MARCH 2018

Time is now for sensible gun laws

Fort Lauderdale should end gun show, fight for reform in wake of Parkland tragedy.

When I first heard the reports of the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High, my shock and sadness were mixed with numbness. Once again, innocent lives were needlessly lost because of our country's failure to responsibly deal with gun violence – this time, just miles from our homes.

Fourteen youths will not graduate with their friends, go to college and live full lives. Three faculty members were taken from their families, dying as they tried to save students from being shot by a deranged killer.

The events of Feb. 14 in Parkland weigh heavily on us because of the inherent tragedy of youth being struck down in their prime. Still, in Parkland, we have found hope that change is

possible. It has been awe-inspiring to witness teen survivors of the horrible event joining together and demanding that our society stop ignoring this crisis and find solutions.

They want – and deserve – more than our thoughts and prayers. As a nation, we cannot let Parkland go unanswered as we did the deaths at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, the elementary school in Newtown, the concert in Las Vegas or the church meeting in Charleston.

I've long supported more sensible gun regulations. It is time. Shortly after Parkland, suggestions arose that Broward County cities unite in seeking reform from Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature.

I immediately introduced such a proposal to the Fort Lauderdale City Commission and won its passage the same day. Collectively, we called on Tallahassee



to restrict the sale of assault-style weapons and high-capacity magazines, require background checks on all gun sales, allow judges to restrict gun access if someone poses a threat, and give cities reasonable power to set appropriate local gun regulations.

But we need to do more than just pleading with state lawmakers.

As a result, I am inviting community leaders and students to join me and to take part in a forum at War Memorial Auditorium to discuss gun violence and set a plan of action. The forum will be at 10 a.m. March 17. This is the exact time and place a gun show was to take place, but it was canceled in the wake of Parkland. What better than to substitute a marketplace for guns with a dialogue for peace.

I believe there is strong community support to permanently end gun shows at the auditorium. It's dangerous for the city to allow gun sales in the middle of Holiday Park near where families and children play. The commission has refused to act on my recommendation for years, but we must now redouble our efforts to accomplish this. It is time for the gun show to find a more suitable venue.

At the forum, we can discuss not just access to guns, but also the improvement of mental health services and the identification of those most in need. And, I'd like to see the city and Broward School District cooperate on expanding the number of school resource officers and providing better training to our schools to deal with life-threatening situations.

Bahia Mar

In last month's newsletter, I revealed disturbing news regarding the Bahia Mar development and the future of the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show.

I seriously believe the Boat Show has

been jeopardized as a result of the approval of a massive apartment complex on our public land at Bahia Mar. Once the construction is completed, there will be no room left for a large-scale, world-class boat show. A boat show squeezed into a parking garage is not what any of us should want or expect.

And there is more. The Boat Show is seeking \$2 million a year in tax money from the county tourism bureau to subsidize its marketing. This is the first time ever that the Boat Show has wanted government financial assistance. Why now? What has changed?

Because of these issues, I am renewing my demand that the city obtain the secret agreement that was signed between the Bahia Mar developers and the Boat Show. It must be released it to the public. Previous leases between Bahia Mar and the Boat Show were publicly available. This one should be as well.

This is basic transparency that taxpayers deserve, yet the city attorney has not stepped forward to force the matter.

Florida has a very strong open records law. How is it possible that a long-term lease involving public facilities and public property not be a public record? This is also a point of basic real estate law. The city owns Bahia Mar and has a fundamental right to review such leases of its property.

The Boat Show agreement must be made public. We need to know what the

terms are and judge for ourselves the risks. The Boat Show is integral to our economy. As city leaders, we must do all we can to protect the thousands of jobs that comprise our marine industry.

In closing, this is my final newsletter as the District 2 commissioner. Over the past five years, I hope this regular report has enlightened everyone about important issues facing the city and laid out my views on our future. Until next time... Thank you for the trust you have placed in me.

Sincerely,





Commissioner Trantalis helps recognize Sarah Sjostrom of Sweden as the 2017 world swimmer of the year at the International Swimming Hall of Fame.



Commissioner Trantalis welcomes people to the Pride Fort Lauderdale festival that was held for the second year in a row on the city's beach.



Commissioner Trantalis joins city staff and police to discuss a recent murder in Middle River Terrace Park with concerned neighbors.



Commissioner Trantalis presents a proclamation to Father James Katinas of St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church in honor of its annual Greek Festival.

