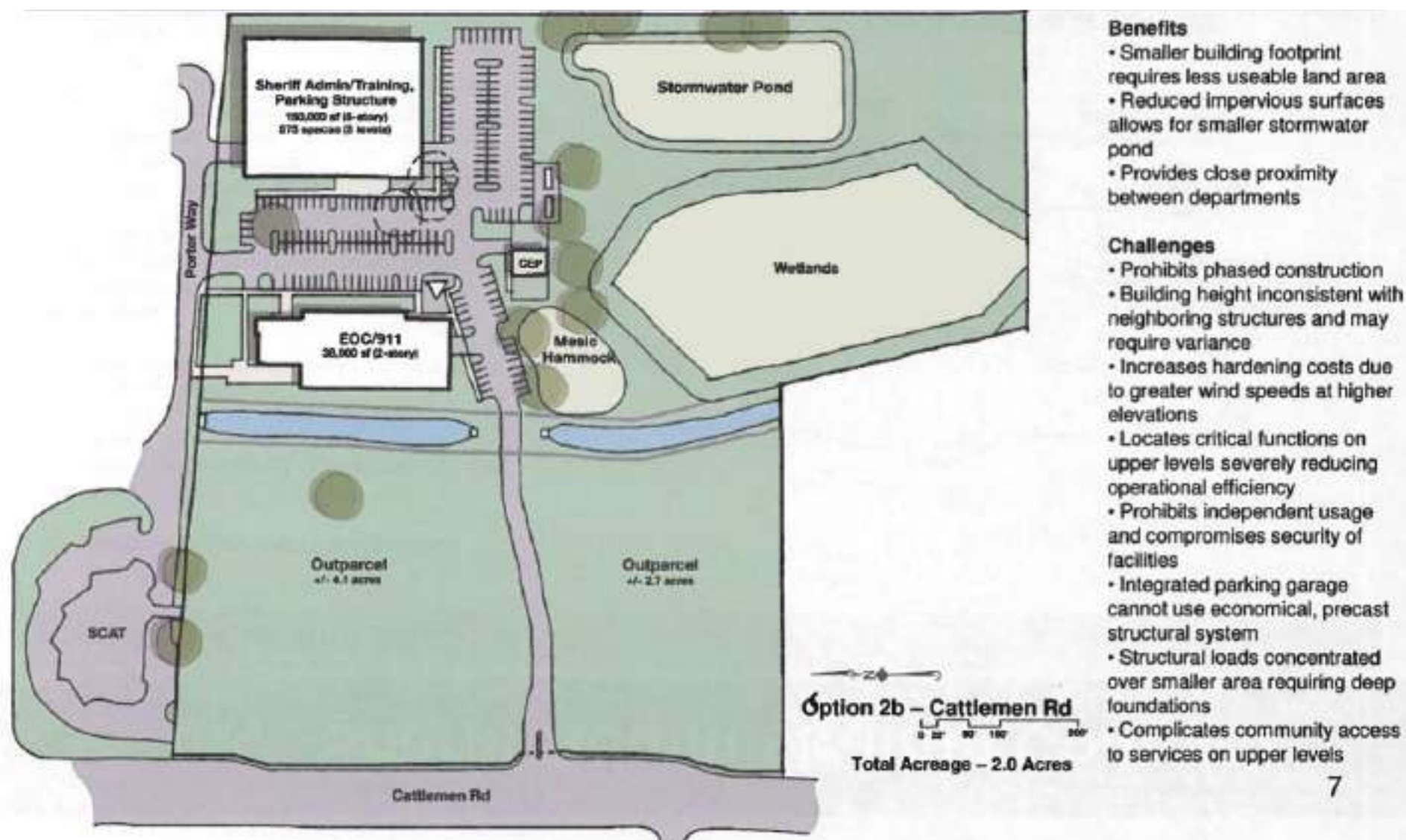
However, interim County Administrator Tom Harmer told the commissioners later that he had checked with the county's real estate staff

and believed he could provide the board with more recent numbers than Gable had been able to find.

When Patterson asked about the cost of building the four lower structures compared to the expense of the tower, Gable responded that while his figures were "very preliminary ones," he would estimate about \$47 million for the four buildings and \$58 million for the tower.

The taller building would necessitate more "hardening," Gable pointed out, so it would be able to withstand hurricane-force winds.

"I guess I don't see the immediate urgency to make the decision," Commissioner Nora Patterson said of the site plan, "and I don't want to make the decision until I have the



A graphic shows benefits and challenges in regard to constructing an 11-story Sheriff's Office tower with parking on the Cattlemen Road site. The tower would have 175,000 square feet; the 150,000-square-foot figure was provided in error, county staff said. Image courtesy Sarasota County

kind of numbers that Commissioner Robinson is talking about.”

“And the property, if anything, will become more valuable,” Patterson added of the parcels fronting on Cattlemen Road.

If they are sold later, she continued, “[they] will be used for an even higher use than if sold today in this economic climate ...”

Gable explained the board members should feel no urgency to make a decision on the site plan.

THE NEW BUILDINGS THEMSELVES

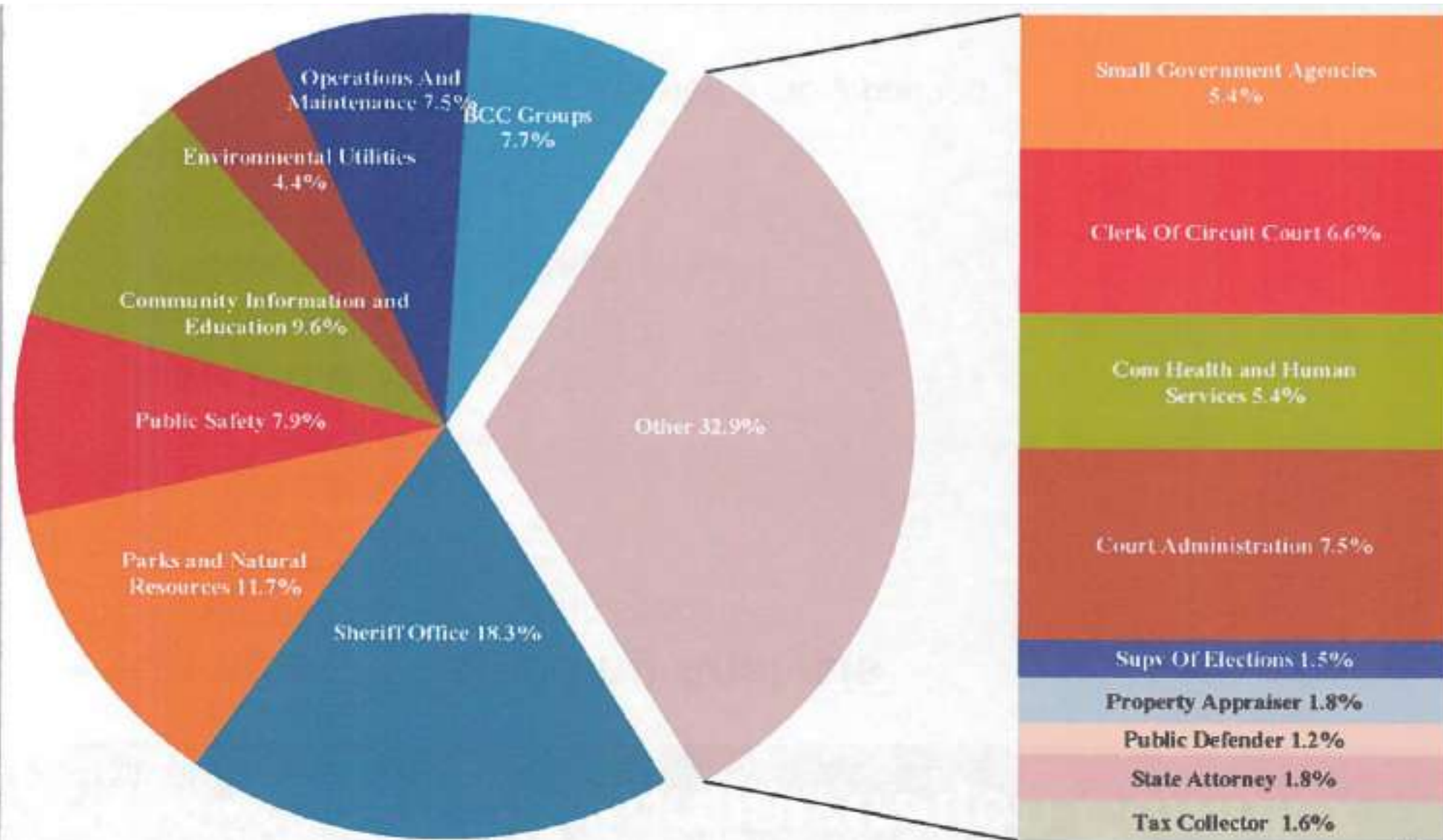
When Vice Chairman Charles Hines asked whether the Sheriff’s Office administrative staff had expressed an opinion about the two site plans, Gable replied, “They tend to lean towards the lower scale, low-rise

approach, just from an operational and security standpoint.”

In a telephone interview with *The Sarasota News Leader* after the workshop, Bill Spitler, director of planning and research for the Sheriff’s Office, explained that he and other members of Sheriff Tom Knight’s staff had joined Gable and the county’s consultant on the site plan — an architect with the Harvard Jolly firm — on a trip to Pinellas County to take a look at the new criminal justice complex there. It includes the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office, judicial structures and a “pretty significant parking garage” on 60 acres, he added.

(Harvard Jolly’s corporate headquarters is in St. Petersburg.)

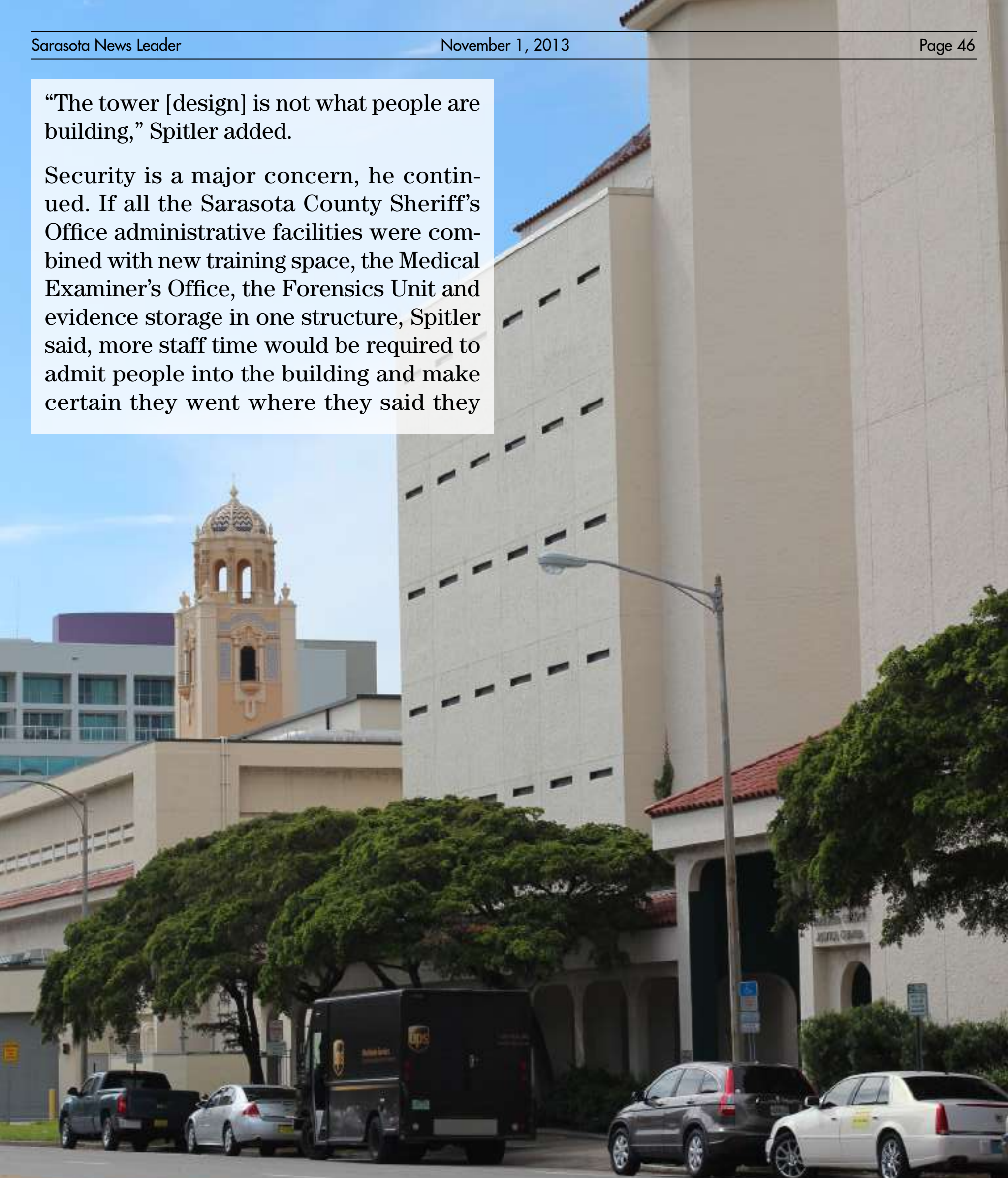
The Cattlemen Road site plan would take up about 6 acres, he noted.



A pie chart shows how Sarasota County facilities are apportioned. Image courtesy Sarasota County

“The tower [design] is not what people are building,” Spitler added.

Security is a major concern, he continued. If all the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office administrative facilities were combined with new training space, the Medical Examiner’s Office, the Forensics Unit and evidence storage in one structure, Spitler said, more staff time would be required to admit people into the building and make certain they went where they said they



Looking west on Ringling Boulevard in downtown Sarasota, the entrance to the Sheriff’s Office’s administrative facilities and the State Attorney’s Office (right) is adjacent to the jail and the historic courthouse. Photo by Rachel Hackney

intended to go. That would result in higher operational costs, he pointed out, because the Sheriff's Office could not risk letting someone there for training purposes, for example, create a problem with the chain of evidence collection.

He stressed "the significant differences in the uses" between the training building, for example, and the proposed facility that would be used jointly by the medical examiner and the Forensics Unit in the Cattlemen site plan with multiple low-rise structures.

Yet, Patterson told Gable, "I don't really see why you have to have the separate forensics building. ... We really have designed a pretty suburban complex there."

Patterson also asked whether the training facility is "a real county need or one of those, 'Gee, it would be nice to have, so let's draw it in there.'"

Gable told her the facility is needed and that it would serve not only the sheriff's staff but also the Emergency Services Department employees.

The training facility in current use, he pointed out, is "very, very sparse."

When Patterson suggested it would be logical to put the training space in the same new structure with the sheriff's administrative offices, Gable replied that Sheriff Tom Knight's staff wanted independent access to those structures.

Patterson told him that could be figured into the design of the building, just as doctor's offices have independent access for the various physicians.

OVERALL NEEDS


Spitler pointed out to the *News Leader* that Knight feels the Cattlemen site has many advantages for employees, including its access to Interstate 75 — which would shorten the travel time to work for employees who live in South County — and its proximity to Benderson Park, which will be hosting more and larger events leading up to the 2017 World Rowing Championships. Spitler characterized those location factors as "time saving we can't even put a number on."

Spitler also stressed, "We're constantly looking at efficiencies, security and providing good service [to the community]." He added, "We spend a lot of time taking care of everyone else." Yet, the sheriff has facilities spread all over the county and many of the structures are inadequate or vulnerable to storm damage — a point he made during the County Commission's previous workshop on the Cattlemen site plan, which was held in March.

One primary example, which the *News Leader* has included in past articles, is that fleet equipment valued at \$7 million — including specialized Sheriff's Office vehicles — has no shelter at the current site where it is stored.

Gable told the commissioners county staff is continuing to work on options for improved fleet storage.

"We provide No. 1 service," Spitler said, and the department needs top-flight facilities to do that.

Nonetheless, he added, Knight has been clear in that "we'll do whatever the County Commission wants." 



PATH TO AN ACCEPTABLE PRICE

O'Leary's Tiki Bar and Grill at Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota uses chickees as shelter for patrons. Photo by Norman Schimmel

NEXT WEEK, THE COUNTY COMMISSION IS SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE A THOROUGH ANALYSIS OF COSTS FOR BUS SHELTERS AND THE POTENTIAL USE OF NATIVE AMERICAN CHICKEES

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

On Nov. 6, Sarasota County Commissioner Joe Barbetta finally may get the answers he has sought for months regarding the expense of county bus shelters.

On that day, Glama Carter, director of Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT), will make a presentation to the board on cost comparisons for shelters — including those in Manatee County and the chickee design Barbetta has espoused for years.

That day, the board also is expected to decide whether it will renew a contract with a Detroit, MI, firm that has been providing shelters to the county since 2010. The fourth amendment to that contract — an item on the board's Oct. 22 consent agenda — sparked Barbetta's latest questions.

Pulling the item from the consent agenda that morning, Barbetta said, "I still don't think we've gotten our arms around these bus shelters."

“There are still too many people standing in the sun. Imagine yesterday and today, standing in the rain, waiting for a bus. It's pretty sad.

Joe Barbetta
Commissioner
Sarasota County



According to an Oct. 22 memo from Carter to the commissioners, the fourth contract amendment to the 2010 agreement with Brasco International Inc. in Detroit would allow the county to spend up to \$250,000 per year on bus shelters provided by the firm. The memo points out that the board set that figure as an “Administrative Upper Limit” in May.

During the 2013 fiscal year, which ended on Sept. 30, SCAT installed 51 new shelters purchased under the existing Brasco contract, the memo continues. The latest amendment would allow the department to purchase more shelters to be installed during the current fiscal year in the city of Sarasota, on Siesta Key and in the Pinecraft community around Bahia Vista Street in Sarasota.

Backup agenda material shows Brasco won the 2010 contract for the bus shelters with



A chickee stands on the Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation in Glades County. Photo by Ebyabe via Wikimedia Commons



A Sarasota County Area Transit passenger waits at a Southgate Mall bus shelter in March. File photo

a bid of \$1,121,450. The two other firms that submitted bids were Tolar Manufacturing Co. Inc. of Corona, CA, which bid \$1,144,525 and Duo-Gard Industries of Canton, MI, which bid \$1,184,520.

A RANGE OF COSTS

“It doesn’t say how many [bus shelters] we’re getting,” Barbetta pointed out of the Oct. 22 consent agenda item memo.

RECENT PROJECTS:

Costs for four recent projects are illustrated below; two projects are bus shelter projects and two projects are primarily deployment pad projects with little to no right-of-way/easement donation requirements. The Batch 6 project immediately below faced substantial hurdles, included right-of-way acquisition challenges, federal and State project solicitation requirements, and other issues which increased costs and time beyond what would be expected for a project this size. Batch 6 also included substantial sidewalk construction that is not typical with most bus stop projects.

Bus Stop and Shelter Projects:

1. Batch 6 – No. of bus shelter locations = 8

	Total	Cost per Stop
Design:	\$90,629	\$11,329
Construction/Install:	\$195,935	\$24,491
Shelter & Amenities:	\$52,000	\$6,500
Constr. Mgmt:	\$69,059	\$8,632
	\$407,623	\$50,952
Project Support:	\$87,669	\$10,959
TOTAL COST:	\$495,292	PER STOP: \$61,911

2. North Port Bus Stops – No. of bus shelter locations = 13

	Total	Cost per Stop
Design:	\$156,484	\$12,037
Construction/Install:	\$193,889	\$14,915
Shelter & Amenities:	\$84,500	\$6,500
Constr. Mgmt:	In-house: 'Project Support'	
	\$434,873	\$33,452
Project Support:	\$44,635	\$3,433
TOTAL COST:	\$479,508	PER STOP: \$36,885

“I still think we have problems.”

During the board's Sept. 24 regular meeting, he pointed out, he mentioned that he had learned Manatee County pays about \$9,000 per bus shelter. A SCAT presentation by Carter in January noted the Sarasota cost was about \$40,000 per shelter, he added. However, after he requested staff look into the use of chickees for shelters — an idea proposed several years ago — the Sarasota County price dropped to about \$27,000 when Carter provided her follow-up report in April.

Chickees are thatch-covered shelters built by the Miccosukee and Seminole Indians. Former Sarasota County Tree Advisory Council member Jack Gurney proposed their use about three years ago in lieu of the bus shelters SCAT was putting up. Gurney told *The Sarasota News Leader* he had spotted “really modest ... little wooden [bus] shelters” in Deland, near Daytona, years ago and was struck by the idea that chickees would be much cooler than the glass-and-steel structures the county

erects. He also expected they would be much less expensive.

However, Carter's April 5 memo questioned the ability of chickees to stand up to strong storms and pointed out they still have to comply with zoning regulations, such as setback and right of way requirements.

For those and other reasons, Carter wrote in that April memo, the SCAT recommendation was that the chickees would not be appropriate for bus shelters in Sarasota County.

“There are still too many people standing in the sun,” Barbetta pointed out during the Sept. 24 discussion. “Imagine yesterday and today,” he added, “standing in the rain, waiting for a bus. It's pretty sad.”

CONTRACT FACTORS

On Oct. 22, Barbetta also questioned why the county has been buying structures from a Detroit firm. “Is there nobody in Florida that does bus shelters?”



On Oct. 22, Commissioners Joe Barbetta and Christine Robinson asked to hold off on a new contract amendment to provide county bus shelters. File photo

He added of the contract, "I think we should be putting this back out on the street and find a Florida firm and find out how Manatee does [a bus shelter] for \$9,000."

Even the cost of a garbage can for a bus shelter was high, as indicated by SCAT documentation for the Brasco contract, he pointed out. For a 20-gallon can, he noted, the expense was \$275; for a 32-gallon can, \$645. "These prices just seem all over the place."

He had seen the Manatee County shelters, he continued. "They're really nice," he noted, and each includes a garbage can, solar power and a bench. "And we need bus shelters really bad."

That was when Carter stepped to the podium. The Nov. 6 discussion, she told the board, would include detailed comparisons of Sarasota's bus shelter costs to those in Manatee County, as well as information about the chickees. "Staff has provided a very thorough analysis," she added.

Then Commissioner Christine Robinson asked whether the board could postpone a decision on the bus shelter contract amendment until that date.

Rebekka Skwire-Cline, SCAT's procurement official, replied, "It's not that we couldn't postpone it." The problem, she added, is that the contract already had expired, so it had become a matter of retroactive renewal.

Skwire-Cline also pointed out, "I think that this amendment ... doesn't obligate us to

purchase from this vendor ... and it's not actually adding shelters."

"Some of us may not even want to allow that ability," Robinson told her. "Is there a problem with waiting two weeks?"

"I'm not aware of any," Skwire-Cline responded.

Commissioner Nora Patterson concurred with Barbetta in wanting details about the cost of the Manatee shelters, including the supplier.

"The main difference is on the size, width," Carter told her. Smaller, more narrow shelters can be installed in Sarasota County "where there is very limited right of way," she added, and those are less expensive. "We recognize that some areas may require more site improvement."

If Sarasota County installed shelters only at SCAT stops with sidewalks already present and no drainage issues, Patterson noted, the expense would be less. "We really do need to compare apples to apples," she added of the Manatee/Sarasota costs.

"Absolutely," Carter told her.

Barbetta also asked Carter to research whether any Florida firms could provide shelters to the county.

"Sure," Carter responded.

On a motion by Robinson, the board voted unanimously to delay a decision on the contract amendment until Nov. 6. 



A WHOLE LOT OF VENTING

Plenty of chairs were available for visitors when Warm Mineral Springs was open. Photo courtesy Sarasota County

THE NORTH PORT CITY COMMISSIONERS DECIDE NOT TO SEEK A NEW SHORT-TERM OPERATOR FOR WARM MINERAL SPRINGS; A LONG-TERM PLAN, THEY SAY, HAS TO BE THE NEXT STEP

By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

Forget the short-term process; the long-term plan is the only option at this point.

After almost two-and-a-half hours of discussion on Oct. 28 — including numerous public comments — that was the unanimous decision of the North Port City Commission in response to the latest letter it had received from the Sarasota County Commission about Warm Mineral Springs.

“I’ve been listening to *bunk* for the last

11 months and getting trashed,” North Port Commissioner Rhonda DiFranco said at one point. “I’m tired of listening to the bunk coming from the county. ... This is nothing but bully tactics,” she added. “Not allowing us to open the Springs is another bully tactic, because they want us to continue with this long-term ITN.”

“*Let’s continue to be the good guys.*”

James Blucher
Vice Mayor
City of North Port

DiFranco was referring to the Oct. 23 letter from County Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Mason, asking the

City Commission to provide the county, within 90 days of the date of the letter, a scope of services for the long-term operations of Warm Mineral Springs.

Although the County Commission also asked the city to pursue another solicitation process for a short-term operator, the North Port Commission decided that was a waste of time.

The North Port board voted unanimously to hold a workshop to start ironing out the details of its long-range vision for the resort. Assistant City Manager Daniel Schult told *The*

I cannot in good conscience ever support spending \$700,000 to \$1 million of taxpayers' money for people to swim there.

Cheryl Cook
Commissioner
City of North Port



Sarasota News Leader on the morning of Oct. 31 that no date has been settled on yet for that session. "I'm hoping the [city] clerk is working on that now," he said, adding that he had just been on the phone with county

officials asking the same question the *News Leader* had asked.

The unanimous County Commission request to seek a new process for short-term management of the Springs came after both boards voted to reject the bid they awarded in September to WMS Sarasota Management LLC. That action followed protracted



(From left) The North Port City commissioners are Rhonda DiFranco, Vice Mayor James Blucher, Mayor Linda Yates, Cheryl Cook and Tom Jones. Photo courtesy City of North Port

negotiations with the principals of the firm, who wanted a two-year lease, instead of the 12-month term offered in the contract. The final email suggesting the change in the contract was sent from the personal attorney of Dr. Grigory Pogrebinsky — one of the WMS Sarasota Management principals — to North Port City Manager Jonathan Lewis. It came after city officials rejected the firm's pleas for more repairs at Warm Mineral Springs before the firm reopened the facilities.

During the North Port City Commission's regular meeting on Oct. 28, Lewis pointed out that the city board already had a workshop set for Dec. 2, so they could begin discussing the long-term plan for Warm Mineral Springs

that day. However, the commissioners could reach no consensus on whether they should tackle the resort topic then or have Lewis schedule a separate workshop.

It was about 16 months ago — July 2012 — when the County and City commissions agreed to pursue an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) so they could receive proposals for development of the resort. The election of DiFranco and Cheryl Cook to the North Port Commission in November 2012 gave that board a new majority — with Mayor Linda Yates — that was desirous of preserving Warm Mineral Springs in a park-like nature. The city and county bought the property together for \$5.5 million in 2010.



A solicitation this summer for a short-term operator for Warm Mineral Springs included this map of the property. Image courtesy City of North Port

RISING TEMPERS

In the meantime, DiFranco made it clear Monday night that she was past the point of frustration with Vice Mayor James Blucher's appeals to his colleagues to "be nice."

Referring to some of the public comments offered that evening, DiFranco won applause when she suggested the city commissioners should "march down to the county at one of their meetings and put it to their face."

Yates admonished the audience members to be quiet. It was one of numerous occasions during the meeting when she asked them to stop talking among themselves as the commissioners debated how to proceed.

Blucher commiserated with DiFranco, but he added, "That kind of war does not work. That ends us up in court. ... Let's continue to be the good guys."

Yates again voiced her frustration — as she did at the board's Oct. 14 meeting — about the Springs remaining closed during season. During that Oct. 14 session, she proposed again that Lewis and his staff work with the county administrator and staff to open the resort to swimming only. When she reiterated that desire Monday night, Cook protested.

"I cannot in good conscience ever support spending \$700,000 to \$1 million of taxpayers' money for people to swim there," Cook said, referring to an estimate Lewis had offered earlier about the city's expense for opening and running the facility.

"If we need to move forward to develop a long-term [agreement], I have no problem with that," Cook continued, "however long it takes us."



Jonathan Lewis is the city manager of North Port. Image courtesy City of North Port

Yates said she understood, but she felt admission fees would cover the city's cost of operating Warm Mineral Springs during season for swimming only.

Based on her review of revenue statements for the resort, Yates noted, she felt visitors' fees would generate enough money. "We're not supposed to be in things for profit," Yates pointed out.

Cook countered that it was unrealistic to expect admission fees to cover the cost, adding that the financial documents to which Yates had referred included revenue from other operations on the grounds, such as the spa and the gift shop.

"I just think it's unacceptable" not to have Warm Mineral Springs open during season, Yates said once more.

At one point, Blucher looked at Lewis and Schult and said that if the commissioners were able to ask staff to open the resort to swimming only — action the County Commission does not support — “I’m sure you guys are going to look at us and say, ‘That’s two months or maybe three months.’”

When Yates asked how serious any of her other colleagues were about making another attempt to win approval for the city to open the resort on its own, DiFranco responded, “It has nothing to do with being serious.”

“It does,” Yates replied.

“We’ve been serious,” DiFranco replied, “and this is what’s aggravated me, because you’re sitting there and you’re saying we weren’t serious. ... How many times are you going to get slapped before you realize [the county commissioners] meant ‘No’?”

MAKING THE DECISION

As the discussion went on, Yates said at another point, “Based on where we are at today, this commission is leaning toward getting on to the long-term [management proposal].” However, she cautioned, that could mean Warm Mineral Springs would remain

closed for another six or eight months. “And the public should have a clear understanding of what the expectation is,” she added. “The public gets their hopes up; then, the public gets their hopes down.”


Yates continued, “We need to make a definitive decision and just go down that path; stick with it ... and get it done.”

Blucher responded that the workshop seemed to be the best option.

Lewis told the commissioners that the focus for the long-term management proposal should be “the parameters of what you want to accomplish. Don’t worry about the process.”

“And I agree with that,” Blucher said.

“I think the long-term is where we need to go and head straight there,” DiFranco added. “I am so frustrated, bringing offer after offer after offer [to the county] and then listening to ‘It’s the city [at fault] ...’”

Blucher made the motion for the workshop, and Cook seconded it. When Yates asked for any further discussion, Blucher declined, indicating enough had been said already that night. Then the motion passed unanimously. 

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CITY COMMISSION PREVIEW

The City Commission on Nov. 4 will try to clean up an ordinance regarding alcoholic beverage consumption in public parks. Photo by Norman Schimmel

MORE GAB, PRICEY PHONE CALLS, OPEN CONTAINERS AND THE MAYOR'S CRIB NOTES PART OF THE NOV. 4 AGENDA

By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

“Competence” might be the byword of the Monday, Nov. 4, Sarasota City Commission meeting. The board is poised to adopt new rules for public comment, allow the rehab of a decaying home and consider extending its Street Teams project. Meanwhile, the people who received notice by email of the upcoming meeting and agenda received a sneak peek at how mayors run meetings.

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK

The Florida Legislature this spring changed the rules on public comment. The new procedure was effective as of Oct. 1. A month later, the City Commission will consider a

resolution making it effective in the City of Sarasota.

Previously, citizens were not allowed to comment on consent agenda items, the normally routine topics lumped together at the beginning of a meeting and passed with a single motion. A commissioner could “pull” an item off the consent agenda for discussion, but public comment still was not allowed on it.

The new law changes that, letting citizens “pull” consent items themselves and then address them. A person will still need to sign a speaker card, giving his name and address and noting the agenda item about which he wishes to talk.

The Legislature also opened up a couple of other agenda items for citizen comment. One is the very seldom-used “Board Actions” segment, normally the second item on the city agenda after approval of the minutes. The other topic is “Board Appointments,” referring to nominations of individuals for advisory boards or other positions influencing public policy. In the past, no public comment was allowed.

Thanks to the Legislature, citizens can comment about board appointments, although they will not be able to directly nominate an individual for an open position or to fill an expiring term. But the change will allow them to ask the commission to nominate someone, or they may comment on the qualifications of a person under consideration for an appointed post.

THE \$800 PHONE CALL

Sarasota’s downtown mooring field continues to create surprises. The latest one flies under

the radar as a budget amendment on the Nov. 4 consent agenda. It transfers \$1,008 from the mooring field’s equipment replacement fund to “establish an expense budget for additional consulting fees necessary for modifications to the Bayfront Mooring Field (additional buoys and slow speed zones),” according to a memo from the city’s director of public works.

Coastal Technology Corp. of Vero Beach would be the recipient of the \$1,008 for “additional permitting services,” says an Oct. 16 letter from the company. The money would pay for two \$100 application fees for the boundary markers and cover the cost of preparing applications for speed zones in the entry area and “application processing for these two project applications.”

That involves “follow-up with agency staff by phone to confirm receipt of the applications, answer any questions related to the applications posed by agency staff and facilitate expeditious review of the applications and issuance of permits.”



The City Commission is scheduled to deal with a \$1,008 item relative to its Bayfront Mooring Field when it goes through its Nov. 4 agenda. Photo by Norman Schimmel

In other words, the company will take the \$1,008 and pay \$200 of it to file the two permits, with the remainder going to cover chatting with state regulators.

OPEN CONTAINERS AND HOUSE REHAB

Only one public hearing is scheduled for the evening session of the City Commission meeting. It is designed to clean up language in the ordinance regulating open containers of alcohol. Unless the alcohol is being consumed at a city-approved event, it is illegal to drink it in a public place.

However, the way the current ordinance is written, if the city sanctions an event with alcohol in a park, it is still illegal to drink it. Thus, the recent Pumpkin Festival in Payne Park —across the street from the Sarasota

Police Department — could have resulted in thousands of arrests for violations of the open container ordinance, had police been eager to enforce it.

The new ordinance removes the park exemption and contains a couple of new definitions.

Under “New Business,” the commission is being asked to sell a lot at 2435 Browning St. to Habitat for Humanity. The organization will pay \$16,600 for the property seized by the city for code violations.

The sale history of the vacant lot shows the rocket-like trajectory of property values over the past 15 years. In 1999, the lot sold for \$38,000. Four years later, the price was \$115,000. It is currently assessed for tax purposes at \$41,000, up from \$26,400 last year.



The city plans to sell a vacant Browning Street lot to Habitat for Humanity. Photo by Stan Zimmerman

Habitat plans to build a new home there within 12 months and sell it to a family with an income at or below 80 percent of the median income for Sarasota County. Otherwise, the property would revert to the city's ownership.

THE MAYOR'S CHEAT SHEET

The final item of interest is also a good place to show how the mayor keeps the meetings on track. People who sign up for email notification of upcoming city meetings are also given a link to enable them to read the agenda. Intentionally distributed or not, the agenda for the Nov. 4 meeting includes a page before each item that gives the mayor instructions on how to run the session. Here is that section for the last item, verbatim:

Item No. XIV.1. NEW BUSINESS:

- *Announce that the next item is the update presentation on the Street Team Program from the Salvation Army.*
- *Call upon David Sutton, Director of Programs/Facilities for The Salvation Army. Public Works Director Jeffcoat and Public Works General Manager Kucharski to make the presentation.*
- *Commission Questions*
- *Call upon persons signed up to speak, if any.*
- *Ask for a motion, if appropriate*
- *Repeat the motion*
- *Ask for discussion*

VOICE VOTE

- *All those in favor say "yes"*
- *All those opposed say "not"*
- *Chair votes "_____"*
- *Announce the results of the vote*


The item asks for a one-year extension of the Street Team program funded by the



Mayor Shannon Snyder listens to discussion during a City Commission meeting. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Downtown and Newtown community redevelopment agencies. It recruits homeless and vagrant individuals at The Salvation Army facility on 10th Street in Sarasota to pick up trash and weed landscape beds for four hours a day.

By many accounts, the program is a success. Of the 198 people who participated in the prior 12 months, 79 obtained employment, and 78 obtained stable housing. The Street Team volunteers in their lime-colored T-shirts — which makes them highly visible for safety's sake — put in almost 8,000 hours working downtown and another 8,000 hours working in Newtown over the last 12 months.

For people checking the agenda on the city's website, the cheat sheets are missing. Looks easy to be a mayor if you have secret crib notes. 



Volunteers at Ed Smith Stadium organize donations to the Mayors Feed the Hungry Program in November 2012. Photo by Norman Schimmel

ORIOLES TEAMING AGAIN WITH MAYORS FEED THE HUNGRY PROGRAM

The Orioles and the Mayors Feed the Hungry Program are teaming up again this year to collect and distribute food to help people in need in the Sarasota area, the Orioles have announced.

Beginning Nov. 1, the Orioles will collect non-perishable food items at Ed Smith Stadium, and they will host the charity's Thanksgiving Sorting Day there on Nov. 22, a news release says.

Those efforts again demonstrate "the Orioles' strong belief in going to bat against hunger," said David Rovine, vice president

of Orioles-Sarasota, in the release. "The Orioles are proud to be a part of the Sarasota community, and we remain a committed year-round community partner, giving back through OriolesREACH and our Sarasota 365 program."

Non-perishable food items may be dropped off at Ed Smith Stadium, located at 2700 12th St. in Sarasota, on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., the release notes. The collection station is located at the Euclid Avenue entrance, just south of Café 54. The stadium will be closed on Monday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day, the release adds.



MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY



On Friday, Nov. 22, volunteers will be needed to sort food collected from locations throughout the community, the release points out. Sorting will take place in the East Lot between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sorting day volunteers do not need to sign up in advance.

“The Mayors Feed the Hungry Program is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization that has helped more than 390,000 hungry persons in Sarasota and Manatee counties since 1987,” the release explains. The organization’s Thanksgiving food drive collects tons of non-perishable food items, it adds. The food is distributed through charitable groups, religious institutions and service agencies. The program also uses cash donations to distribute food gift cards.

“Before the Orioles joined with us in 2012, we had been holding our food drives in a grass parking lot for the last 12 years, so the facilities at Ed Smith Stadium were a huge improvement,” said Scott Biehler, vice chairman of

the charity, in the release. “Mayors Feed the Hungry does not receive government funds, and we are all volunteers. Corporate partners like the Baltimore Orioles are vital to serving the thousands of local residents who would go hungry without our help,” Biehler pointed out.

The program is endorsed by the mayors of Sarasota, Bradenton, Palmetto, Venice and Longboat Key, as well as the chairs of the North Port City Council and the Sarasota and Manatee county commissions. More information may be found at www.mayors-feedthehungry.org.

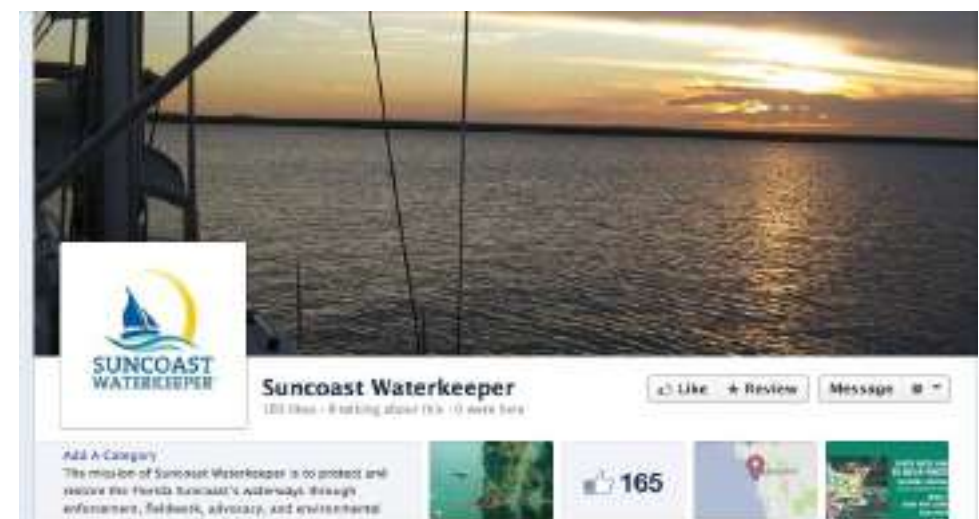
“The Orioles’ participation with the Mayors Feed the Hungry Program is part of Sarasota 365, a host of initiatives through which the Baltimore Orioles and OriolesREACH demonstrate the ball club’s year-round engagement with the greater Sarasota community,” the release notes. For more information or to sign up for the Orioles in Sarasota e-newsletter, visit www.orioles.com/sarasota.

SUNCOAST WATERKEEPER BENEFIT SET FOR NOV. 2

A fundraising event for the Suncoast Waterkeeper, a relatively new environmental not-for-profit organization, will be held from 7 to 11 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2.

The Suncoast Waterkeeper “works to protect and restore the coastal waters of Sarasota and Manatee counties,” a news release notes. The fundraiser has been scheduled to follow the Sarasota Bay Water Festival in Ken Thompson Park (see related item in this column).

The party will be held at Sarasota Architectural Salvage, located at 1093 Central Ave. in downtown Sarasota. Music will be provided by Hymn for Her and Radio-Free Carmela & the Transmitters. The Baja Boys Grill food truck



will be on the premises, and beer will be offered by Sweetwater Brewing Co. The beer is covered in the \$10 admission fee.

For more information about the Suncoast Waterkeeper, visit <https://www.facebook.com/Suncoastkeeper?ref=hl>.

SARASOTA BAY WATER FESTIVAL TO PRESENT PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (SBEP) will host four panel discussions during the 2013 Sarasota Bay Water Festival set for Saturday, Nov. 2, at Ken Thompson Park, the SBEP has announced.

The discussions will focus on the protection of local wildlife, stormwater pollution, environmental education and the challenges facing Sarasota Bay.

The schedule follows:

- Noon — *Protecting Sarasota Bay Wildlife*: Panelists will be Jeanne Dubi with Sarasota Audubon, Krystan Wilkinson with Mote Marine Laboratory, Buddy Powell with Sea to Shore Alliance, Suzi Fox with AMI Turtle Watch and Shorebird Monitoring and Jay Leverone with SBEP.
- 1 p.m. — *Reducing Stormwater Pollution*: Panelists will be Michelle Atkinson with Manatee County Extension, Tom Heitzman with Florida Native Plant Society, Alison Albee with the City of Sarasota and Ray Kaiser with the AMI Eco-Village.
- 2 p.m. — *Environmental Education & Stewardship*: Panelists will be Karen Fraley with Around the Bend Nature Tours, Melissa Nell with Manatee County, Rob Wright with Sarasota County, Jennifer Shafer with the Science and Environmental Council of Southwest Florida and Sara Kane with the SBEP.
- 3 p.m. — *Sarasota Bay Past, Present and Future*: Panelists will be Damon Moore with Manatee County, local archaeologist Bill Burger, Capt. Kathe with Cortez Fishing Village and Sherri Swanson with HDR Inc.



The Sarasota Bay Water Festival will have a wide array of attractions for the public on Nov. 2 in Ken Thompson Park. Contributed photo

“The purpose of the Water Festival is to celebrate the importance of Sarasota Bay to the region’s environment, economy and quality of life,” a news release points out. Among the event’s other offerings will be seven hours of free live music with Ben Hammond, Democracy, Come Back Alice, Hymn for Her and Luke Andrews; dragon boat races; fine artists and photographers selling unique gift items; food trucks; a beer and wine garden; vintage and new boat displays; four panel discussions on bay-friendly living; the winning submissions to the *I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest*; dip netting and nature walks for children; and tent exhibits promoting boating, fishing, kayaking, paddle board sports, scuba diving and more.

The SBEP is the presenting sponsor and HDR Inc. is the host sponsor this year.

Among the raffle prizes will be a 12-foot Perception Sport Kayak from Economy Tackle and Dolphin Paddlesports, a Hovie Scout paddle board from SUP Sarasota, an 18-inch by 20-inch matted giclee print from acclaimed photographer Clyde Butcher, an open water diving class with Florida Underwater Sports, a two-hour excursion on a Yamaha jet boat with Sarasota Wind and Water Adventures, a full-day bike rental from Freedom 4 Electric Bikes and a Disc Sports Package from Sun King Disc Sports. The winning raffle tickets will be drawn at 5 p.m. on the music stage, the release points out.

A free water taxi will run all day between Marina Jack in downtown Sarasota and the



A water taxi will ferry people from Marina Jack to the Sarasota Sailing Squadron. Contributed photo

Sarasota Sailing Squadron to take members of the public to and from the festival. The Squadron is located next to the Water Festival venue at Ken Thompson Park on City Island. Freedom Boat Club is providing the taxi service for the second consecutive year, the release notes.

The taxi runs will start at 10 a.m. at Marina Jack; the final departure from the Sarasota Sailing Squadron will be at 6:30 p.m. Small signs will be posted along the left side of Marina Jack Restaurant to guide visitors to the dock area, the release says.

“The scenic trip is about 20 minutes and the maximum wait is expected to be 30 minutes,” it adds. “Freedom Boat Club is providing three boats commanded by experienced Coast Guard certified captains,” it notes.



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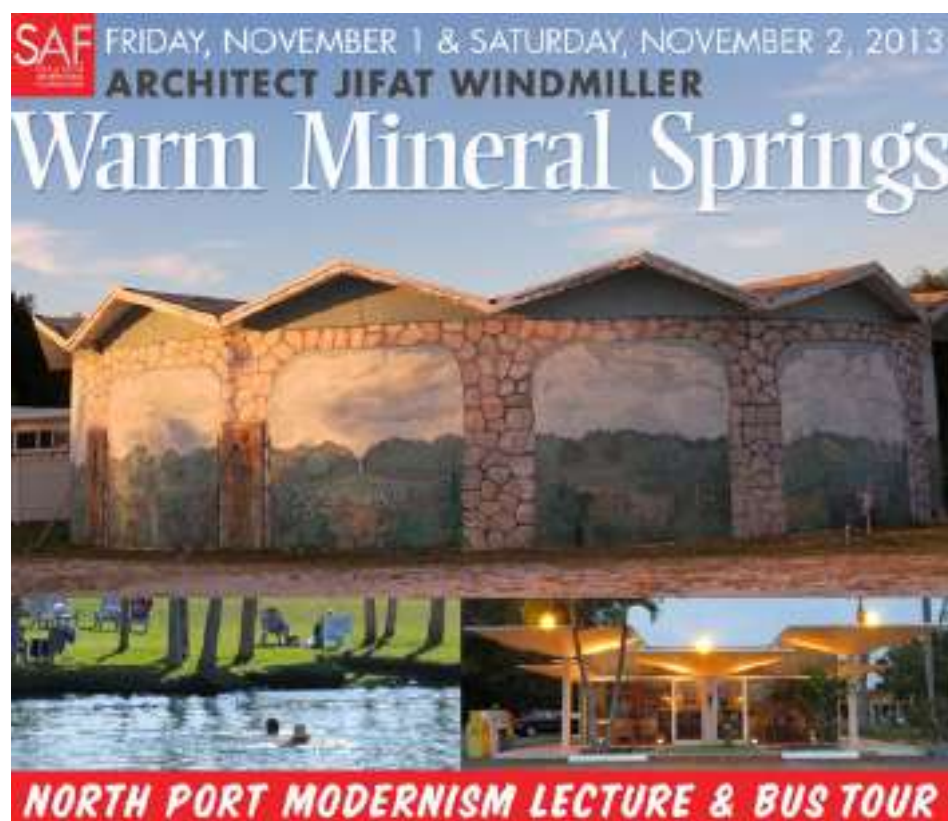
FOUNDATION HOSTING WARM MINERAL SPRINGS BUS TOUR

The [Sarasota Architectural Foundation](#) is hosting a bus trip tour of Warm Mineral Springs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2, with lunch included the organization has announced.

Those interested in taking the “Magical ‘Reality’ Bus Tour” to the North Port resort should make advance reservations, as space is limited, a news release says. The cost is \$40 per person. To pay online, click [here](#). For more information, email info@saf-srq.org or call 364-2199.

Those registered for the tour are asked to be at the Sarasota Visitors Center, located at 701 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, at 9:45 a.m. on Nov. 2 to catch the bus, the release notes.

The air-conditioned ride will feature the comments of architect Jifat Windmiller “and other mid-century modern enthusiasts,” the release adds. Warm Mineral Springs “is one of the most intriguing natural features in the continental United States,” it notes.



Although the facility is closed to the public, the release continues, “SAF has been granted special permission to tour the site.” Tour stops will include “architect Jack West’s Warm Mineral Springs complex and the unique Cyclorama, Warm Mineral Springs Motel (Victor Lundy, 1958), Venice Beach Pavilion (Cy Tucker, 1964) and Nokomis Beach Plaza (Jack West, 1956, restored 2008).

DRUG TAKE BACK DAY NETS MORE THAN 120 POUNDS

The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office collected more than 120 pounds of prescription medication as part of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) national turn-in event on Saturday, Oct. 26, the office has announced.

Residents dropped off a total of 123 pounds of pharmaceutical drugs: 61 pounds in Sarasota and 62 pounds in Venice, a news release says.

Anyone who missed the turn-in event may drop off unused or expired prescription medications year-round at either of the Sheriff’s Office’s two permanent drop boxes, it notes. They are located at the Criminal Justice Center, 2071 Ringling Blvd. in Sarasota, which

is available 24 hours a day; or the South County Sheriff’s Office at 4531 State Road 776 in Venice, where the hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

“Medicines kept in the home are susceptible to misuse and theft,” the release points out. “Many people who abuse prescription drugs steal them from family and friends.”

The release continues, “In addition to reducing drug crimes and potential overdoses, turning in medication for proper disposal is important to prevent health and safety hazards and keeps the substances out of treatment plants and waterways.”

ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK HOLDING BOWLS OF HOPE ON NOV. 3

All Faiths Food Bank welcomes the public to come to Phillippi Estate Park on Sunday, Nov. 3, for the annual Bowls of Hope fundraiser.

“Join us for soup and select a beautiful hand-crafted bowl to keep,” a news release says. “Your support helps us fill the empty bowls of our neighbors in need.”

Tickets are \$25 at the door.

Live entertainment will be offered. Additionally, hundreds of ceramic bowls will be available — created by local potters — from which to choose, the release adds. Those local businesses offering their wares will be

Carla’s Clay, Englewood Art Center, Island Village Montessori, Out-Of-Door Academy, Pete Nye, Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Pine View School, Sister Maureen of Venice and Venice Art Center.

The soup selections will be provided by more than 30 local restaurants, and bread, dessert and light beverages will be included in the ticket price.

Phillippi Estate Park is located at 5500 S. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota. Tents will be erected to protect participants from sun or rain. For more information, call 549-8131.

INTERNATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE SET FOR NOV. 13-15

The Sister Cities Association of Sarasota has teamed with the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee and the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce to host a three-day conference on *Sustainability Through Renewable Energy & Aquaculture*.

It will be held Nov. 13-15 in USF Sarasota-Manatee’s Selby Auditorium, located at 8350 N. Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, a news release says.

The goal of the conference is to bring together both professionals and students from Florida and Sarasota’s Sister Cities, the release notes.

“One of the major missions of Sarasota Sister Cities Association (SCAS) is to foster international relationships through exchanges in areas of business, culture and education,” said SCAS President Beth Ruyle Hullinger in the release. “SCAS’s objective is to develop respect, understanding and cooperation through citizen diplomacy.”

The conference will focus on three topics:

- *Sustainability*, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Nov. 13.
- *Renewable Energy Alternatives*, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 14.
- *Sustainability of Ocean & Water Resources*, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Nov. 15.

Attendance is open to the public, but registration is required, the release points out. Full registration for the three-day conference is \$75. An option for attending select daily sessions is \$30 per day. Lunch is included for those with paid registrations on Nov. 13 and 14.

To register for the conference go to <http://sarasotasistercities.org/en/form/international-sustainability-conference-registration>.

College and high school faculty members and students may register for the conference at no cost by contacting Dr. Raymond Young, conference chairman, at aloharay4@gmail.com. Lunch will not be provided to those attending the sessions at no cost, the release adds.

HISTORIAN TO REVEAL SECRETS OF FLORIDA'S 'FORGOTTEN WOMEN'

"Do you know anything about Julia Tuttle, Mahulda Carrier, Carrie Abbe, Rose Wilson or Victoria Brandon?" asks a news release from the Historical Society of Sarasota County.

"Probably not," the release continues, "but you should."

These women, along with the more familiar Marie Selby, Bertha Palmer, Mabel Ringling, Zora Neale Hurston and Harriet Beecher Stowe, will be the focus of "a lively and informative presentation by Sarasota-based Florida historian Hope Black, who aims to uncover the lives and achievements of women who made their way to Florida between 1842 and 1918 and had a huge impact on the growth and development of this state," the release adds.

Black's presentation, *Florida Women: Familiar and Forgotten*, will take place on Thursday, Nov. 7, at 7 p.m. in the Crocker Memorial Church, located at 1260 12th St. (Pioneer Park) in Sarasota. Members of the Historical Society of Sarasota County will be admitted free; for the general public, the cost is \$10.

Black will give an illustrated presentation and then conduct a question-and-answer session "about the extraordinary and diverse group of women who came to Florida in the 19th and 20th centuries and made significant changes in the culture and landscape of the state," the release notes.

A native of Rochester, NY, Black received her master's degree in liberal arts from the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg. "She wrote her thesis on Bertha Honore Palmer and has concentrated her research through the years on people who have been important in the evolution of the Sunshine State," the release points out. Black is a frequent speaker on Florida history and a



Hope Black/Contributed photo

member of the Historical Society of Sarasota County as well as a former board member, it adds.

"These women whom I have come to know and greatly admire came from different backgrounds with varying degrees of resources, education, voracity and goals," said Black in the release. "Some came to Florida with an inheritance and a dream to fulfill, while others were single women with an unstoppable passion for activism. Some women came as children, the daughters of women who dutifully followed their homesteading husbands."

She continues in the release, "But, all but one of these courageous women shared one common bond: They sacrificed creature comforts in an ordered society to brave a wild frontier plagued by roving animals, insects and reptiles and prejudices unique to the South."

For more information about Black's presentation, contact Linda Garcia at the Historical Society, 364-9076; or Marsha Fottler at 371-8593.



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COMCAST AWARDS EDUCATION FOUNDATION A \$20,000 GRANT

Thanks to a \$20,000 grant from the [Comcast Foundation](#), the [Education Foundation of Sarasota County](#) will accelerate a new digital literacy initiative to reach young people across the county, the foundation has announced.

“As a result, hundreds of students will gain access to high-quality digital tools, training and tutoring in safe, supportive environments during the 2013-2014 school year,” a news release says.

With the Comcast Foundation funds, the Education Foundation’s Texcellence Program will launch its newest Digital Learning Lab in partnership with Alta Vista Elementary School. More than 115 students who attend Alta Vista’s A+ Adventure Club after-school program will use the lab, the release points out.

“The first Education Foundation Digital Learning Lab was installed in April to enrich Laurel Civic Association’s after-school, weekend, and summer programs,” the release adds. Other Digital Learning Labs are planned for at least 10 locations, including YMCA’s Triad sites, Sarasota Housing Authority, Sarasota County Libraries, Boys and Girls Clubs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers.

Susan Scott, executive director of the Education Foundation, announced the grant. “Even with the success of our Texcellence computer donation program, we found that an alarming number of students still have limited or no access to digital technology outside the classroom,” she said in the release. “Having this Comcast Foundation grant means we will be able to reach so many more young people who need these tools and are incredibly motivated to learn with them — with a little help from caring adults.”



Ty Blanton, 6, enjoys working with his new computer from the Education Foundation. Contributed photo

“Over the past six years, the Education Foundation’s Texcellence program has taken one teacher’s vision and scaled it up to reach every neighborhood in the district,” the release points out. “A collaboration between the foundation and Sarasota County Schools that is supported by private donations and grants, Texcellence is recognized as a national model for public/private partnerships, giving families the digital tools they need to support their students’ academic achievement.”

Since 2007, the release continues, “a total of 6,621 Sarasota County students in need have received a home computer, training for the family and ongoing low-cost technical support. Since 2011, every Texcellence family has also qualified for a discounted subscription at \$10 per month through Comcast’s [Internet Essentials](#) program.”

For more information about Texcellence and Digital Learning Labs, visit www.texcellence.org or contact Jennifer Sams at 927-0965.

SHERIFF PROMOTES FIVE MEN AND ONE WOMAN TO SUPERVISORY POSTS

On Oct. 24, Sarasota County Sheriff Tom Knight promoted five men and one woman to new supervisory positions in the Patrol and Special Operations divisions, the office has announced.

Capt. John Walsh, promoted from lieutenant, became the Patrol Bureau commander; Lt. Dave Scott, promoted from sergeant, and Lt. Debra Kaspar, promoted from sergeant, have been named Patrol Bureau watch commanders.

Detective Mike Dumer and Deputy Scott Mruczek were both promoted to sergeant and assigned to the Patrol Bureau, the release adds. Deputy Brent Wineka was promoted to chief pilot of the Aviation Unit, still assigned to Special Operations.

The promotional process was formalized during Knight's first term in office to ensure

its objectivity, the release points out. These steps were outlined in his initial management review and implemented in the 2009-2013 Strategic Plan, it notes.

"These professionals have been trained to lead the Sheriff's Office and their promotions today are part of our succession plan," said Knight in the Oct. 24 news release. "With the right leadership, employees improve the effectiveness of the organization and instill important qualities in those they manage and supervise, enhancing our ability to serve this community."

In addition to the promotions, Capt. Paul Richard was named commander of the Investigations Bureau.



(From left) Sgt. Mike Dumer, Lt. Dave Scott, Lt. Debra Kaspar, Capt. John Walsh, Sgt. Scott Mruczek, Dep. Brent Wineka and Sheriff Tom Knight. Contributed photo

ALTA VISTA ELEMENTARY IDENTIFIED AS 'EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS'

Alta Vista Elementary School is “exceeding expectations” academically, according to a network of 36 school districts across Florida, the Sarasota County School District has announced.

“The network, known as the East Coast Technical Assistance Center (ECTAC), runs the Exceeding Expectations Project to identify Florida Title I schools that show progress in improving student achievement,” a news release explains. Twenty Title I schools were identified for this year’s project, out of a total of 1,243 Title I schools in the state.

“Title I schools have a high percentage of students living in poverty,” the release adds. Over 90 percent of Alta Vista students receive

free or reduced-cost meals, it notes. The school was cited for “exceeding expectations on academic indicators when compared to other schools with similar characteristics and populations.”

Over the next few months, an ECTAC team will visit Alta Vista and the other 19 identified schools to observe the practices that are contributing to their success, the release continues. After the visits are completed and each school’s data is further analyzed, a selection team will make the final determination of Exceeding Expectations Award Schools, the release says. “These schools will be asked to participate in a statewide conference in May to be recognized for their accomplishments



Sarasota County School District administrators visited Alta Vista Elementary to congratulate the school for 'exceeding expectations': (from left) Superintendent Lori White, Title I Parent Involvement Facilitator Carolyn Major-Harper, Supervisor of State and Federal Programs Jane Mahler, Alta Vista Principal Barbara Shirley, Executive Director of Elementary Schools John Zoretich, Assistant Principal Dehea Smith and third-grade teacher Barbara Rannigan.

and to share their strategies with other schools from around the state.”

Last year, 16 of the 20 originally identified finalists received the award, the release points out.

Among Alta Vista’s positive academic indicators were maintaining or increasing total reading and math proficiency from 2011-12 to 2012-13, increasing or maintaining the school’s grade in the 2011-12 and 2012-13 school years, scoring above the state median for all schools (not just Title I institutions) in total reading and math learning gains and in highest-quartile reading and math learning gains in 2012-13, and performing above expectations on total school grade points in 2011-12 and 2012-13, the release adds.

“Our entire Alta Vista community is thrilled to receive this prestigious recognition and invitation to participate in a statewide project involving schools that have exceeded expectations in student achievement,” said Principal Barbara Shirley in the release. “This validates the hard work we are doing



Alta Vista Principal Barbara Shirley is surprised Oct. 4 with the news that her school is ‘exceeding expectations,’ according to a statewide network that monitors academic progress of Title I schools. Contributed photo

to ensure that every child is making learning gains and achieving academic excellence. We are fortunate to have a talented and dedicated staff, caring parents, great students and community volunteers who value education and provide a tremendous amount of support for our school.”

Alta Vista Elementary is located at 1050 S. Euclid Ave. in Sarasota.

BOBBY JONES COURSE TO HOST WOMEN’S GOLF TOURNAMENT

Bobby Jones Golf Club will host the 14th annual Women’s Partner and Individual City Championship tournament Saturday, Nov. 9, and Sunday, Nov. 10, the City of Sarasota has announced.

The competitive tournament is open to females of all ages, a news release says. Tee times will begin each day at 8 a.m. and continue every 10 minutes.

The registration fee is \$220 per team, the release notes. Registrations must be received by 5 p.m. Monday, Nov. 4. Entries are limited to the first 100 teams. [Click here to download a registration form.](#)

Entry fees include two rounds of golf with a riding cart, a tee gift, a non-alcoholic beverage on the course each day and lunch on Sunday.

Tee times and results will be posted on the Bobby Jones Golf Club website: www.BobbyJonesGolfClub.com.

Bobby Jones Golf Club is owned and operated by the City of Sarasota; it offers three courses with a total of 45 holes, the release adds.

For more information, call 954-4163 or visit the website.

NEW COLLEGE TO SCREEN *SHORED UP* AND HOST THE DIRECTOR

Brian Kalina's documentary, *Shored Up*, will be screened at New College of Florida at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 5, the college has announced.

Kalina had been working for three years on a film about the fragility of oceanfront communities, but he lacked that "hook" — the imagery and statement that would sell the film to an audience, a news release says. "Then superstorm Sandy thrashed the New Jersey shore, flooded Manhattan and sent Kalina back to film the 'after' shots of the places he had already visited," the release continues. The result is *Shored Up*.

Following the presentation of the film, a question-and-answer session will be conducted with Kalina and New College faculty members Frank Alcock and Jono Miller.

Alcock, associate professor of political science, "is an expert in the intersection of government policy and marine science," the release notes. "Miller, the former director of the college's Environmental Studies Program, has studied the region's coastal environment for decades and is active in restoration efforts."

The movie will be presented in cooperation with The Union of Concerned Scientists,

A FILM BY BEN KALINA

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The Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida and The Rising Seas Initiative, the release points out. David Shafer, founder of the Rising Seas Initiative and executive director of the Science and Environment Council of Southwest Florida, says the film is a “wake-up call for Southwest Florida, considering how much of our population and tax base is on the coast,” the release adds.

“*Shored Up* began as an examination of conflicts over beach renourishment programs along the Jersey Shore,” the release continues. “As Kalina researched and filmed, it expanded into an exploration of the political conflicts and personal stakes of communities along the shore, with insights from scientists, politicians and residents, and [it] exposed major shortcomings in coastal management and the immediate need for change.” 



A satellite photo shows Hurricane Sandy over a wide swath of the East Coast of the United States on Oct. 30, 2012. Image from NASA via Wikimedia Commons

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SARASOTA POLICE DEPARTMENT TO HOST TWEET FROM THE BEAT

The Sarasota Police Department will take members of the public on a virtual ride-along on Friday, Nov. 1, the department has announced.

The Police Department will host its first ever Tweet from the Beat, a news release says. The event is set for Nov. 1 from 7 p.m. until 2 a.m. Throughout the evening, Shift Commander Sgt. Ken Castro and Sgt. Rex Troche “will share what they see and do through texts and photos tweeted from the beat” through the Partnership Policing communications coordinator, the release notes.

People following @SarasotaPD will be able to ask questions and interact with our officers, the release adds. Anyone not already on Twitter may go to www.twitter.com and sign

up, the release points out. “It’s easy, quick and free. Once you create an account, you can follow us @SarasotaPD.”

“Tweet from the Beat is a chance for the community to interact and let our officers communicate with the city we serve and protect,” said Capt. Pat Robinson with the Bureau of Patrol Operations in the release.



FIREFIGHTERS BENEVOLENT FUND TREASURER ARRESTED

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested Thomas Rhoades, 43, of 8983 Misty Creek Drive, Sarasota, for stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Sarasota Firefighters Benevolent Fund, the department announced last week.

The investigation began after the president of the Benevolent Fund reported the theft earlier this month, a news release says. Detectives found that Rhoades, who was the treasurer of the nonprofit organization, "made numerous unauthorized in-branch and ATM withdrawals" from the Benevolent Fund's high-yield savings and business checking accounts, it adds. Those totaled \$221,507.58 between February 2011 and September of this year, the release notes.

Rhoades took over as treasurer of the organization in December 2010, according to the report.



Thomas Rhoades/Contributed photo

Rhoades is charged with one felony count of Scheme to Defraud and one count of Grand Theft in excess of \$100,000.

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VENICE CONTRACTOR CHARGED WITH GRAND THEFT

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has filed additional charges against a Venice contractor who took payment from a customer but did not perform the work, the office has announced.

Steven Baker, 57, owns Advanced Window Concepts, located at 795 Commerce Drive, No. 2, in Venice, a news release says. "Detectives learned he cashed a \$1,350 check from an Englewood woman in August but did not pull permits and did not start the job."

The Sheriff's Office report for the August case points out that Florida State Statute 489.126 "states that a contractor who receives more than 10 percent of the contract price must apply for permits within 30 days after a payment is received, must start the work within 90 days after the date all necessary permits are issued, and shall not fail or refuse to perform any work for any 90 day period."

Baker has been in the Sarasota County Jail since September, when the Venice Police Department charged him with a similar crime as the one in August, the news release adds. The Sheriff's Office also filed charges against him earlier this month for taking a \$3,500 down payment from a Venice woman in May without pulling permits or installing new windows, it notes.

Two Sarasota County Sheriff's Office detectives investigate claims against people who engage in contracting work without proper licenses, permits or certification, it points out. "This partnership with Sarasota County Code Enforcement and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) protects consumers financially, shields



Steven Baker/Contributed photo

them from potential litigation and ensures their safety, since shoddy work can only be detected during the inspection process," the release explains.

A first offense usually results in a civil citation by Code Enforcement, but subsequent violations lead to misdemeanor or felony criminal charges, the release notes.

To check a Sarasota County license, call Code Enforcement at 861-6126, and to report someone you suspect is acting as an unlicensed contractor or performing work without a permit call Sarasota County at 861-5000. For more information visit: <https://www.scgov.net/DevelopmentServices/Pages/ContractorLicensing.aspx>

MAN ARRESTED BY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FOR AGGRAVATED CHILD ABUSE

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Office has arrested a 25-year-old Cape Coral man for child abuse and other charges after a six-month-old girl was found battered and covered in Windex, the office has reported.

Deputies were called to Sarasota Memorial Hospital Sunday morning, Oct. 27, after the infant was brought in with facial and head trauma, a news release says. "The baby's mother and a witness explained that the little girl was sleeping in her crib when they went to bed Saturday night, but they woke up Sunday morning to the sound of her crying harder than normal," the release notes.

When the mother turned on the light, the report says, "she saw cuts to the baby's face and near one of her eyes and that the crib had been moved into the living room."

Both the mother and the witness reported that Christopher Rounds, 25, of Cape Coral was the only person awake with the baby when she was crying, the release continues. "The mother said Rounds smoked **K2** earlier in the day, while the witness said Rounds had been drinking and had anxiety attacks over caring for the infant," it added.


According to the report, the mother told deputies, "I know Chris didn't mean to hurt her."



Christopher Rounds/Contributed photo

The witness also told deputies he heard Rounds and the mother arguing, the report says, including Rounds yelling, "I've been up for over two f***ing hours taking care of your baby while you slept."

The baby later was transported to All Children's Hospital in St. Petersburg, the release notes.

Rounds was charged with Aggravated Child Abuse. He is being held without bond. He also faces two counts of Disorderly Conduct for threatening deputies and two neighbors when initially contacted about the abuse investigation, the report adds. 

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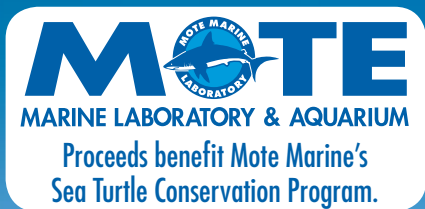


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OPINION



WEDNESDAY, BLOODY WEDNESDAY

EDITORIAL

When Mary Stuart, the Queen of Scots, was

beheaded in 1587, her executioner was having an off day. His first stroke hit the back of Mary's head, not her neck. According to some accounts, she cried out in pain and continued to moan loudly as he raised the ax for another try.

The second stroke at least hit her neck, but it did not completely sever her head from the body. It took yet a third swing of the headsman's ax to complete his gruesome task.

Beheadings no longer occur in the civilized world, of course, but they have become metaphorical stand-ins for the firing of employees, especially the termination of high-ranking executives. "Heads will roll," was commonly

uttered after some corporate debacle, when dismissals were in the offing.

In the wake of corporate America's *en masse* exodus to offshore factories and service call centers in the 1980s, the firing of domestic employees spawned a new euphemism: "Downsizing."

More important, a cottage industry sprang up that offered corporations new strategies for terminating employees that would be less traumatic than the figurative beheadings many firings tended to be.

Certainly, in an era when the phrase "going postal" had entered the vernacular as a sinister, cautionary tale with regard to letting employees go, corporate America had a vested interest in making those terminations as humane as possible.

OPINION

For upper management, the bestowal of generous settlements, sometimes called “golden parachutes,” and a more collegial approach to their termination created the new standard for ending an executive’s employment. Figurative beheadings no longer were accepted, especially at the top level of management.

Three decades have passed since this more enlightened way of handling executive terminations became the norm. Yet, for four of our county commissioners — Joe Barbetta, Carolyn Mason, Christine

Robinson and Charles Hines — their maladroitness firing of County Administrator Randall Reid made one wonder if it was not still 1587.

We do not intend here to second-guess their reasons for dismissing Reid. The impasse that had developed as a result of the friction between the administrator and Commissioners Mason, Barbetta and Robinson made his sooner-rather-than-later departure almost a *fait accompli*.

Rather, we object to their humiliating approach to his termination ... certainly humiliating for Reid, but also for all citizens of Sarasota County who were mortified by the bumbling manner in which he was dismissed.

We understand that Government in the Sunshine laws prohibit commissioners privately rehearsing how such a scene should

unfold in open session. However, each commissioner is capable of ensuring that, when confronting such a sensitive matter, significant preparation of thought and speech have been undertaken so the process of terminating someone can be handled professionally and in a dignified manner.

“For four of our county commissioners — Joe Barbetta, Carolyn Mason, Christine Robinson and Charles Hines — their maladroitness firing of County Administrator Randall Reid made one wonder if it was not still 1587.”

Instead, it seemed that the commissioners were wholly unprepared last week to address their concerns over Reid’s continued employment, appearing at times abashed and uncertain in offering their evaluations

of his job performance, and later, in their condemnatory rationale for his firing.

The result was that almost no one watching the proceedings could believe that the firing of Reid was completely justifiable, given the hesitant and inadequate statements offered against him. It had more of an appearance that scores were being settled and that one who had earned these commissioners’ displeasure was being given his comeuppance.


Commissioners Mason, Barbetta and Robinson should have come to the meeting with clearly thought-out statements to support their individual intentions to dismiss Reid. Each should have acknowledged his or her own role in creating the tenuous relationship with the administrator, since they have amply demonstrated their complicity in many public criticisms over the last year.

OPINION

Coupled with their stated discontent regarding Reid's management style, this would have established a more reasonable basis for his termination without cause.

And Hines could have spared us his rambling justification for casting the fourth vote for termination. By siding with the majority, his vote surely would have been assumed as a means of avoiding an awkward three weeks before another 3-2 vote sealed Reid's fate.

Hines' contradictory reasoning only added to the overall awkwardness of the meeting.

The commissioners who had decided Reid no longer was the best person for the job should have put forth well-reasoned and coherent explanations of their concerns. This, we feel, they did not do. And, despite any failings as a county administrator, Reid did not deserve to be cast aside with such ignominy. 

THE STATE'S SUNSHINE LAWS WERE NOT MEANT TO KEEP ELECTED OFFICIALS FROM SPEAKING WITH — AND LISTENING TO — CONSTITUENTS



By Stan Zimmerman
City Editor

COMMENTARY

I can remember when the Public Records and Open Meetings Laws were young, still malleable and not “barnacled” with appellate opinions, Supreme Court decisions and even a constitutional amendment. Florida circuit judges knew they were on a legal frontier, the entire nation waiting to see if the experiment in transparency would implode — or even, just maybe, lead to a more perfect union.

Before the laws, school boards were particularly secretive across the state. Their meetings would last only minutes, because the issues were already decided behind closed doors. And Sarasota's near-legendary City Manager Ken Thompson used to pile the city commissioners into his enormous Pontiac and do an

“educational” drive to work out the kinks in upcoming agendas.

But the so-called Government in the Sunshine laws changed all that. They made members of committees and commissions personally liable for violations. One Sarasota County Commissioner — Beverly Clay — worried that her jewels could be seized if she abused the laws in any way.

On Oct. 18, the attorney for Citizens for Sunshine Inc. filed a suit alleging a violation of the Open Meetings Act following a “pow wow” among downtown merchants, senior city staffers and at least two city commissioners. Both Commissioners Suzanne Atwell and Susan Chapman were cited personally as defendants for attending a get-together to talk about homelessness and vagrancy downtown.

OPINION

I was not there. I do not know if Atwell and Chapman engaged in skullduggery to circumvent the law and whip up some policy in secret. Lawyers can argue the facts of the case. What I want to argue is that two or more commissioners have the right to meet and talk with their constituents.

For years city and county commissioners have enjoyed an open invitation to attend a variety of community events. The regular meetings of the Coalition of City Neighborhood Associations (CCNA) are a good example. On the first Saturday of the month, the CCNA members gather upstairs at the Waldemere Fire Station. The neighborhood leaders are often joined by two or more city commissioners. The latter come to gauge the temper and temperature of the city's distinct areas.

When individual neighborhood associations meet, it is not rare to find two or more city commissioners attending. The venue may or may not be public, as some neighborhood groups meet in churches. In neither case is any "notice" given in the legal sense, but in both cases, the "commissioner-guests" are often invited to speak and take questions.


If constituents' invitations lead to infractions of the Open Meeting Act — as Citizens for Sunshine alleges — then elected and appointed board members would be wise to decline such appearances. However, this quickly would lead to a disconnect between the leaders and the led. And it would raise

a major obstacle to good government, which involves give-and-take between leaders and constituents.

The Sunshine laws are not "geographic"; they are "discursive." In other words, the entire membership of a board can be in one room without any notice, for example, for a night at the opera. Only if those members start to talk about topics they will later discuss and vote on at their board meetings do the requirements of the Open Meetings Act apply.

Put another way, the members can be in the same place at the same time, and they can listen and ask questions of their constituents. That is a vital component of democracy. Only if they debate among themselves the merits and liabilities of future action will the law be violated.

We do not know the evidence or testimony the attorneys for Citizens for Sunshine will introduce in this case. The brief filed with the lawsuit says only, "Defendants Chapman and Atwell spoke at the meeting about the homeless/transient issue in the presence of each other" — just as they have spoken about similar issues before the CCNA and other neighborhood groups.

I will not address the merits of the Citizens for Sunshine case. But if the desire is to erect a barrier between citizens and policy makers, the plaintiffs are hurtling down the wrong track. We need more, not less, communication between city leaders and residents. 

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PEER REVIEW CRITICAL FOR LIDO RENOURISHMENT PROJECT

To the editor:

Roger Drouin wrote an excellent and balanced presentation of the complex issue of the Lido Beach renourishment project (*Taking shape*, Oct. 25).

Milan Mora, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project manager, noted the 2005 Inlet Management Plan (IMP) for Big Pass and New Pass was peer-reviewed and the basis for the current modeling. While this is true, I want to make it very clear that the model used in the IMP was not supported as a decision-making tool by the peer review team.

Here is the statement on Page 8 of the peer review by an independent team of three coastal engineers/scientists:

“However, the technical deficiencies forced an inconsistent application of the effort for evaluating alternatives and precluded reviewers from fully supporting the results and they do not support reliance on the information as a decision making tool for the IMP. The reviewers also emphasize that sediment transport modeling is a difficult task and there is no existing tool which can currently provide results without considerable margin of error. The reviewers do give credit to [Coastal

Technologies Corp.’s] efforts recognizing the difficulty of their work and the current state of this science and technology.”

The complete list of pertinent documents may be found at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/k5y28jwnf3bkr8z/zcmvekPWkI>.

The current Army Corps of Engineers modeling needs to have a peer review followed by a public hearing before the County Commission before permits are granted for the renourishment project.

Peter van Roekens
Secretary, Siesta Key Association
Chairman, Boaters’ Coalition



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Sarasota News Leader welcomes letters to the editor from its readers. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length, and include the name, street address and telephone number of the writer. Letters should be emailed to Letters@SarasotaNewsLeader.com, with “Letter to the Editor” in the subject line. Letters actually printed will be selected based on space available, subject matter and other factors. We reserve the right to edit any letters submitted for length, grammar, spelling, etc. All letters submitted become the property of *The Sarasota News Leader*.

OPINION

ASSOCIATION SEEKING ONE WORLD AWARD NOMINATIONS

As the Sister Cities Association of Sarasota (SCAS) celebrates 50 years of citizen diplomacy, nominations are being accepted to honor an exceptional individual or organization as the recipient of our annual One World Award.

The One World Award is presented to an extraordinary person or organization that, through work, volunteer efforts or philanthropy in Sarasota, has enhanced understanding and respect among people throughout the world.

I encourage you to contemplate and submit the names of those who should be recognized for their exceptional work in the international

arena — perhaps a neighbor, co-worker, church member or an organization actively engaged in international relationships. Nominations, including an explanation of why the person/organization should be considered for the One World Award, should be submitted to walljb@comcast.net by Nov. 15.

SCAS serves a tremendous global need by allowing individuals to strengthen shared interests around the globe and lessen the possibility of world conflicts.

For more information, visit www.SarasotaSisterCities.org.

Bill Wallace

Sister Cities Association of Sarasota



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Monday, November 18, 2013

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NICE CARS!
FORWARD STEPS
SIESTA SEEN

Inside

Your Lifestyle Guide To The Suncoast

Nice Cars!

Staff Reports



All photos by Norman Schimmel

CLASSIC COLLECTION DRAWS ATTENTION AT THE RITZ

A group of classic car owners has created a Sarasota tradition: They take a drive every Sunday to enjoy lunch together.

The restaurant choice changes week to week, but the line of vehicles is unmistakable on local roads.

The drivers' "club" has no name, but the members turn a lot of heads as they make their way to their destination. When they arrived on Oct. 27 at the Ritz-Carlton in downtown Sarasota, Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel was able to get a real close-up look at those classy cars.











FORWARD STEPS



Kelly Yankle (left) works with David Tlaiye and Sara Scherer during a rehearsal of Ne Me Quitte Pas. Photo courtesy of Sarasota Ballet

DANCERS SHOW INCREASING PROMISE WITH THEIR OWN CHOREOGRAPHY IN SARASOTA BALLET'S LATEST THEATRE OF DREAMS

By Elinor Rogosin

A&E Writer

I have been skeptical about the *Theatre of Dreams* programs of the Sarasota Ballet, feeling that it was not fair to include works by fledging choreographers in a subscription series. However, I am slowly changing my view.

The opportunity does give the dancers in the company a chance to stretch their creative ambitions; and there have been surprises in the past three years. Ricardo Graziano, in particular, has emerged as a promising choreographer who will be represented by both a new work and a reprisal during the upcoming season. Though I still have doubts, the overall variety and level of the choreography

have grown with each presentation, and I am beginning to enjoy the fun and excitement of discovering new talent.

On Oct. 25, I joined the loyal ballet-goers who were busy greeting one another in the foyer of the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts at The Ringling after the long hot summer, while the dancers were getting ready to prove that their choreographic dreams would result in an intriguing evening of dance.

Opening the program, *Gitana Galop*, Kate Honea's sunny ballet, recreated the world of Johann Strauss II (*Five Gallops from Kettentanz*) in a set that resembled an



David Tlaiye (left) directs Juan Gil and Sareen Tchekmedyan in a scene from Xibalba. Photo courtesy of Sarasota Ballet

engraving of an 18th century ballroom, with the dancers — elegant in Bill Fenner's silver and gray costumes — adding to the illusion of watching a long forgotten ball. Though Honea's choreography is basic and hints at classroom combinations, she arranged the patterns of the dancers with a sure hand and played with the galloping rhythms of the music.

The four girls and four boys who made up a small corps were easy to watch, but all eyes, including mine, were focused on the debut of Edward Gonzalez, the company's most recent Cuban expatriate. He is young, and his Russian/Cuban training is evident in his strong technique, his elegant upper body movements and formal stage presence. And his lovely partner, Emily Dixon — in a flaming red costume



Kate Honea (left) works with Edward Gonzalez and Emily Dixon during a rehearsal of Gitana Galop. Photo courtesy of Sarasota Ballet

— was a delight to watch. Both eased into the showy lifts that Gonzales handled very well. However, most of his roles have been in the 19th century ballets — *Giselle*, *Swan Lake*, etc. — and he has to learn to release and move with ease, which will undoubtedly happen during the current season with its emphasis on 20th century ballets.

But it was the ever charismatic, happy dancing of Logan Learned — who skimmed the floor as if flying on a silent breath — which brought the familiar Strauss melodies to life.

In direct contrast to the charming vision of an 18th century ballroom, *Xibalba*, (place of fear) — a short, dark, contemporary work of love and betrayal choreographed by David Tlaiye — explored the intensity of emotional despair. Sareen Tchekmedyian, as the fickle

lover, ricocheted between Ricki Bertoni and Juan Gil in this tragic romantic triangle. Bertoni, in the role of the one deceived, knotted himself into a ball of anguish. In contrast, Gil, as the indifferent lover, remained impassive, even when Tchekmedyian wrapped herself around him. Though Bertoni's tortured performance was melodramatic, Tlaiye's inventive and expressive choreography easily blended natural emotional gestures with fleeting references to classical ballet.

Both *The Blue Hour* and *Ne Me Quitte Pas* (don't leave me now) played with the traditional form of the *pas de deux*, in which two dancers — a man and a woman — perform together. In *The Blue Hour*, (set to Chopin's *Nocturne No. 27 Opus 2*), Danielle Brown and Ricardo Graziano wrestled with the sweeping



Alex Harrison (center) directs Sarasota ballet dancers in a scene from *The Blue Hour*. Photo courtesy of Sarasota Ballet

complicated choreography in Alex Harrison's classically based ballet, though one difficult overhead lift — with Brown arching backwards — captured the delicate wistful mood of the piece. Perhaps Harrison wanted to reflect the drifting melancholy in the music as the dancers swept across the stage in a series of embraces. However, except for the many stunning lifts, there was little emotional connection between the dancers.

Kelly Yankle, who joined Sarasota Ballet last year, used a powerful recording of Edith Piaf as inspiration for another anguished love affair (*Ne Me Quitte Pas*), in which Sara Scherer — wearing a Bill Fenner satin slip — hung onto David Tlaiye in making plain a woman's need to keep her lover. At first Scherer was alone, doubling over as if battling a stomach ache. When Tlaiye appeared, I was not certain whether he was a figment of her imagination or the lover.


As in Tlaiye's exploratory choreography, Yankle's movement vocabulary was centered in the torso, and it explored natural emotional gestures. Both duets were short and danced with such aplomb that they gave the choreography the look of professionalism.

The delight of the evening for me was Logan Learned's ballet, *Nebulous*, set to Philip Glass' *Violin Concerto, Movement 3*. The ballet opened with Juan Gil, Ricardo Rhodes and Ricardo Graziano in dark tights and T-shirts, standing in a straight line, arms hanging down at their sides with palms turned in, surrounded by the rhythmic underpinnings of Glass' insistent pulsating music. It was obvious that Learned had turned to Balanchine for his inspiration in creating a ballet exploring movement, space and rhythm. Surprising

for a young choreographer, Learned used the spare minimalist music well and was not overwhelmed by its power. In fact, I enjoyed watching how the six dancers — including the three women, Kate Honea, Victoria Hulland and Elizabeth Sykes — came together as a trio, separated into groups and then into couples, separated again and regrouped into trios, with the focus on continuous movement, whether in counterpoint or in unison. It was like watching pieces move in geometric patterns but responding all the while to the changing nuances in the tone and rhythm of the music.

Not surprising, from a choreographer who jumps and leaps like a bouncing ball, there was a great variety of backwards, sideways and inventive leaps and lifts. I thought it was the most exciting ballet of the evening, and it will be interesting to see what direction Learned will follow in his next work.

Though Jamie Carter's ballet, *The Tarot*, sounded interesting in the program notes, I found it was bland, academic and disappointing.

Nonetheless, *Theatre of Dreams* can be thought of as an appetizer of a program that showed off the growing artistry of the dancers. It also acted as an incentive to follow the company through the rest of the season, as the members delve into the world of master choreographers: George Balanchine, Frederick Ashton, Agnes DeMille and Antony Tudor. Then audiences, myself included, can appreciate the levels of sophistication, knowledge and artistry that come together in a work that communicates both emotional and aesthetic coherence. 



I like to take my time.

Sure, it's a temptation to rush. Each issue of *The Sarasota News Leader* is brimfull of in-depth coverage of all the news and goings-on in Sarasota County. And it has delightful and informative feature stories. Thanks to its community calendar, I always know what the most exciting happenings are each week. Plus, it is simply so beautiful, with photography that takes my breath away.

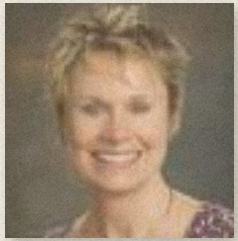
There is so much there, I don't know where to begin. So it is hard to resist the urge to read it all at once. But I know better. Take your time and indulge in all that it has to offer.

You have a whole week.

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ONE MORE STEP IS NEEDED BEFORE 'NO PARKING' SIGNS GO UP ON AVENIDA DE MAYO; THE STORMWATER PROJECT SHOULD STAY WITHIN ITS BUDGET; AND THE SIESTA KEY ASSOCIATION VEEP WILL BE HONORED BY THE COUNTY



By Rachel Brown Hackney
Editor

As it turns out, new parking measures on Avenida de Mayo cannot be implemented until they have gone through one more step at the County Commission level, I learned this week.

Although the commissioners **voted unanimously** last week to direct staff to follow Fire Chief Mike Tobias' recommendations to create "No Parking" zones on the street, Curt

Preisser, a county spokesman, discovered on Oct. 29 that the board still will have to approve a resolution "memorializing" its Oct. 23 action. However, Preisser was unable to learn a timeline for when that will take place.

It should be a relatively simple process to get the signs up once the resolution wins approval, he indicated.



A sign put out in March on Avenida de Mayo alerted the public to a forthcoming Sarasota County Traffic Advisory Council discussion of parking issues on the street. File photo

Siesta Seen

In the meantime, I spoke late last week with Kevin Cooper, the executive director of the Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, to get his thoughts on the vote. Cooper addressed the board when it considered the request in May for some type of parking regulations on Avenida de Mayo.

“For me, obviously, safety is a primary concern,” Cooper said. After he read Tobias’ August memo, which cited specific concerns about the potential for visitor parking on both sides of the narrow road to block emergency vehicles, Cooper added that it was clear “it was 100 percent necessary to make sure there were some concessions ...”

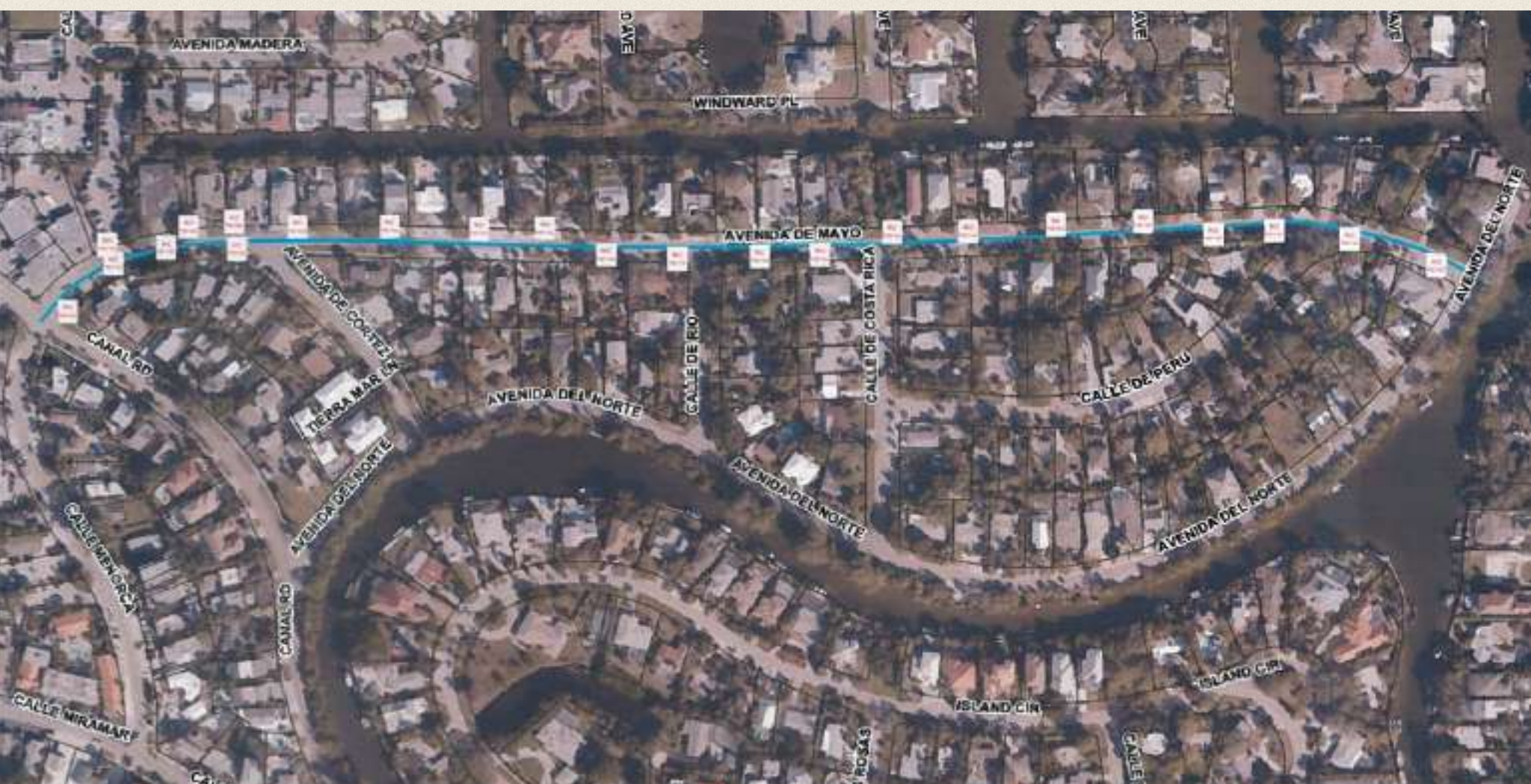
It is difficult to protest a plan designed to protect visitors and residents alike, he pointed out.

Nonetheless, Cooper said he always worries when Siesta Village businesses lose parking spaces.

Discussion I heard among residents and members of the Siesta Key Association (SKA) indicated that after Eat Here Siesta Key opened its doors to patrons last year — and quickly became a popular new dining choice on the island — even more overflow parking ended up on Avenida de Mayo.

“I’d like to see a solution for replenishing [those lost spaces] in some way,” Cooper told me.

As Sarasota County Code Enforcement Officer John Lally has pointed out for years, the island desperately needs a long-term parking solution, possibly a garage.



An aerial map shows the location of Avenida de Mayo. Image courtesy Sarasota County

Siesta Seen

However, Cooper said that given the high value of property on Siesta Key, he is not certain a private entity or the county ever will find it financially viable to build a garage.

The flip side of that, Cooper noted, is the ever-present desire of the Chamber and business owners not to deter people from coming to the island because of worries about whether they can find places to leave their cars without fear of towing.

SPEAKING OF TOWING ...

Although SKA leaders had asked the County Commission to endorse the erection of signs

warning parking violators on Avenida de Mayo that they would be subject to towing, the board members declined to take that step. Commissioner Nora Patterson — a longtime Siesta Key resident — briefly revisited the “towing wars” that erupted in 2006 and 2007 as her primary reasoning.

SKA President Catherine Luckner and Vice President Michael Shay pointed to a state law that they felt would protect people from “predatory towing” if the commission allowed the signs. Patterson was not dissuaded. She responded to an email from Shay with the following note:



In January, work was still months away from beginning at the stormwater project site next to Siesta Public Beach on one side and the Gulf & Bay Club condominiums on the other. Photo by Norman Schimmel

Siesta Seen

“Tow truck companies can tow away cars WITHOUT complaints when the spots are marked. They actually do that and profit from doing so and have done just that in [Siesta] village. That is very damaging to our image and I personally do not support that and the rest of the commission did not comment although I did mention your concern as well as Catherine’s expressed at the monthly meeting of Siesta Key organizational presidents.”

Patterson added, “Thank you for your wisdom in identifying and clarifying the problem [on Avenida de Mayo]. Let’s see how this [board action] works since the solution comes from both the fire chief and the county staff.”

OVER BY THE BEACH ...

When Sarasota County Public Works employee Alex Boudreau was put in charge of the new stormwater project on Siesta Key — the inaptly named “Beach Road Drainage Project” — he probably never could have foreseen weeks on end of meetings with the contractor and other staff members about delays related to excessive rain.

I give Boudreau a *lot* of credit for his positive outlook — and the fact that he continues to take my calls. This week, he was again generous with his time in providing an update on the work.



Sarasota County Project Manager Alex Boudreau explains details of the Beach Road Drainage Project to Siesta Key Association members on Oct. 3. File photo

Siesta Seen

After a three-hour meeting on the morning of Oct. 29, he had lots of details. First, Florida Power & Light Co. had employees working on the site between midnight and 8 a.m. on Oct. 28 to locate a transformer and take the necessary steps for power to be supplied to electric pumps that will dewater the area where the new 1-acre stormwater pond will be located. Two electric pumps will be used for that work, Boudreau said, so the contractor had

employees taking steps this week to run electrical wire from the FPL power source to the pumps and burying the lines.

One pump already has been delivered, he added, and the other is expected to come in by the end of this week. "We're actually waiting on the switches," he noted, before the dewatering can begin. The target date to have the pumps up and running is Nov. 4,



A schematic shows the location of a new 3,000-foot pipeline leading from the stormwater site into the Gulf of Mexico. Water removed from the project area will be pumped into that pipeline after sediment is allowed to settle out of it, the project manager says. Image courtesy Sarasota County

Siesta Seen

Boudreau said — “sooner, if we can get everything hooked up.”

He added, “I’ve been saying ‘Monday, Monday, Monday’ [over the past weeks], but that’s how things have developed.”

It should take a week to complete the dewatering, he continued. Therefore, if all goes as planned at this point, the construction of the stormwater pond should begin on Nov. 12 — a Tuesday, because that Monday is Veterans Day.

According to the latest Interim Field Change Agreement (IFCA) the county has signed with the contractor, Forsberg Construction Inc.

of Punta Gorda, the firm will have an extra 80 days to complete the project, Boudreau explained. “We literally shut them down for that amount of time,” Boudreau added, referring to the deluge in September. That IFCA would carry the work into March, based on the previous schedule, he noted. However, the contractor said he would have a better idea of the completion date once the digging of the pond commenced. “He may not need all that time,” Boudreau said of the 80-day allowance.

Meanwhile, county staff and Forsberg representatives have been coordinating their efforts with the plans for the improvements at Siesta Public Beach, which are scheduled



A Nia class works out on Siesta Public Beach, catching the eyes of walkers and a solitary gull. Photo by Rachel Hackney

Siesta Seen

to get under way in November on the eastern side of the park — the one closer to the stormwater site. The original schedule called for the stormwater system to be completed before work started at the beach.

The meetings are taking place weekly, Boudreau explained, focused on “How can we piggyback on different things to get economies of scale?”

He added, “It doesn’t look like we’ll affect [the beach project] schedule at all.”

In fact, Boudreau said, the stormwater team may be able to assist the beach project crew. For example, he pointed out, the original plan called for the stockpiling of dirt from the stormwater project so it could be used in the beach park improvements — saving the county money. However, because county commissioners were concerned about an unsightly mound of dirt piled near Beach Road, the plan also called for covering the dirt with sod. Now, that will not be necessary, Boudreau noted.

Finally, when asked about what the delay of the stormwater project will mean to the county in terms of extra cost, Boudreau responded that the latest IFCA put the expense at \$77,000, but the savings from preventing some duplication of work with the beach project, plus funds set aside for contingency, should mean no extra expense in the \$4.5 million effort.

As we were finishing up the interview on Oct. 29, he added, “The weather report for the rest of the week is dry, so that makes me feel good.”



Michael Shay will be honored this month by Keep Sarasota County Beautiful. File photo

CONGRATULATIONS!

SKA President Catherine Luckner has been spreading the good news that her organization’s vice president, Michael Shay, has been awarded one of the Keep Sarasota County Beautiful volunteer recognition awards for 2013.

“We don’t know which of the awards,” she added in an email. “They’re keeping it secret until the event on Nov. 13.”

All winners will be recognized at Keep Sarasota County Beautiful’s annual program

Siesta Seen

that day at the Venice Community Center. Doors will open at 4 p.m., and dinner will be served from 4:45 to 5:45 p.m., with the awards program immediately afterward. There is no cost to attend the event, Luckner added.

However, RSVPs are requested by Tuesday, Nov. 5; they may be submitted by completing the form online at www.scgov.net/kscb, by calling 861-5000 and asking for KSCB staff or via email at keepsarasotacountybeautiful@scgov.net.

Regular attendees of the SKA meetings know that last year Shay took over coordination of the island Adopt-A-Road program from SKA Secretary Peter van Roekens. Shay also coordinates with KSCB to encourage volunteers to join forces on the key for other major cleanup efforts throughout the year.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Speaking of the SKA: It will be celebrating its 65th birthday in November.


A news release points out that the organization “has worked diligently to represent the residents of the Key on the many issues that come up to maintain the beauty and uniqueness of our island. Each month, at its meetings, it brings in guest speakers to inform, update and discuss events and plans that affect the island. Residents are always welcome to join in on the discussions with their thoughts and questions. We welcome all to join the association to share in this important work. You can also follow what’s going



*Jeff LaHurd will be the guest speaker at the Siesta Key Association meeting on Nov. 7.
Photo by Scott Proffitt*

via www.siestakeyassociation.com and ‘like us’ on Facebook ... Siesta Key Association.”

As part of the celebration, the SKA has invited Sarasota historian Jeff LaHurd to be its guest speaker during its Nov. 7 meeting, which will begin at 4:30 p.m. in Room F at St. Boniface Church, located at 5615 Midnight Pass Road.

LaHurd not only is the author of 16 books on local history, but he also is the history specialist at the county’s History Center — and a delightful speaker, I might add. 



Jack Fanning and In the Mood/Contributed photo

JAZZ CLUB ANNOUNCES JAZZ AT TWO LINEUP FOR NOVEMBER

The Jazz Club of Sarasota's *Jazz at Two* 2013-2014 concert series continues this month with In the Mood, featuring vibraphonist Jack Fanning (Nov. 1); the Patricia Dean Trio (Nov. 8); and Tony Castellano Jr. (Nov. 15), the club has announced.

The series, which was founded in 2001, "showcases the region's top jazz performers" on Fridays from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Sarasota, located at 3975 Fruitville Road in Sarasota, a news release says. Tickets are \$7 for Jazz Club members and \$12 for non-members. A portion of ticket sales is directed to the Jazz Club's scholarship program.

Fanning will ring in the month with his quartet, In the Mood, featuring drummer Dane Hassan, pianist Tommy Goodman and bassist Dominic Mancini. Born in Baltimore in 1929,

Fanning grew up taking piano lessons from his mother and listening to the music of Lena Horne, Glenn Miller and the big swing bands of that era, the release notes. In 1974, he helped found the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee and also established the Monterey Bay Hot Jazz Society, "which is still going strong today," the release says. After Fanning retired in 1992, he and his wife, Billie, moved to Venice, "where Fanning quickly became a fixture on the local jazz scene," the release notes.

Following In the Mood, the Patricia Dean Trio will perform on Nov. 8, with Dean on vocals and drums, Jeff Phillips on piano and Dave Trefethen on bass. "Dean is that rare combination of singer and musician, able to do both at an exceptional level," the release continues. Critics have noted she "is no mere singing drummer or drumming singer. As a drummer, she's an inspiring and supremely

tasteful timekeeper, accompanist and soloist,” the release adds. “As a jazz vocalist, Dean is swinging, sensitive and, quite simply, just wonderfully musical.”

Dean has opened for George Benson, Mindi Abair and David Benoit, the release says. She most recently has performed with vocalist Giacomo Gates, bassist John Lamb and saxophonist Harry Allen. She has toured extensively with her own trio, performing on cruise ships, at country clubs and jazz festivals around the world.

The November *Jazz at Two* series will conclude with Tony Castellano Jr. on Nov. 15. Castellano’s father is a renowned jazz pianist, the release notes, and his mother was a singer. Castellano started playing piano at age 7. He “has enjoyed an illustrious career performing and touring with such greats as Ray Charles, John Lamb, Herbie Mann and Richie Cole,” the release points out. “He has recorded many critically acclaimed and genre-hopping CDs, and his comedic flair and dexterity at the piano have earned him numerous awards across several states.”

Castellano enjoys performing a vast repertoire — from Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin to Miles Davis to Billy Joel, the release continues. In the *Jazz at Two* concert, he will be joined by Ken Loomer on drums and Franco Marino on sax.

For more information about the Jazz Club of Sarasota, call 366-1552 or visit www.jazzclubsarasota.com.



Tony Castellano Jr./Contributed photo



Patricia Dean/Contributed photo

***I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE* RETURNS TO VENICE**

The long-running off-Broadway musical comedy *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* will return for the third time to Venice Theatre on Friday, Nov. 1, and run through Sunday, Nov. 24.

Evening performances are Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 to \$28 for adults and \$10 to \$15 for students.

“Musically directed by Bobby Brader and staged by Steven Flaa (who performed in the show the last time the theatre presented it in 2008), this hilarious revue covers everything you have ever secretly thought about dating, romance, marriage, lovers, husbands, wives and in-laws, but were afraid to admit,”

the release says. “With memorable tunes by Jimmy Roberts and clever lyrics and sketches by Joe DiPietro, songs such as *Always a Bridesmaid*, *Single Man Drought*, *Marriage Tango* and the show’s title number always bring big laughs,” the release notes. The more poignant numbers — *I Will Be Loved Tonight* and *Shouldn’t I Be Less in Love with You?* — “might elicit a few tears as well,” the release adds.

When Venice Theatre (then Venice Little Theatre) first produced *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* in 2006, it needed to add five performances to the run to meet audience demand, the release points out. The theatre’s producing director, Allan Kollar, said at the time, “After the first three performances this



The original 2006 cast of I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change returns for a new round of shows: (top) Chris Caswell and Larry Alexander; (bottom) Kim Kollar and Bobbi Eschenbach. Contributed photo

weekend, we came in Monday morning to an unprecedented ticket demand. The decision to extend was confirmed by Tuesday night.”

The theatre brought the show back for a second run in 2008.

The four performers from the original 2006 cast — Chris Caswell, Kim Kollar, Bobbie Eschenbach and Larry Alexander — will “return to delight audiences and likely produce another round of sold-out shows,” the release continues.

“Perhaps a tribute to the show’s enduring popularity is that three different acts in Venice Theatre’s 2013 Summer Cabaret Festival featured the song *Always a Bridesmaid*, now a comedic staple for female singers,” the release says.

Venice Theatre is located at 140 W. Tampa Ave. in Venice. Tickets may be purchased online at www.venicestage.com, by phone at 488-1115 or in person at the box office, which is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and one hour before all performances.

SATISFACTION TO TAKE VENICE COMMUNITY CENTER STAGE NOV. 16

The international Rolling Stones tribute band Satisfaction will take the stage at the Venice Community Center on Saturday, Nov. 16, at 7:30 p.m., Sarasota County has announced.

The center is located at 326 Nokomis Ave. in Venice. The doors will open at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets for general seating are \$25. For preferred seating options, call 861-1380.

The tribute band has been touring since 2001 with more than 1,600 performance dates to its credit, a news release says. “It is the only full-time touring show of its kind,” the release points out. “The band has been featured in dozens of national newspapers, magazines and television ads as the greatest show ever honoring the Rolling Stones and their legacy,” Dorian Mattox, the Venice Community Center program coordinator, notes in the release.

“This highly acclaimed production showcases the most authentic cast and costuming audiences have ever witnessed,” Mattox adds. “The likes of Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and a supporting cast bring a colorful performance covering 50 years of classic hits.”

In 2005 the group became the first Rolling Stones show on the Las Vegas strip, the release continues. “They shined just like the real Stones on the strip,” according to the *Las Vegas Sun. Showbiz Magazine* added, “They’ll have you in the aisles just like *Jumping Jack Flash*.”

In 2007, Satisfaction was featured on the CBS News New York special about the rise of tribute shows, the release notes. In 2008, it assisted in the promotion of the Martin Scorsese-produced documentary *Shine a Light*, about the history of the Rolling Stones. “In 2010, the group was approved by the Rolling Stones to perform long-term engagements annually with the Walt Disney Corp.,” the release points out.

The group has launched a new project titled *A Symphony for the Devil*, which features the group performing with symphony orchestras around the world.

For more information about the show and to purchase tickets, call 861-1380.



Venice Community Center will present a tribute to the Rolling Stones on Nov. 16. Image courtesy Sarasota County

MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT COMING TO FLORIDA STUDIO THEATRE

Florida Studio Theatre will open its first show of the 2013-14 Mainstage Season, the Tony Award-winning *Monty Python's Spamalot*, in the Gompertz Theatre on Friday, Nov. 15, the theatre has announced.

“Lovingly ripped off from the classic film *Monty Python and The Holy Grail*, this outrageous parody tells the tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and has been called ‘The best new musical to open’ by *The New York Times*,” an FST news release points out. “While embarking on their quest for the Holy Grail, the knights encounter flying cows, killer rabbits and taunting Frenchmen,” the release adds.

Bruce Jordan will return to FST for this show after previously directing hit comedies such as *The Underpants*, *Perfect Wedding* and *Shear Madness*, the release continues, noting he was one of the original co-producers for the latter.

“My favorite part about *Spamalot* is not only does it have a lot of funny scenes,” Jordan says in the release, “it also has lots of tune-fu music. In its own way it’s like the musical comedies I was brought up on. A fun book and a strong score. ... Some people have said that



Spamalot will ‘gallop’ onto the Gompertz Theatre stage beginning Nov. 15. Photo courtesy of Florida Studio Theatre

Monty Python is to comedy what the Beatles were to music. I see that. I understand how they began and how they have shaped much of the comedy that follows them.”

Among the 16-person cast are returning FST company members Patrick Noonan, Gill Brady and Priscilla Fernandez, along with new company members Kevin Loreque and Jacob Hoffman, the release adds. Among Noonan’s past FST productions are *Occupant* and *Irma Vep*. Brady previously appeared in *The Underpants* and *Our Son’s Wedding*, while Fernandez was in the *South Beach Babylon* production.

Monty Python’s Spamalot will run until Jan. 11. Single tickets range from \$18 to \$45. Season subscriptions may be purchased for as little as \$45. Both are available online at FloridaStudioTheatre.org, in person at the FST box office at 1241 N. Palm Ave. in Sarasota or by calling 366-9000.



JAZZ ON THE WATER CRUISE PLANNED FOR NOV. 3 ABOARD LEBARGE

The Jazz Club of Sarasota will present a *Jazz on the Water* cruise on Sunday, Nov. 3, from 3 to 5 p.m. aboard LeBarge, departing from Bayfront Park in Sarasota, the club has announced.

“Guests will enjoy the swinging sounds of the Jeremy Carter Jazz Quartet,” a news release says. Tickets are \$30 for Jazz Club members and \$35 for non-members. Snacks and beverages will be available for sale; guests are requested not to bring coolers. Boarding will begin at 2:30 p.m.

The Jeremy Carter Jazz Quartet comprises Rick Steuart on keyboards, Dan Navarro on

bass, Joe Renda on drums and Jeremy Carter on tenor sax, the release notes.

“The jazz cruise has been a favorite Jazz Club event for over 10 years,” says Dave Walrath, president of the Jazz Club of Sarasota, in the release. “What better way to enjoy a crisp autumn day than to sail on Sarasota waters while enjoying great jazz? Our mission is to present the finest jazz music on Sarasota waters. We believe we do just that with this event.”

For more information about the Jazz Club of Sarasota or tickets, call 366-1552 or visit www.jazzclubsarasota.org.



LeBarge is docked at Bayfront Park in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

FIRST CHURCH TO OPEN ITS SEASONAL JAZZ SERIES ON NOV. 10

The First United Methodist Church in downtown Sarasota will launch its 2013-14 concert series, Jazz at First Church, on Nov. 10, the church has announced.

The opening performances of this free series will feature the Jazz Trio: Johnny Moore on drums, Dominic Mancini on bass and Tommy Goodman on piano.

Special guests will be Davy Jones on trumpet, Mike Parmalee on saxophone and Greg

Nielsen on trombone for a *Dixie and Swing Special*, a news release says.

The performances will be offered at two times — 4 to 5 p.m. and 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The next concert will be on Dec. 8, featuring guest artist Jim Wellen on saxophone.

The church is located at 104. S. Pineapple Ave. in downtown Sarasota.

For more information, call the church office at 955-0935.



The Jazz at First Church series will resume on Nov. 10 in downtown Sarasota. Photo by Norman Schimmel

ASOLO REP TO OPEN SEASON WITH BELOVED MUSICAL *SHOW BOAT*

Asolo Repertory Theatre will open its 2013-2014 season with *Show Boat*, based on the novel by Edna Ferber, with music by Jerome Kern and book and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, the theatre has announced.

This winner of the 1994 Tony Award for best revival features a score of timeless classics, including *Ol' Man River*, *Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man* and *Make Believe*. The show will run from Nov. 15 to Dec. 29.

"*Show Boat* will take audiences aboard Capt. Andy Hawks' *Cotton Blossom*, a 19th century riverboat that travels from town to town on the Mississippi River with a troupe of performers," a news release says. "The musical chronicles these performers' lives during a crucially transformative period in U.S. history, spanning 1887 to 1927, from the dawn of the Progressive Era to the eve of the Great Depression."


The musical "explores many poignant topics, including racial diversity in marriage and economic hardships, that still challenge the world today," the release adds.

"The love of family and family in the larger sense — the family of man — that's what the

show is about. That's what Oscar Hammerstein is about," said Hal Prince, director of the 1994 Broadway revival.

"The musical launches the second year of Asolo Rep's five-year American Character Project, which examines all of the historical, cultural and political intricacies that make this country unique," the release points out.

"Eight musicians will bring *Show Boat*'s magnetic score — orchestrated by Dan DeLange — to life," the release notes. The reimaged version of this masterpiece was mounted in 2011 at Goodspeed Musicals in East Haddam, CT, directed by Rob Ruggiero and choreographed by Noah Racey. Ruggiero and Racey will also lead Asolo Rep's production, along with musical director Wade Russo.

Tickets for *Show Boat* and the entire 2013-2014 Asolo Repertory Theatre season are available by calling 351-8000, visiting www.asolorep.org or going to the box office, located in the lobby of the theatre at 5555 North Tamiami Trail in Sarasota, part of the Florida State University Center for the Performing Arts. 



Show Boat will open at the Asolo Repertory Theatre on Nov. 15. Contributed image



RELIGION BRIEFS

(From left) Redeemer parishioners John Meyer; Cathy Meyer; Jay Crouse; Laura Crouse; Annie Pollard; Garland Pollard; Andy Dorr; Valerie Dorr; the Very Rev. Fredrick A. Robinson, rector of the Church of the Redeemer; Pam Hawn of South Shore Community Church and SRQ county leader for Day of Hope; and Redeemer parishioner Jody Maxwell celebrate the church's recognition. Contributed photo

CITY OF SARASOTA HONORS CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

The Sarasota City Commission officially recognized the Church of the Redeemer during its Oct. 21 regular meeting, praising the church for serving the community's homeless and at-risk children through its participation in the third annual Day of Hope, held Aug. 3.

More than 200 Redeemer and community volunteers donated their time to this year's Day of Hope, a news release says. The event provided 179 homeless and at-risk schoolchildren with meals; haircuts; dental, optical and doctor checkups; family portraits; backpacks full of school supplies; and \$50 gift cards for new clothes.

"A community is measured in the size of its heart by how it treats the homeless, and especially homeless children, and I think Day of Hope shows that Sarasota has a big heart,"

the Very Rev. Fredrick A. Robinson said upon receiving the proclamation on behalf of Redeemer. It was presented by Mayor Shannon Snyder.

"And yet," Robinson continued, "it's just a small piece of how we deal in our community with the tremendous problem of homelessness. So we pray at Church of the Redeemer for the wisdom and the resources in our community to alleviate homelessness."

Snyder singled out Redeemer volunteer leaders Laura and Jay Crouse and Alice and Garland Pollard for their work on behalf of Day of Hope. "The City Commission of the City of Sarasota, on behalf of the citizens of our community, takes great pride in recognizing the Church of the Redeemer for their community spirit and their commitment to making Day of Hope a great success, with the

devotion of many volunteers who make a difference,” Snyder said.

Pam Hawn, founder of the Bradenton non-profit Hope Kids Community and the creator of Day of Hope — which started in 2009 and spread to Redeemer in 2011 — attended the commission meeting as well, the news release notes. As Crouse thanked the commissioners for their recognition of Redeemer’s role in Day of Hope, he also praised Hawn’s original vision for the program: “It just captured our imagination as a way for us to serve the City of Sarasota and homeless at-risk kids.”

At the conclusion of the presentation, Snyder asked the dozens of Redeemer and community volunteers who attended the Oct. 21 meeting to stand, and the commissioners applauded all of them for their efforts on behalf of the community.

The Church of the Redeemer is a traditional Episcopal church located at 222 S. Palm Ave. in the heart of downtown Sarasota. For more information about Day of Hope, or about the church in general, call 955-4263 or visit redeemersarasota.org.

CONGREGATION TO HOLD KRISTALLNACHT SERVICE

Dr. Norman Weinberg, founder and director of the Polish Jewish Cemeteries Restoration Project (PJCRP), will be the featured speaker during a Kristallnacht service at the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism (CHJ) on Nov. 2, the Congregation has announced.

The service will begin at 10:30 a.m.

Of the estimated 1,200 to 1,400 devastated Jewish cemeteries in Poland, more than 30 sites have been restored, a news release says, and another 40 projects are in various stages of funding. One of the key actions of the non-profit PJCRP has been the presentation of a petition to the German government, asking it to pay its fair share for remediation of the destroyed cemeteries and the mass graves the Nazis created, the release points out. Films documenting the sites before, during and after restoration will be shown.

Teaching children about the Shoah and Jewish heritage in Poland and about tolerance and reconciliation is an important educational initiative the PJCRP began in 2002, the release adds. The organization’s most recent project



Dr. Norman Weinberg/Contributed photo

is *Who Returned My Soul*, in which students take on various personas and tell stories of actual Holocaust survivors, the release notes.

The program will be free for CHJ members. A donation of \$5 is suggested for non-members.

CHJ meets at Unity, located at 3023 Proctor Road in Sarasota.

For more information, call 929-7771 or visit www.chj-sarasota.org.

TEMPLE SINAI PRESCHOOL HOLDS TRIKE-A-THON

The Gan Preschool at Temple Sinai recently held its fifth annual Trike-A-Thon to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the Temple has announced.

Almost 50 students participated in one way or another in this event, "which is one of the two significant *mitzvah* (good deed) projects done each year at the Gan," a news release explains. The youngest class members made up the cheering section, while the others were on trikes. Some students even brought their bikes from home, the release notes.

With the atrium of the building decorated like a speedway, the students rode a circular track that included the foyer of the sanctuary. "Moms, dads and even some grandparents

were there to volunteer and cheer on their little ones," the release says.

It was a successful fundraising effort, raising more than \$1,400, but also a teaching opportunity for the students. Laura Freedman, director of early childhood education, explained to the students that they were riding for children who could not ride and that the money they raised would help doctors heal youngsters.

The participating students ranged in age from 18 months to pre-K level, but Freedman's age-appropriate explanation to each group of children "included the idea that they were performing a *mitzvah*, a major tenet of Judaism," the release points out.



The Gan Tziporium (Birds) class cheered on the riders at Temple Sinai's The Gan Trike-a-Thon. Contributed photo



Learning the basics of helmet and bike safety was also a component of the program. “Ride slowly, do not ride in any street and be careful at driveways’ was the mantra of the morning,” the release adds. “When asked how fast they should ride, one 4-year-old girl replied, ‘Medium,’ which seemed particularly wise to the nearby adults.”

Cara Sheyner zooms on the speedway for the Gan Trike-a-Thon at Temple Sinai. Contributed photo



The release continues, “Each student received a sticker for participating and a Popsicle treat to cap off a fun and worthwhile morning.”

For more information about the accredited preschool at Temple Sinai, contact Laura at 926-9462.

MENACHEM AND FRED TO BE DISCUSSED AT WIN SHOWING

The award-winning film *Menachem and Fred* will be presented by the Women's Interfaith Network (WIN) of Sarasota/Bradenton at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 3, at the Unitarian Universalist Church, located at 3975 Fruitville Road in Sarasota.

The "Fred" in the film is recently deceased Sarasota resident Fred Raymes, a news release points out. In 2009, Raymes and his wife, Lydia, were in Berlin to accept the Cinema for Peace Award for *Menachem and Fred*; it was called "the most inspirational movie of the year," the release notes.

"What becomes home when you are forced to leave it?" the release asks. This documentary "tells the true story of two brothers who are

reunited after many, many years," the release says. Its focus is on their reading the last letter they received from their parents before their parents were killed in Auschwitz. "It took Menachem and Fred 30 years to face their past, recover their history and bring their current families together," the release points out.

"This film is a clear indication of how devastating war is — for younger generations who survive and their offspring," the release continues, and it demonstrates how much time may need to pass before recovery can begin.

Admission to the film showing is \$3.

For more information, visit womensinterfaithnetwork.org.



Menachem and Fred will be shown and discussed at the Unitarian Universalist Church in Sarasota on Nov. 3. Contributed photo

TEMPLE EMANU-EL'S LUNCH WITH THE RABBI CONTINUES

On Wednesday, Nov. 6, at noon, Temple Emanu-El's popular monthly *Lunch with the Rabbi* program will continue at the synagogue, located at 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota.

Members of the community are warmly invited "to join Rabbi Brenner J. Glickman for casual socializing as well as stimulating conversation on current events and topics of Jewish interest," a news release says. Each attendee is asked to bring a brown-bag lunch; homemade dessert will be provided.

For more information, call 371-2788.




Rabbi Brenner Glickman greets Harry Lifsec at Temple Emanu-El's Lunch with the Rabbi. Contributed photo

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL RETURNS TO TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Temple Emanu-El, 151 McIntosh Road in Sarasota, invites members of the community to a new session of Adult Sunday School on Sunday, Nov. 10, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

A follow-up to the past two years' successful Adult Sunday School programs, "this learning and discussion session will focus on instilling Jewish values in children and families," a news release points out. "In a supportive learning atmosphere facilitated by Rabbis Brenner and

Elaine Glickman, attendees will discuss parenting challenges, how Jewish teaching can guide parents toward meeting them and how Judaism can help children become generous, respectful, kind people with a commitment to justice and doing the right thing," the release adds.

A \$10 donation is requested for guests. For more information or to register, call 379-1997. 



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE BEST OF UPCOMING EVENTS

01
NOVEMBER

Jazz Club of Sarasota presents *Jazz at Two*, featuring vibraphonist Jack Fanning

Nov. 1, 2 p.m., Unitarian Universalist Church, 3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$7 (\$12 for non-members). Information: 366-1552 or JazzClubSarasota.org.

01+
NOVEMBER

FSU/Asolo Conservatory presents *The School for Lies*

Through Nov. 17; times vary. FSU Center for the Performing Arts, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. Admission: \$27 to 29. Information: 351-8000 or AsoloRep.org.

01+
NOVEMBER

Dabbert Gallery presents *Season of Color*

Through Nov. 29, 76 S. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Free admission. Information: 955-1315 or DabbertGallery.com.

02
NOVEMBER

Sarasota Bay Water Festival

Nov. 2, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Ken Thompson Park on City Island, featuring free live music; dragon boat races; fine artists and photographers selling unique gift items; food trucks; a beer and wine garden; vintage and new boat displays; four panel discussions on bay-friendly living; and winning submissions to the *I Love Sarasota Bay Photo Contest*. More info at sarasotabaywaterfestival.com.

02+
NOVEMBER

Artist Series Concerts presents *Akers sings Porter: Anything Goes!*

Nov. 2 & 3; times vary. Historic Asolo Theater, 5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$25 to 45. Information: 306-1202 or ArtistSeriesConcerts.org.

15+
NOVEMBER

FST presents *Monty Python's Spamalot*

Nov. 15 through Jan. 5; times vary. Gompertz Theatre, 1241 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Tickets: \$18 to 49. Information: 366-9000 or FloridaStudioTheatre.org.

16+
NOVEMBER

Artist Series Concerts presents *Crossover with the Rastrelli Cello Quartet*

Nov. 16 & 17, 7:30 p.m., Historic Asolo Theater, 5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota. Tickets: \$25 to 45. Information: 306-1202 or ArtistSeriesConcerts.org.

YOUR LIFESTYLE GUIDE TO THE SUNCOAST

REFLECTING A CITY THAT LOVES TO READ

PRESS



Norman Schimmel
Photographer

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SCHIMMEL SIGHTINGS



Each week, Staff Photographer Norman Schimmel searches Sarasota County for iconic shots that underscore why the community is a favorite with residents and tourists alike.