

GALT MILE NEWS

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PART 1:

Saving a Species - Lighting or Lawyers?

By Eric Berkowitz

We all share in the annual \$80 billion windfall generated by our Florida beaches; they help put food on the table, keep the lights on, and pay the rent. Since 80% of Floridians either live or work in one of the state's 35 coastal counties and no part of the state is more than 58 miles from the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico, these beaches also shape every Floridian's quality of life. As for us, since we each bonded with the beach within 24 hours of moving to the Galt Mile, anything that threatens this irreplaceable asset is given emergency status and placed squarely in every association's crosshairs. While the long-delayed beach re-nourishment finally appears on track for a projected December 2013 start date, events in the past year have given Galt Mile residents good cause to speculate about admittedly capricious Sea Turtles policies that unnecessarily consumed our beach and its recent evisceration by Superstorm Sandy and the subsequent Thanksgiving Day tidal washout. This 4-part January newsletter chronologically examines these two critical beach issues—in detail. First, check your supply of Tylenol and Roloids.

At the May 17, 2012, GMCA Advisory Board meeting, among the community issues that City Commissioner Bruce Roberts pledged to address over the summer was an inconsistent and imbalanced enforcement policy for beachfront turtle-safe lighting. For 140 million years, nesting female sea turtles have been laying their eggs on our beaches. Their hatchling turtles were guided to the ocean by an instinct to travel away from the dark silhouettes of dune vegetation and toward the moonlight-illuminated open ocean.

In many highly populated coastal areas, artificial lights near the beach are brighter than the moonlit ocean, reversing the turtles' biological compass. Nesting females seeking the darkened shore instead head out to sea where they cannot lay their eggs. If they find the shore and successfully deposit their eggs, the disoriented hatchlings travel inland, toward the artificial lights, where they often die from dehydration or predation by fire ants and ghost crabs. They also become "road kill" on local thoroughfares.

Sea turtles are either endangered or threatened (the loggerhead is the only species that has sufficient population to be classified as threatened in Florida). They are protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and Florida's Marine Turtle Protection Act (379.2431, Florida Statutes). Florida Law (F.A.C. Rule 68E-1) also restricts molestation or harassment of marine turtles, nests or eggs as well as the marine turtle habitat. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) together review permits for coastal construction under Chapter 62B, F.A.C. (Florida Administrative Code) that affects Marine Turtles. The state of Florida developed a model lighting ordinance (62B-55, F.A.C.) to guide local governments in creating turtle-safe lighting ordinances.

Broward County adopted Chapter 39, Article IX, Sec 39-107 in 1989. Ten years later, Pompano Beach followed their lead (Ords 99-18, 2000-64), Deerfield Beach in 2000 (Chapter 34, Article V, Sec 34-96), Hallandale Beach in 2001 (Ch. 6, Art. I, Sec 6-10), Lauderdale-by-the-Sea in 2002 (CH 30 Article V Div 2 Subdiv I Sec 30-313 [27]), Fort Lauderdale in 2003 (Chapter 6, Article III, Div. 2, Sec. 6-51), Hillsboro Beach in 2007 (Ord 232), and Hollywood in 2011 (Chapter 108). Despite enacting its ordinance in 2003, Fort Lauderdale postponed enforcement until 2007, after recovering from the serial hurricanes of 2004 and 2005. Every jurisdiction that passed a local variation of the State template assigned a liaison to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Fort Lauderdale's official contact in 2007 was a code compliance officer named Al Lovingshimer.

In May of 2007, Lovingshimer and Galt Mile officials negotiated a process that balanced the needs of sea turtles with those of local residents and their associations. By respecting the security concerns of unit owners and the financial constraints of their common interest communities, the mutually conceived plan cured 90% of the Galt Mile code violations by the following November.

Although Lovingshimer was claimed by cancer a few weeks later and posthumously named "2007 Code Enforcement Officer of the Year" by his Building Department peers and the City Commission, the understanding was upheld by then Code Compliance Manager Cate McCaffrey, who initially approved the agreement when first negotiated by Lovingshimer. When McCaffrey was later named Director of Business Enterprises, new Code Compliance Manager Mike Maloney also perpetuated a balanced enforcement policy.

An open communication channel between the Galt Mile Community Association and code compliance officials successfully addressed turtle-safe lighting issues over the next three years. As a rule, when a violation was reported, the compliance officer would work with the association to cure the infraction inexpensively and in a manner that didn't compromise resident safety. If a violation involved a major fixture, such as a parking deck lamp, the officer would recommend an inexpensive shield to temporarily deflect light from the beach. When the fixture approached the end of its useful life and was budgeted for replacement, the association would incorporate a turtle-safe substitute into its lighting plan. By blending short and long term solutions, associations achieved compliance without incrementally burdening budgets or creating a gauntlet of dangerous tripping hazards.

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Turtle hatchlings head for ocean.

In late 2010, personnel changes in City government left a vacuum in city policy that crippled the process. With no guidance from the City, when newly elected board members and/or new managers evaluated their associations' lighting needs, they applied for and received City approval for lighting elements that once again endangered sea turtles. As compliance unraveled over the next year, no attempt was made by the City to revive the process they unilaterally slammed shut a year earlier.

Code Enforcement officers were also awash in confusion. Until the 2011 nesting season, when an enforcement officer realized that an alleged violation was "overreaching" or baseless, it would be tossed. If it had merit, the officer would negotiate a resolution that was acceptable to the association. With no viable guidance from their supervisors, when handed a list of alleged lighting violations by Nova University volunteers who video beachfront light sources during evening patrols of the shoreline, instead of objectively evaluating the infraction and productively interacting with an association official, they could only confirm the violation and threaten repercussions for non-compliance.

When association representatives asked compliance officers whether a particular solution was acceptable, they would respond, "I'm not supposed to comment on that. We can only tell you whether a solution is acceptable after it's implemented." Aware that they were burdening associations with irresolvable Catch-22 dogmas, enforcement visits were often concluded with a frustrated apology.

New Senior Enforcement Officer Ingrid Gottlieb lamented that they were in an impossible situation. "I'm very frustrated by this," exclaimed Gottlieb. Code compliance official Mario Sotolongo - a party to the original agreement - while addressing an April 25th Regency Tower violation, admitted that the City had a huge problem - and his bosses didn't know how to address it. After discussing the violation, the two officers met with GMCA President Pio Ieraci and V.P. Eric Berkowitz. Mario explained that the city's erratic enforcement policies were making things worse. He said that we should revive the understanding that allowed them to work constructively with associations. When Pio asked how to best go about

doing that, Mario recommended asking our City Commissioner for help. At the May 17th Advisory Board meeting, Commissioner Bruce Roberts agreed to help reinstate the lapsed format.

At the June 6th Presidents Council meeting two weeks later, Roberts was accompanied by management personnel from Building Services and Code Enforcement, now part of Director Greg Brewton's Department of Sustainable Development. Also attending was Assistant City Manager Susan Torriente, their liaison with City Manager Lee Feldman's office. After Code Compliance Officer Mario Sotolongo discussed the department's environmental objectives and Building Services Manager Terry Burgess expressed an intention to address the enforcement dilemma with GMCA representatives, attending association officials were given the floor for questions. It soon became evident that the enforcement issue veiled a Pandora's Box of frustration and animosity that had grown exponentially over the nesting season. An acrimonious nest marking policy hatched in the State Capitol similarly antagonized beachfront communities all over Florida.

The attending City officials were pummeled by complaints that rightfully should have been directed at Tallahassee. Specifically, two State Environmental Agencies that use the City - and its beachfront neighborhoods - as ant farms. The complaints were familiar to City Officials, having also heard them from every other beachfront neighborhood and hundreds of vacationing tourists. In short, beaches that serve as home to thousands of local residents and annually attract 11.1 million tourists to the City had devolved into demilitarized zones.

During the day, both residents and visitors are forced to search for a small patch of beach that hadn't yet been declared off limits by student volunteers from Nova University. If they arrived at the beach early enough, they might find enough space to spread a blanket between 30 foot square exclusion zones cordoned off around 3-foot turtle nest sites. In the evening, visitors walking on or near the beach were accosted by self-proclaimed "environmental warriors" who either chastised them for "committing genocide" or ordered them off the beach. The federal and state laws that protect sea turtles, nests, eggs and hatchlings don't bar people from strolling on the beach or empower "Jungsturm" reprobates to intimidate residents and visitors.

In past years, nest sites were adequately cushioned by small protected zones measuring 4-5 feet from the center of the nest (8-10 foot diameter). The thousands of visitors and resident beachgoers enjoyed sharing the beach with these curious emoluments to environmental responsibility. The modestly-sized zones prevented interference with the nest sites while providing a constructive reminder that the beach is a shared bioniche. In 2012, a blazingly asinine decision was made by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) to expand each protected zone by a factor of ten. Nest sites that used to take up 100 square feet of beach now each consumed nearly 1000 square feet.

This inexplicably invasive statewide policy was mirrored in every community on the Florida coast. In each jurisdiction, the ludicrously large exclusion zones hampered municipal beach maintenance. When nest site numbers exploded in June and July, the tractors and surf rakes used to mechanically clean and smooth public beaches were blocked by the extensive nest armoring, forcing beach maintenance personnel to manually harvest large waste while leaving tons of less wieldy residual trash to rot on the beach. As a result, the small patches of beach still open to beachgoers were rife with garbage and rotting seaweed.

Since Fort Lauderdale beach maintenance ends at Oakland Park Boulevard, Galt Mile residents pay Pompano vendor "Beach Raker" for that service. In May, the contiguous construction sprawl encircling 4 adjacent 3-foot nests formed a 110-foot barrier that rendered the Galt Mile beach impassable, forcing the company's rake-pulling All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) to skirt the blockade by driving through the surf.

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TURTLE TROUBLES

City Looks at Lighting Law

On October 30 as Hurricane Sandy was stripping beaches along the eastern Seaboard, City Manager Lee Feldman convened a round table meeting to examine the City's Sea Turtle policies. Officials from the Galt Mile Community Association and other beachfront neighborhoods met with Feldman, District 1 City Commissioner Bruce Roberts, Assistant City Manager Susanne Torriente from Sustainable Development, Building Department chief Terry Burgess, Director Greg Brewton of Sustainable Development, Code Enforcement boss Skip Margerum, City Attorney Carrie Sarver, Al Carbon from Public Works and support staffers in their respective departments and division.

Problems stemming from the 2003 Turtle-Safe Lighting Ordinance and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) nest marking policies have soured neighborhoods, blistered tourism and turned the City's signature resource into a battlefield. The recent evisceration of local beaches intensified the need to address a problem that – if not resolved – would continue to claim a growing percentage of a shrinking beach.

Swimming in complaints about the beach areas lost to enormous nest sites, city officials were delighted to hear that Lou Fisher had confirmed FWC's intention to revise its outrageous nest sizing policy. However, the attending officials' were primarily focused on mitigating unintended consequences of the City's poorly drafted 2003 turtle-safe lighting ordinance. In addition to wreaking havoc on the City's tourism industry, a policy that forced the entire beach area into darkness for 75% of the year was fatally crippling the beach neighborhood's viability as an economic engine, endangering drivers and pedestrians along A1A and opening serious security and safety breaches in beachfront residential communities. Since consequences of the ordinance that were marginalized when first passed have since mushroomed into significant threats, officials would have to stem the growing problems or reshape the ordinance to promote Sea Turtle survival without crippling the City or sacrificing its residents.

Representatives from the city's beach neighborhoods complained about the cost of satisfying inconsistent and ever-changing enforcement protocols, regulatory conflicts between the beach lighting ordinance and building code-mandated lighting requirements for resident safety, enigmatic violations for reflected light (or cloudlight) and code officers who fail to balance the needs of people with those of sea turtles.

When Commissioner Roberts asked how these problems might be specifically resolved in the Galt Mile neighborhood, he was reminded that an earlier understanding between Code Enforcement and association officials successfully facilitated Galt Mile compliance through 2010, after which that communication suddenly lapsed. Suggesting a follow-up meeting with GMCA officials to revive that understanding, Code Manager Skip Margerum asked how prospective solutions would be conveyed to member associations. GMCA President Pio Ieraci offered to add a Marine Turtle forum to the December 3rd Presidents Council meeting agenda, which would also allow association officials to directly query City, County and State policies.

Two weeks later, after volunteering to participate in the December 3 forum, Broward County Sea Turtle program manager Lou Fisher offered to explain how the nest sizing quandary came about and more importantly, how FWC plans to remedy the problem next year. When informed about the lighting enforcement dilemma with the City, Fisher recommended that GMCA invite FWC lighting expert Karen Schanzle (Environmental Specialist II with the Marine Turtle

subsection of Imperiled Species Management at Florida FWC). Schanzle regularly consults with Code departments in coastal municipalities throughout South Florida, including Fort Lauderdale. When contacted by the GMCA, in addition to participating in the forum, Schanzle agreed to help associations – on request – tailor inexpensive and compliant lighting options.

Preliminary Meeting with Code Enforcement

On November 27, GMCA President Pio Ieraci and Vice President Eric Berkowitz accepted Skip Margerum's earlier invitation to address Galt Mile enforcement issues. Joining Margerum were two Code officers whose assignment to beach lighting enforcement prompted their selection as the City's Code liaisons to FWC – Dick Eaton and Ingrid Gottlieb (Ingrid is assigned to the Galt Mile).

Margerum assented to creating extended compliance plans for an association's major non-compliant fixtures or lamps. If an association cobbles together some inexpensive interim measure that partially corrects an infraction, enforcement would be postponed until these expensive fixtures approached the end of their useful lives and were budgeted for replacement, after which a turtle-safe solution would be implemented. This process would enable associations to achieve compliance with little or no impact to their budgets. Margerum also agreed that his officers must find compliance solutions that satisfy resident safety and security needs while meeting association budgetary constraints. All 3 Code officials insisted that a vast majority of violations can be cured with a variety of inexpensive makeshift shields, painting out the beach-facing side of certain fixtures, fitting fixtures with monochromatic yellow or red bulbs, etc.

Since strict enforcement of the ordinance would threaten disastrous repercussions for both the City and its residents (one provision empowers the city to force the retrofitting of nearly a million windows with shutters or coatings), Margerum acknowledged that city policies – and those of his department – must protect both people and turtles. He brought up a problem that occasionally surfaces when a plan is given interim approval pending a more comprehensive lighting solution in the future. Often unaware that their plan was the beneficiary of special consideration, new board members or a new manager may mistakenly construe the prior approval as proof that their lighting is compliant. Conversely, a new code officer who is unaware of a predecessor's "compromise" may think that their lighting is in violation. As such, both the association and the city must record these "understandings" in a manner that provides subsequent association administrations or "rookie" code officers with continuity.

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PART 3: GMCA BEACH MEET - Sea Turtles & Sandy



By Eric Berkowitz

On December 3, 2012, the Galt Mile Community Association convened a 7:30 PM Presidents Council Meeting at Plaza East Condominium. As is customary, the meeting was preceded by a brief introduction of a well-reputed local vendor (Custom Air Designs). After thanking Plaza East President Glenn Rollo for hosting the final meeting in 2012, Presidents Council Chair Pio Ieraci announced that the agenda was predominated by two issues that are critically important to Galt Mile residents and their associations. To address a growing community anger stemming from abusive and enigmatic Sea Turtle policies, an authoritative forum was configured to explain how these concerns will be resolved going forward. Since our future, both individually and as a community, is inextricably tied to the fate of our beach, we also needed to know what remedies were being considered to restore Fort Lauderdale's collapsed coast, 4 pulverized blocks of A1A and our disappearing Galt Mile beach.

Sea Turtle Forum - Monster Nests

At the meeting's outset, GMCA President Pio Ieraci introduced City Commissioner Bruce Roberts, City Manager Lee Feldman and Broward Beach Administrator Eric Myers. Roberts was integral to assembling the Sea Turtle forum. Along with Feldman, he is examining the City's current Sea Turtle policies in hopes of resolving adverse city-wide consequences of the 2003 beach lighting ordinance. He has also committed to addressing the growing anger among his Galt Mile constituents over imbalanced Sea Turtle policies. Given the recent decimation of Broward's beaches, Myers' status as the County's beach renourishment sparkplug has catapulted his importance to beachfront municipalities that desperately need those beaches made whole. Wearing two hats, Feldman was also expected to shed light on the crushing devastation suffered by area beaches and the tidal damage to A1A. They were all in for a bumpy night.

Instead of asking participants to prepare presentations that drew on their respective areas of expertise, Ieraci opted for a Town Hall style panel that would interactively engage attending association officials. After introducing the panel members and outlining the format, Ieraci called on Broward County Natural Resource Specialist III Lou Fisher to tackle the nest size anathema. Founder of the Broward County Sea Turtle program, Fisher told members that a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) approved attempt to collect hatching behavioral data required roping off the nest area and much of the hatchlings' projected postnatal route to the ocean. "We were overwhelmed by the unexpected 50% increase in nesting events," admitted Fisher. "We weren't prepared for more than 700 nests on local beaches." According to Fisher, when FWC realized the adverse impact of the enormous nest sizes, they changed their directive to roping off one large nest zone and 4 smaller ones. In the confusion that followed, Nova student volunteers who were marking the nests bungled the new orders, and continued cushioning nests with huge parcels of beach through the end of the nesting season.

Apologizing for the garbled communication, Fisher revealed the Agency's directive for next year's nests, "FWC has ordered that nests be encircled by a 3-foot radius (6-foot diameter)." Instead of 30-foot square fortifications built around 900 to 1000 sq. ft. of beach, next

year's nests will consume only 28 sq. ft. In view of what happened this year, Fisher added "FWC plans to closely monitor the beaches next year." L'Hermitage I Manager and Advisory Board member Pat Quintero asked Fisher, "What will happen if the number of nests explodes again, so that the smaller nests still take up most of the beach?" Fisher told her that they (FWC) would meet and adjust the marking rules as needed, remarking "One idea is to mark off an outer perimeter with posts identifying individual nest sites."

As the Broward permit holder, Lou Fisher administers nest management throughout the county. However, the only agency empowered to enforce beach lighting regulations on the Galt Mile is City of Fort Lauderdale Code Enforcement. Among the forum's City participants were Code Enforcement Supervisor Skip Margerum and the two Code officers who specialize in beach lighting compliance, Dick Eaton and Ingrid Gottlieb. While Eaton monitors compliance in the City's southern beach neighborhoods, Gottlieb is assigned to the northern City beaches, including the Galt Mile. Representing the State was FWC lighting expert Karen Schanzle (Environmental Specialist II with the Marine Turtle subsection of Imperiled Species Management at Florida FWC).

Galt Mile Sea Turtle Lighting

When Southpoint Director Michael Katz complained about shifting lighting requirements, Ieraci routed his concern to Skip Margerum. As Code Supervisor was explaining how a turnover in Code officers during the past few years created an unfortunate lack of continuity, Ieraci drew a parallel to associations, wherein new board members or a new manager might notice a dark area behind the building and install new lights without verifying compliance. An attendee interjected that his association was violated for a deck lamp that was approved by the building department for a permit and subsequently passed inspection.

When an association applies for a permit, its approval by the Building Department is based on the application's conformity with the Florida Building Code, which local governments are empowered by statute to interpret and enforce. Since the turtle-safe lighting ordinance is a city law, and not part of the State building code, compliance is not considered when vetting an application for a building permit. Unfortunately, when homeowners or associations are awarded a permit, they often mistakenly believe that the project also complies with the City's beach lighting ordinance.

Margerum said "Before making changes to your exterior lighting, contact us. If you meet with your Code officer at that stage, achieving compliance with the City ordinance will often cost little or nothing." When Katz asked if there existed some "certification" that would protect an association from future violations, Ieraci called on the FWC lighting expert Karen Schanzle. While FWC does approve comprehensive association lighting plans, they will not approve individual fixtures or partial plans since compliance also depends on how and where the lamps are installed. Schanzle also said that FWC maintains a list of turtle friendly lighting fixtures and manufacturers on its website. However, for a vast majority of lighting situations, pre-approval by the local Code Officer will suffice. President Bob Korn of Galleon said that his association had retained lighting experts to devise a compliant lighting strategy. Margerum suggested that Korn contact Ingrid Gottlieb before spending additional funds on a turtle-safe lighting plan.

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Currently amid a balcony replacement project, President Lisa LaMarca of Southpoint asked if the Code officer would attend a meeting with their contractor. Gottlieb explained that while she isn't qualified to make technical lighting decisions, she can provide an association with free access to FWC lighting experts like Karen Schanzle. Schanzle added that she would be glad to examine any association's lighting needs and provide free guidance.

Intimating that FWC may be perpetuating some elaborate hoax, one suspicious association official questioned whether there was any research supporting FWC claims about what turtles can and can't see. Schanzle named several renowned FWC researchers, including Blair Witherington, whose work with Marine Turtles is voluminous and nationally acclaimed.

Irate Playa del Mar Treasurer Fred Nesbitt told Margerum "Lamps on our pool deck approved only last year were recently cited as non-compliant." Margerum suggested that the current deck plan may have been approved subject to additional changes in the future. It is not unusual for a code officer to authorize a long term multi-stage lighting solution in which each of the non-compliance interim steps are temporarily approved pending completion of the overall plan. Admittedly unaware of who supposedly approved the 15 lamps in Playa's pool

area, Nesbitt was unable to confirm what transpired. Since it was equally plausible that the incident exemplified inconsistent and arbitrary enforcement by code officers, GMCA officials stated their intention to scrutinize the fairness and consistency of future decisions.

During the Sea Turtle forum, an underlying current of anxiety about the accelerating beach erosion – the second part of the meeting agenda – surfaced several times. While Ieraci was taking questions for panelists, Plaza South civic activist Terry Claire said that she was far more concerned about the devastation wrought by Hurricane Sandy, and asserted that a neighborhood capable of expelling the Calypso gasworks could also somehow restore the lost beach. Pointing out the difference between fending off French megacartel "Suez" and managing the effects of tidal erosion, Ieraci announced that the beach devastation and a renourishment update are forthcoming in the agenda. When two other members similarly expressed impassioned concern for their diminished beach, they, too, were assured that the issue would be undertaken minutes later.

Upon adjourning the Sea Turtle Forum, Ieraci turned the meeting focus to reconstituting our skeletal beach and exploring recovery efforts. Pio stated that we are all fearful about the lost beaches and damage to ATA – whether rattled by the threat it poses to our lifestyle and/or the economic underpinnings of the City and the whole region. He observed that every Galt Mile resident is understandably spitting blood "over damage that could – and should – have been avoided." He told attendees "Before we can reasonably discuss our options, we need to know what the City and County are planning, the extent of the damage, what recovery resources are available, recovery time frames and how this may impact the planned Segment II renourishment."

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SOLD	4100 Galt Ocean Dr. # 1005	2/2	\$295,000	SE-interior unit-Original.	
PENDING	3430 Galt Ocean Dr. # 309	2/2	\$349,000	SE-Interior unit-Spacious.	

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To avoid compliance problems, associations planning to add or revise exterior lighting should contact Galt Mile Code officer Ingrid Gottlieb prior to spending one dime of their member's money. Gottlieb will meet with association representatives and offer compliance guidance. She can also make resources available to associations free of charge that would otherwise cost them a bundle. If necessary, the Code officer and the member association can request assistance from the neighborhood association to realize a solution. Margerum said that he would monitor his officer's enforcement decisions and insure that they are fair to associations. In turn, GMCA officials would bring grievances about questionable decisions to Margerum.

Although a preliminary meeting, it restored the two-way communications required to resolve future enforcement issues between the neighborhood and the City department. Time will tell whether this was the first step to moderating a growing source of community anger or political window dressing. Part 3 explores how these first steps were viewed by understandably skeptical association officials at the Dec 3 Presidents Council meeting. •

Part 3...Continued

Where's the Beach?

An Advisory Board member asked City Manager Lee Feldman how Fort Lauderdale planned to mitigate the damaged shoreline and adjacent infrastructure. Before effecting repairs to the 4 blocks of A1A (from Northeast 14th to 18th Street) that was reduced to soggy rubble, Feldman said they must decide between rebuilding the 4-lane Ocean Highway or possibly add an oft-discussed greenway to the 2-lane thoroughfare that was hastily reconfigured from the roadway's former southbound lanes.

With concrete wall barriers installed as temporary breakwaters piled along the east side of the street and parking spaces next to a 6-foot pedestrian path lining the west, Feldman added that FDOT wants some "guarantee" that the reconstructed road will be protected from future storm surge. The only coastal engineering capable of shielding A1A (as well as \$billions in upland property and infrastructure and thousands of lives) is a healthy beach. Instead of just adding more sand to the eroded shoreline, Feldman said "We need to find a more long term solution." The City is currently exploring features that will resist increasing tidal erosion, including construction of an offshore reef. Ironically, this sustainable approach had been proposed by both Myers and predecessor Steve Higgins for decades.

Higgins insisted on treating the entire Broward coast as a single ecosystem wherein the health of every segment depends on the stability of adjacent segments. Since 80% of the sand lost to tidal erosion occurs at coastal inlets like Port Everglades, fitting them with sand bypasses and implementing other erosion control architecture will serve to stabilize the beach. Instead of scheduling an endless series of expensive full scale renourishments, performing smaller, more frequent sand placements at a few easily identifiable erosion hot-spots would only require a fraction of the sand at a comparably reduced cost.

Broward Beach Administrator Eric Myers announced that State and Federal permits required for the Segment II renourishment are continuing through the approval process. One veteran Advisory Board member asked Myers what everyone was thinking, "With various short term and long term plans under consideration, can someone grab our sand to fix the beach where A1A is damaged? Is the Segment II renourishment still planned for next year?" Scores of attendees breathed a collective sigh of relief when Myers retorted, "The major renourishment is still scheduled for December 2013." Before the meeting, when asked if there was anything we could do to speed up our beach fix, Myers said that the county needed to collect money owed by the Federal government for the previous renourishment. He asked if the GMCA could coax newly elected Congress person Lois Frankel into facilitating delivery of those funds. When asked about unused beach renourishment funds that former Congressman Alan West claimed to have diverted to Broward, Myers said that West never delivered. In short, the cash was snatched.

When asked about Federal funds, Feldman warned that we should not expect help from the Federal government (since the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rejected our eligibility for Federal resources) - and that any prospective

Continued on page 16

THE GALT MILE NEWS

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LONG & SHORT TERM A1A & BEACH FIX OPTIONS

PART 4:

By Eric Berkowitz

On December 10, more than 300 local residents, their elected officials from the City, County and State, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) bureaucrats and representatives from environmental, business and civic organizations converged on the Beach Community Center. The public officials were there to reveal long and short term recovery proposals under consideration by the City, County and State (FDOT). Residents who packed the standing-room-only Monday night event hoped for a glimpse at the future of their beach.

In the \$3 million short term solution described by FDOT officials, the temporary concrete jersey barriers will be replaced by steel sheets punched into the ground to stabilize and support the beach. FDOT project manager Gerry O'Reilly explained "Once core samples reveal an optimum depth to which the sheet pile should be driven, a 2400-foot long metal wall will be inserted as far east as allowed in the permit (the FDOT right-of-way includes the roadway, not the beach), when the current barriers will simultaneously be removed." Work will begin in the last week in January or the first week in February. Seemingly pleased that project costs are already funded, O'Reilly admonished that the funds must be disbursed by June. Over \$2 million is available for the short term fix and a \$3 million work program set-aside for the roadway rebuild.

Once structurally isolated from roadway infrastructure, the beach will receive tons of sand hauled by truck to the devastated areas north of Sunrise Boulevard between 14th and 18th streets. As the adjacent beach is outside the FDOT right-of-way, the accompanying sand placement will be managed by the County. Since the short term plan must be completed prior to the March onset of sea turtle nesting season, on December 11, the Broward County Commission authorized County Administrator Bertha Henry to bypass ordinarily convoluted procedural requirements in favor of an expedited procurement process for engineering services, cost-sharing negotiations with State and Feds, regulatory Whack-a-Duck and construction. Henry asked for \$3 million to dump a maximum 50,000 cubic yards of sand on the connected beach. At the December 20th GMCA Advisory Board Meeting, Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca confirmed that the County Tourism Fund will fuel the mini-renourishment. By March, the makeshift adaptation of A1A would be cushioned by an additional 20 - 40 feet of beach.

Longer term, FDOT envisions the temporary 2-lane A1A configuration abutted with a third "left turn" lane. Space liberated by the lane reduction can accommodate a long-planned Greenway project from Sunrise Boulevard to the north end of the beach. In addition to the sidewalk and possible on-street parking, FDOT District Secretary Jim Wolfe said "Whatever the new configuration is, there will be bike lanes on both sides; which we will insist on." Wolfe also said that the new road would be elevated and O'Reilly proposed tilting A1A so that water drains to the west - away from the ocean - rather than to the east.

Mayor Jack Seiler was joined by Commissioners Bruce Roberts, Romney Rogers and Bobby DuBose, City Manager Lee Feldman, Assistant City Managers Susanne Torriente and Stanley Hawthorne and Public Works Director Albert Carbon, who also floated the mobile microphone to attendees recognized for comments or questions. Seiler thanked District 93 Statehouse Representative George Moraitis, who volunteered his assistance when A1A first buckled. Summarizing his efforts to enable Port Everglades to exploit \$billions in new trade

when post-Panamax supertankers begin navigating the upgraded Panama Canal in 2014, Moraitis said that beach infrastructure is critical to the regional and State economies.

To deter its abuse as a weekend speedway, the GMCA successfully added a lane reduction to the FDOT A1A resurfacing project along the Galt Mile; narrowing the roadway from 6 to 4 lanes. It came as no surprise when residents who live near the decomposed section of A1A similarly opted to endorse the smaller 2- or 3-lane configuration. One local resident observed "It's like the fourth turn of the Daytona 500 when they're coming down A1A. The only way to control this is to cut it down to three lanes and make it more pedestrian friendly and beach friendly for people who want to use the beach, not as a bypass for Federal Highway."

Assuming the role of meeting host, Mayor Seiler announced the City's intention to investigate natural and artificial erosion control enhancements that will further stabilize the shoreline and resist rising sea levels caused by global warming. In addition to fitting beaches with increased vegetation and dunes, Seiler discussed adding an artificial reef to the offshore marine architecture. Explaining that the city is actively soliciting both professional and public input in an effort to evolve a balanced action plan, the Mayor told attendees about "RestoreA1A.Com" a city website created to harvest feedback.

Four years ago, Broward, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and Monroe counties caucused to form the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact. Last year, the group came up with 110 recommendations, including redesigning low-lying roads and relocating drinking-water wells inland. On November 6, 2012, one week after Sandy butterflyed A1A, Mayor Seiler signed a pledge to help implement those aspects of the climate action plan appropriate to Fort Lauderdale. Denouncing renourishments as a paranoid overreaction to a non-existent threat from "fluctuating sea levels" and scorning global warming as a myth propagated by a "worldwide Communist conspiracy," right-wing demagogues rebuffed the group's conclusions as "junk science" and "heresy" spurred by a "Socialist power grab." On the other side of a rubber wall, in a city of strange bedfellows, President Thomas J. Goreau of the Global Coral Reef Alliance wrote a June 1st letter to Eric Myers. Decrying the beach fix, Goreau observed "The beach in Segment II is not eroding," a revelation he is likely to have since revisited. Welcome to the Venice of America!

Continued on page 16



Galt Mile residents vet beach future at SRO Community Center meeting.



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13

Urban Gourmet Market
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9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-462-4166

26th Annual Boca Fest
The Shops at Boca Center
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Info.: 954-472-3755

14

Commissioner Bruce Roberts:
Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center, 6 p.m.

15

BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

Agatha Christie's BBC Murders
(Through 2/15)
Parker Playhouse
Tix.: 954-462-0222

16

BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

20

Urban Gourmet Market
1201 E. Las Olas Blvd.
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-462-4166

21

22

BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

23

BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

Business Education Seminar Series:
SMALL BUSINESS EXPO
War Memorial Auditorium
6 to 8 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-4752

27

Urban Gourmet Market
1201 E. Las Olas Blvd.
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-462-4166

28

Commissioner Bruce Roberts:
Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center, 6 p.m.

29

BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

30

BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

Wicked, Broadway
(Through 2/17)
Broward Center for the Performing Arts
Tix.: 954-462-0222

3

Urban Gourmet Market
1201 E. Las Olas Blvd.
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-462-4166

4

5

BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

6

BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

Sunday Jazz Brunch
Riverwalk, Downtown FL
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info.: 954-828-5985

10

Urban Gourmet Market
1201 E. Las Olas Blvd.
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-462-4166

11

12

BINGO
Galt Towers Social Room
(4250 Galt Ocean Drive)
7:30 p.m.
Info.: Cyndi Sanger: 954-563-7268

13

BINGO
Regency South Party Room
7 p.m.
Info.: Bob Pearlman: 954-547-4063

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

JANUARY 17: Art Walk Las Olas, Las Olas Blvd. from Museum of Art to SE 16th Ave., 5 to 9 p.m., Info.: 954-258-8382

JANUARY 17-20: 30th Annual Palm Beach Winter Antiques Show, Embassy Suites in WPB, Info.: 954-563-6747

JANUARY 18-20: 2013 International Orchid Show, War Memorial Auditorium, Info.: 954-563-3548

JANUARY 19: JA World Uncorked!, JA World Huizenga Center-Broward College, Coconut Creek, 6:30 to 9 p.m., Info.: 954-979-7100

JANUARY 19-20: Downtown Delray Beach Festival of the Arts, 1111 East Atlantic Ave., Delray Beach 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 954-472-3755

JANUARY 25-26: Monty Python's SPAMALOT, Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 8 p.m., Tix.: 954-462-0222

JANUARY 26: Englebert Humperdinck, Hard Rock Live, 8 p.m., Tix.: 954-797-5531

JANUARY 27: Medication Take Back Event, 301 N. Andrews Ave., 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info.: 954-765-4999

JAN/FEB

THU

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UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR AREA

February 17

A1A Marathon

Starts at the Museum of Discovery, downtown Ft. Lauderdale
6 a.m.

Info.: www.a1amarathon.com

February 23

Ft. Lauderdale Secret Garden Tour

Tour private gardens at several of Ft. Lauderdale's most
prestigious homes

Tix.: www.FLGC.org

February 23-24

6th Annual Ocean Adventure Expo 2013

Broward County Convention Center

Info.: 561-715-0247

February 23-24

17th Annual Butterfly & Garden Festival

3750 S. Flamingo Road, Davie, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Info.: 954-473-2955

February 24

MS Walk Ft. Lauderdale

Huizenga Plaza, 9 a.m.

Reg.: 954-731-4224

March 2

23rd Annual Walk For The Animals

Huizenga Plaza, 8 a.m. to Noon

Info.: 954-266-6817

March 8-10

International Orchid Festival

Fairchild Tropical Garden, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Info.: www.fairchildgarden.org



**FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF
EVENTS, GO TO THE
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WWW.GALTMILE.COM**

17 BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr.) 7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting
Nick's Italian Restaurant
11 a.m.

24 BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr.) 7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

18 Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

Miami City Ballet
(Through 1/20)
Broward Center for the Performing Arts
Tix.: 954-462-0222

25 Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.
Info.: 954-776-5092

7th Annual International Chocolate Festival
(Through 1/27)
Fairchild Tropical Garden
9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Info.: www.fairchildgarden.org

31 BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr.) 7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

1 Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

19 Juan Sidi Flamenco
Broward Center
2 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
Tix.: 954-462-0222

Flamingo Fest
(Through 1/20)
Flamingo Gardens
9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Tix.: 954-473-2955

26 Fort Lauderdale's SEFCC Home,
Health & Fitness Expo
War Memorial Auditorium
Info.: 561-245-8985

Dania Beach Vintage Motorcycle Show
Frost Park (300 NE 2 Street, Dania Beach)
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Info.: 954-830-8855

2 North Beach Art Walk
A1A, 32nd & 33rd Streets
7 to 11 p.m.

4th Annual Burger Battle
Esplanade Park
5 to 10 p.m.
Info.: 954-468-1541, ext. 203

7 BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr.) 7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

Stars of SNL:
Jon Lovitz, Chris Kattan, & Tim Meadows
Coral Springs Center for the Arts
7:30 p.m.
Tix.: 954-344-5990

8 Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

Seminole Tribal Fair
(Through 2/10)
Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
Info.: 954-966-1712

9 14th Annual Delray Beach Garlic Fest
(Through 2/10)
Downtown Delray Beach
Info.: 561-279-0907

FL Renaissance Festival
(Through 3/10: Weekends ONLY)
Quiet Waters Park, Deerfield Beach
10 a.m. to Sunset
Info.: www.ren-fest.com/deerfield-home.asp

14 BINGO
Southpoint's North Lounge
(3400 Galt Ocean Dr.) 7 p.m.
\$5/person for 3 boards

Valentine's Day

Love In The Park
Huizenga Plaza (Bubier Park)
6 to 10 p.m.
Info.: 561-447-9123

15 Jazz on the Square
The Village Grille
Commercial Blvd. & A1A
7 p.m.

16 Palm Beach Marine Flea Market
& Seafood Festival
(Through 2/17)
South Florida Fairgrounds, WPB
Info.: 954-205-7813

2013 KID Duck Fest Derby
Esplanade Park
1 to 4 p.m.
Info.: 954-390-7654

FEBRUARY 2: Hillsboro Lighthouse Tour, Sands Harbor Hotel, Pompano, 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info.: 954-942-2102

FEBRUARY 2: 16th Annual Downtown Delray Beach Craft Festival, Pineapple Grove-Delray, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Info.: 954-472-3755

FEBRUARY 2: Hope Floats, Esplanade Park, 4 to 8 p.m., Info.: 954-468-1541

First Saturday of every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd & the Beach LBTS, 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info.: www.lbts.com

Second Saturday of every Month: Beach Sweep, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Info.: 954-474-1835

Wednesdays: Yoga in the Garden, Bonnett House, 8 to 9 a.m., Info.: 954-563-5393 ext. 137

Tuesdays and Thursdays: Yoga with Ali Hecht, Esplanade Park, 6:30 p.m., Info.: 954-732-0517

Mondays and Wednesdays: Cardio Mix with Josh Hecht, Esplanade Park, 6:30 p.m., Info.: 954-732-0517

Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736

Sundays: Urban Gourmet Market, 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Info.: 954-462-4166

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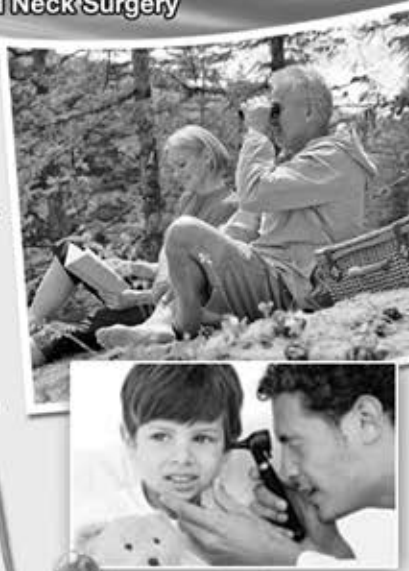
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Part 3...Continued

solutions will be wholly dependent on local efforts and resources. On November 1, Governor Rick Scott requested Federal aid for Broward and six other Florida Counties where Super Storm Sandy cannibalized coastal infrastructure after stripping away protective beaches. Since Scott cleverly decided to spend the next five days before the presidential election firing a battery of non-stop pot shots at the Obama Administration, it came as no surprise when FEMA administrator Craig Fugate sent Scott a letter stating "Based on our review of all the information available, it has been determined that the damage to the infrastructure from this event was not of such severity and magnitude as to be beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments." Jacksonville native Fugate, who currently lives in Gainesville, formerly served as Director of Florida Division of Emergency Management.

According to Feldman, a \$3 million metal sheet pile installation and sand placement plan is the best shot at fixing A1A. The cost of building the sheet metal wall between the beach and the road would be split among the County, the City and FDOT. Despite the Federal snub, money is not expected to be a problem. Funds are available through a variety of sources, including the county's tourism fund. While every long term plan is fitted with an 18-month timetable, post-planning construction for the short term fix will begin in January and should be completed by March.

To residents who hunger for fast-tracking a Galt Mile beach fix, here's a nutshell version of reality - the only sand available in sufficient quantities for a long-term solution is vested in the planned Segment II renourishment. Expediting the timetable would require moving sand from staging areas to placement sites during the sea turtle nesting season. Since FDEP and FWC have a stranglehold on the County permit currently under application, the chances of busting a move are comparable to that of a snowball in hell. The same "roadblock" exists on the Federal level. The Army Corps of Engineers is answerable to EPA. Do the math. Before Ieraci adjourned the meeting, Feldman announced that recovery options will be discussed at a city-sponsored December 10 meeting at the Beach Community Center. Part 4 reviews proposed long and short term plans vetted by FDOT, the City, the County, and more than 300 anxious residents at the emergency meeting. •

Part 4...Continued

While accepting that sustainability is a worthwhile feature of any plan, residents were flustered by an 18-month waiting period projected for the long-term solutions. When FDOT District Secretary Jim Wolfe said "I wouldn't see work starting on a rebuild of A1A for 18 months....," Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca - a building contractor by trade - said "18 months is a long time. Maybe we could contract that and make it a shorter timetable." Then again, LaMarca also said that he doesn't believe renourishing the beach earlier would have made any difference - an enigmatic supposition since every Broward Beach Administrator in the past two decades warned that renourishment delays threaten to undermine adjacent infrastructure. Notwithstanding his views on coastal cyclonic impacts, when Eric Myers revived the near comatose Segment II renourishment, LaMarca took point on the Broward board, lining up unanimous Commission support while bird dogging vulnerable project funds.

Residents rejected repeated inferences that the damage was limited to the 4 blocks where A1A was mangled, passionately insisting that shriveled beaches in the Lauderdale Beach and Galt Mile neighborhoods warrant attention. Broward Beach Administrator Eric Myers assured attendees that the short or long term plans for A1A shouldn't impact the Segment II project timetable. However, he added that the need to incrementally replace the recently lost sand may boost project costs. After 47 years of waiting for their beach to be fixed, few Galt Mile residents are concerned about anything other than the start date. In view of meeting feedback - with few exceptions - the rest of the City agrees. •

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