



From The Desk Of
DEAN TRANTALIS

Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

APRIL 2015

Unite to save downtown site for park

City considers selling One Stop Shop, but long-time master plans says lot should be preserved

Twelve years ago, residents and business leaders came together to create a new vision for downtown Fort Lauderdale. It was a vision of a vibrant area with high-rise housing, shopping, offices and entertainment.

We're seeing this come to fruition. New housing like The Edge and The Manor has been built. The Flagler Arts and Technology Village was created and is ripe with possibility for arts and entertainment. The Wave streetcar will soon be reality. We're on our way!

But now we're at a critical juncture. A key component of the Master Plan was identifying the need for green space. The plan recognized that an important component to an inviting neighborhood is more parks for residents to enjoy. Unfortunately, the threat of development looms over the main site in Flagler Village that the Master Plan identified for future park space – the former Building Department, or what many call the One Stop Shop.

The city manager wants to sell the One Stop Shop to developers to pay the city's bills. I don't believe we should be selling the family jewels to pay the light bill. The site has a beautiful tree canopy and is the only place for a new park in Flagler Village. This park would provide the oasis from urban encroachments that loom just ahead as new development is planned and built nearby.

Many know of the Peter Feldman Park at



Sistrunk Boulevard and Northeast 3rd Avenue. It's a well-appreciated amenity in a downtown area already experiencing new density.

Cityscapes are forbidding places when they fail to include open spaces. I urge us to rally together. Please voice your opinions to the other members of the City Commission to ensure at least part of the One Stop Shop site is saved for park space. The city can find other ways to pay its bills, but it won't get another chance to create a truly wonderful downtown.

Now, let me update you some other important matters.

This past winter and spring marked an unusually busy tourist season. The number of visitors certainly gave a good boost to our economy, but the traffic congestion was a daily nightmare. My office heard from numerous residents of the beach and Las Olas Isles who literally felt trapped in their home.

The City Commission has agreed with my suggestion that we need to better scrutinize events proposed for the beach and Las Olas during the height of tourist season. We plan to limit their number and the time of day that they take place.

The commission has also agreed to a concept of locating parking garages throughout the barrier island and not just a single location such as adjacent to the Las Olas bridge. Parking facilities from the Bonnet House area to the north and Bahia Cabana to the south would eliminate some congestion on State Road A1A. I'd like to go even further and have remote parking sites on Sunrise Boulevard and Southeast 17th Street with shuttle service to the beach.

With Las Olas, the city staff is in the second phase of a plan to improve traffic flow. This will include removing the stop sign on Southeast 15th Avenue between Las Olas and Broward boulevards. But we all can agree



that this is just the beginning. We need to continue to explore more options to open traffic flow.

I've asked the city manager to convene a town hall forum so all the neighborhoods can get together with our staff and discuss how best to improve the situation. My office will let you know when this is scheduled.

I have good news to report on beach renourishment.

At long last, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has granted the necessary permit to begin work. Broward County hopes to lay the first sand in November. About 750,000 cubic yards of sand will be added from Pompano Beach to Terramar Street in Fort Lauderdale.

Finally, I'm pleased to announce the commission agreed to seek bids to expand the Las Olas Marina to accommodate more boats as well as larger yachts. The consensus is that a mega-development is not appropriate on this city-owned property, but the marina space is under-utilized right now. We listened to the marine industry. We want to see if we can build something that ensures Fort Lauderdale remains one of the world's premier yachting destinations.

Sincerely,



WEDNESDAY, MAY 13 • 7:00 – 8:00 P.M.

with COMMISSIONER DEAN J. TRANTALIS

Talk to Commissioner Trantalis about City programs, services or ideas to improve Fort Lauderdale. Residents with listed phone numbers will receive a call prior to the start of the meeting. Neighbors can also call the number below to join the conversation.

CALL TOLL FREE (888) 409-5380 TO JOIN IN!



Commissioner Trantalis walks with County Commissioner Chip LaMarca and school board members Dr. Rosalind Osgood and Robin Bartleman in the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Las Olas Boulevard.



Circuit Judge Elijah Williams swears Mayor Jack Seiler and commissioners Trantalis, Romney Rogers, Robert McKinzie and Bruce Roberts into office. Commissioner Trantalis was re-elected March 10 to represent District 2.



Commissioner Trantalis helps lead the start of Florida AIDS Walk that took place along State Road A1A on Fort Lauderdale's beach in late March.



Commissioner Trantalis helps cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the Shade Post, a new boutique showroom and retail art gallery in Flagler Village.