



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

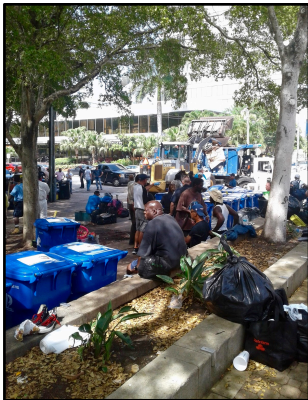
JUNE 2017

City grapples with homeless, Bahia Mar

Homeless camp in Stranahan Park suddenly shuttered; new Bahia Mar plan under review

As the summer approaches, I know many families are planning vacations with the hope of stepping away from our usual routines and putting behind us the issues that weren't always such a pleasure to deal with.

The first that comes to mind for me is the treatment of our homeless population. This past month, our city management along with others on the City Commission triggered a series of events that could only



be considered shameful at best.

For too many months, a situation was allowed to fester outside the county main library in which people who suffer from

mental illness, addiction and hunger were relegated to living conditions that were simply subhuman. And instead of making a serious attempt to meet their needs, these folks were allowed to suffer in the throes of a political battle between the city and county governments.

Instead of taking the initiative to help those who are destitute, our city routed them out of Stranahan Park with no lasting options to assist them in their time of need. It was a sin to treat folks like this.

The next thing that comes to mind is the deteriorating condition of our underground infrastructure. We have seen eddies of raw sewage engulf places where kids play and people walk their dogs.

After having hired expensive consultants to come up with a plan that was due a year ago, we finally received an 800-page report this spring. So you would think

we would be right on top of this issue, but no, the commission has yet to discuss the report.

Given the effects of climate change and the worsening condition of our infrastructure, it is almost criminal that we haven't begun the process.

Finally, the commission voted to explore making Las Olas Boulevard even more impassable than it is today by permanently narrowing the street to just two lanes. Yes, two lanes. That's no bike paths, no space for the pedicabs. It's a re-envisioning of the road such that the tree canopy in the median will be cut to the ground and the sidewalks widened. I don't know what they were thinking.

This newsletter cannot conclude without a discussion about the recent vote regarding Bahia Mar.

As many will recall, we suffered through a brutal review process a year ago over the first proposed plans for two 39-story condo towers, a warmed-over hotel renovation, a grocery store, and a parking garage with more housing units and retail space. The developer wisely withdrew his application after community uproar.

One thing missing at that time was any agreement with the Marine Industries Association of South Florida to ensure the future the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show at the site. How insane was that? No review should have begun without such a commitment.

The developer has now significantly revised the plans.

The new proposal seems quite different, with a smaller scale, a new hotel, a grocery store and the like. But this time, an agreement also has been reached to keep



the Boat Show here another 30 years.

The process of city review should begin in which we can look at density, traffic and infrastructure needs. Many of us are concerned about what the final plan will encompass. There have been renderings, but the process remains fluid.

The underlying lease calls for a first-class marina/hotel resort with related improvements. What that exactly means has yet to be determined. But when it came to vote on whether to allow the review to begin, it was important for me to support the process.

A no vote would have guaranteed my being excluded from the discussion. There is nothing to be gained from that. This way, we can participate in meaningful dialogue about what works best for the community.

So now we have something to talk about at our cookouts, morning coffees and our leisure moments. I look forward to hearing your ideas. Let's hope we can come together with some level of consensus to ensure that Fort Lauderdale remains the city you never want to leave.

Sincerely,





Commissioner Trantalis helps open the new KaBoom! playground that was built in Middle River Terrace Park with the help of local volunteers.



Commissioner Trantalis joins Mayor Jack Seiler to honor the late civic activist Lu Deaner by renaming a park in the Dolphin Isles neighborhood after her.



Commissioner Trantalis discusses development issues and infrastructure needs with members of the Central Beach Alliance at the Sonesta Hotel.



Commissioner Trantalis joins state Rep. Bobby DuBose and School Board member Rosalind Osgood at a community forum regarding LGBT youth.



Commissioner Trantalis presents a Community Appearance Award to residents who helped add a sculpture of a Sankofa bird in Sistrunk Park.



Commissioner Trantalis, Mayor Jack Seiler and members of the Broward Housing Authority help open a new townhouse project, Manors at Middle River.