



From the desk of
DEAN TRANTALIS
 Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

MAY 2017

City, county leaders discuss key issues

Consensus forms for joint government campus, but progress lacking on homelessness

My colleagues on the City Commission and I recently met with our counterparts on the Broward County Commission to discuss a wide range of important subjects – from homelessness downtown to the construction of a joint government campus.

While we found common ground on some areas, significant differences remained on others.

Both the county and city are confronted with aging administration buildings so we've begun discussing a combined county-city building. The current structures no longer meet the needs of the respective governments and will likely require costly renovation work in the coming years.

With the start of the Brightline train service this summer, both properties are valuable and potentially could be sold to pay for a new campus. Or, one could be used as a site for a new federal courthouse that is also envisioned. We are waiting for news regarding the 2018 federal budget, but we know Fort Lauderdale ranks as one of the top three cities in need of a new courthouse.

There would be a lot of efficiency if we place the county and city operations together. One possible location could be the county's bus station as it takes more space than needed.

County Commissioner Chip LaMarca

and I will take the lead on advancing the plans.

Both commissions also largely agreed that recent suggestions of relocating the Broward



Convention Center are unrealistic. The cost could easily approach \$1 billion, and the one location mentioned downtown would impinge on our historic neighborhood of Sailboat Bend.

The convention center has added to the horrendous traffic congestion on Southeast 17th Street, but other ways exist to resolve the problem. We will look for those solutions as the county embarks on an expansion of the convention center and the development of a hotel on the site. One possibility would be some sort of bypass road.

County officials also think the expanded convention center with an on-site hotel will attract a different mix of clientele. After the expansion, the center will focus more on national meetings. Most attendees would stay on site or within walking distance.

Unfortunately, the county and city could not find common ground regarding homelessness.

The city wanted the county to consider re-opening the old stockade that the Sheriff's Office previously used as a workcamp and detention facility for non-violent offenders. With minor renovations, it could be transformed into an assessment center where we could work with the homeless to obtain needed services for them.

County commissioners and their staff weren't open to the idea. They said the stockade is their only backup if overcrowding forces them to seek additional jail space.

Still, some solution must be found.

The county and city currently focus on a federal initiative called housing first, but funding is far from what is needed to provide housing for those living on the street. And meanwhile, the situation at Stranahan Park grows more dire.

The final subject discussed was



affordable housing.

Some officials wanted the county to provide the city relief from requirements designed to ensure available housing for our workforce. I did not agree.

The city is approaching a deadline that county officials imposed when they gave us permission to add 5,000 more housing units downtown. They said that before the city sets aside half of the new units for specific projects, we must approve at least 375 workforce housing units out of a total promise of 750.

We are approaching that half-way mark, but aren't close to meeting the workforce housing target. Downtown developers have made a lot of money yet have not included such in their plans.

Nurses, teachers, bank tellers and waiters need affordable places to live in our urban core. We shouldn't force such middle-income workers to find housing 15-20 miles away. That's not the future we want.

Diversity is what makes Fort Lauderdale great. Diversity in income is part of what makes a diverse community. That requires a wide mix of housing. Downtown developers should step to the plate and make sure that happens within their projects.

Sincerely,





THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE PRESENTS THE
Great American
BEACH
PARTY
SATURDAY, MAY 27
10 AM - 8:30 PM
FORT LAUDERDALE BEACH
A1A and Las Olas Boulevard

Free Event Featuring
LIVE BANDS • KIDS ZONE • DJ
SAND CASTLE CONTEST • ART SHOW
CLASSIC CAR SHOW
LIFE-SIZE BEACH GAMES
U.S. MILITARY PARACHUTE TEAM
TRIBUTE TO U.S. ARMED FORCES
WALK OF FAME INDUCTION



MUSIC FROM
EDDIE
MONEY



Commissioner Trantalis joins his colleagues on the City Commission in welcoming the consul general of Costa Rica, Rodolfo Rodriguez.



Commissioner Trantalis reviews plans for a townhouse project during a recent meeting of the South Middle River Civic Association.



Commissioner Trantalis speaks at the Masters Broker real estate forum, which was held at the sales center for the new Four Seasons Private Residences.



Commissioner Trantalis helps dedicate a tree on Arbor Day in Hott Park in honor of longtime city arborist Gene Demsey, who recently passed away.

