

SIB islander

CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

December 2019

Winter Fest



December is finally here and that means it is time for our annual holiday celebration, Winter Fest. Saturday evening is full of festivities including ice skating, rides, games, crafts, tree lighting and a special visit from Kris Kringle. If you didn't get enough time on the rink, the park is open on Sunday for a full day of ice skating enjoyment.

Saturday

December 7 • 5:00–9:00 pm

Winter Fest

Sunday

December 8 • 10:00 am–6:00 pm

Ice Skating

**All happening at Heritage Park
19200 Collins Avenue**

Wristbands for rides and ice skating are \$20, or \$5 with a valid city-issued SIB Resident ID Card. Save your wristband from Saturday, as they are also valid for ice skating on Sunday!

Free parking is available at Heritage Park with overflow under the William Lehman Causeway or ride the free SIBshuttle. For more information, visit sibfl.net/winterfest.

from our **Mayor**



George 'Bud' Scholl
Mayor

We have an exciting month ahead of us as we say goodbye to 2019 and prepare for the start of a new decade.

The next few weeks are full of events designed to bring our multiethnic community together.

As we know, the cultural composition of our city is as diverse as it gets; our residents and visitors travel here from across the globe. We have residents who have lived here for 25+ years and we also welcome new citizens beginning their career or starting a family. We do not shy away from differing beliefs; we value and respect all members of our community and encourage you to get involved and share your ideas. Because the cultural representation of our city is ever-evolving, much thought and care goes into planning our yearly calendar to include events and programs that will appeal to our diverse population.

Throughout the last several years, city staff has been following the recommendations of the Cultural Master Plan, set forth based on community research and analysis. You may have seen some new additions to our event calendar such as Hispanic and Russian Heritage Celebrations and the Gateway LIVE! quarterly performance series. We are bridging artistic barriers each season with exceptional new cultural performances and events.

In addition to the annual holiday-themed events such as Winter Fest, Holiday Ball, Holiday Concert, and teen event, this month we are hosting one of our Sister Cities from across the world, Hengchun, Taiwan. We always welcome visits from our sister cities as they strengthen the ties of our relationship while exchanging cultural traditions. From December 8 – 12, the mayor and delegation from Hengchun will be visiting Sunny Isles Beach. Their visit culminates in An Evening with Hengchun on Wednesday, December 11 as we invite our residents to join us for a spectacular cultural exchange event. You can read more details about this event in SIBlife or on our website at sibfl.net/events.

No matter where you are from or how long you have been in our city, we have an event for you this month. I wish you all a very happy holiday season.



SIBlife

An Evening with Hengchun

Join city officials and meet the delegation from our Sister City, Hengchun, Taiwan on Wednesday, December 11 from 6:30-9:30 pm at Gateway Park. Learn about the Asian culture, enjoy a performance by Taiko Drummers, observe the Lion Dance and participate in dumpling making. Parking and admission are free for this event. For more information, visit sibfl.net/events.

Holiday Crime Prevention

We are in the middle of the biggest shopping season of the year, which is also the busiest crime season. The holidays are a time to spend with family and friends, but we must also remain vigilant for car thieves. When not in your car, minimize the risk of theft by locking doors and closing windows. Do not tempt burglars by leaving valuables visible. Read many more holiday safety tips online at sibfl.net/holidaysafety.

Holiday Park Closures

With beautiful South Florida weather, every day this holiday season is a park day. As you are preparing for an outing, take note of our holiday park closures. Our parks are open 365 days a year, but have limited hours on Thanksgiving, Christmas Day and New Year's Day from 11:00 am-6:00 pm except Pelican Community Park which is closed on federal holidays. To see more details about specific park closure hours, visit sibfl.net/parks.

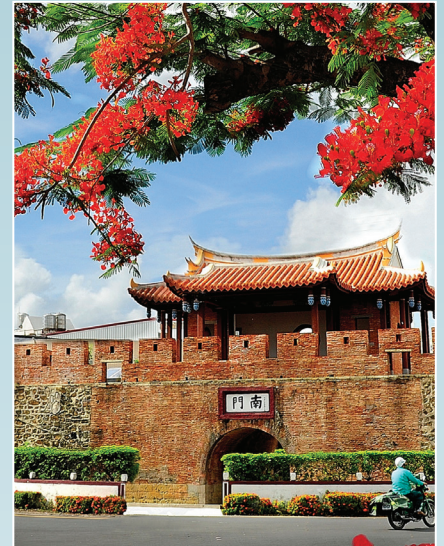
Seasonal Events

The end of the year brings exciting events

that the whole family can enjoy. The month kicks off with Winter Fest on December 7 and 8 at Heritage Park. Enjoy ice skating, rides, crafts and a visit from Kris Kringle on Saturday, and a whole day of ice-skating fun on Sunday. Celebrate the holiday season with live music, food and dancing at the Holiday Ball on Saturday, December 14 at Pelican Community Park. And on Sunday, December 15 head to Gateway Park for a Holiday Concert. Teens can enjoy the start of winter break away from their parents at the Teens Only Event on Friday, December 20. This year, we are celebrating the New Year a little early at our Pre-New Year's Eve Party on Saturday, December 28. Ring in 2020 with live entertainment, food, drinks and dancing. To see more details about our holiday events and purchase tickets, visit sibfl.net/events.

2020 Census

Once every 10 years, the United States Census Bureau counts every resident in the country. It is important that we all participate in the 2020 Census as it maintains an accurate representation of our population. The Census helps shape many parts of our community, including determining how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year. When you respond to the census, your answers are kept anonymous. The U.S. Census Bureau is bound by law to protect your answers and keep them strictly confidential; they are used only to produce statistics. This will be the first time that responses will be accepted online and via telephone. To learn more about the Census, visit 2020census.gov.



A Message from the City Manager

by Christopher J. Russo



In my experience as a city manager for over 30 years, the business of government is often a complicated process. But government and the making of laws does work if citizens and government officials are willing to put the good of the city above personal or political agenda. Everyone may not always get exactly what they want, but the city as a holistic entity will be the definite beneficiary. Recently, this idea was put to the test. It started last December, when a zoning application was filed for a project located on the southbound side of Collins Avenue and Sunny Isles Boulevard. That this proposed project became controversial would be an understatement. It set off a firestorm of controversy and emotions.

Emotions aside, important legal and philosophical issues were raised. Throughout the course of their opposing efforts, objectors brought to the city's attention, questions about past planning and zoning mistakes not previously identified. That is actually where the most productive work was accomplished. The Mayor and Commission wanted answers on the larger issues, and staff set to find out where and how the errors occurred, as well as determine the path forward to solve these issues.

We all agreed that the Comprehensive Plan required fixing. We also knew that certain prior project approvals on the south side of Sunny Isles Boulevard granted under the defective plan needed to be addressed for the protection of the residents currently living there. Predictably, there was some disagreement about how to resolve the issues raised. The Commission and staff remained dedicated to finding solutions that worked for the overall good of the city, never wavering in these goals. The elected officials listened to the concerns of the citizens who showed up - many for the first time. Again, it was not easy; there was a level of distrust that had been propagated, which we had to overcome.

Experts were hired on both sides of the issue. Although the discussion wasn't always comfortable, everyone remained committed to doing what was best for the overall good of the city. The following decisions came from this extremely productive process:

- A moratorium was put into place on all development on the west side of Collins Avenue in what was previously known as the Town Center District.
- The mistakes concerning approvals on the south side of this area are being

addressed for the protection of those residents. The city, in consultation with the State of Florida, has begun the process it believes is best to update and resolve issues that require fixing in the Comprehensive Plan. If approved, the Town Center District will be divided into the north side and south side.

- A new vision for the remainder of the Town Center North will be developed through public workshops that will hopefully reflect the articulated desires of our citizens.

It is not uncommon for governments to reassess their planning goals and objectives based on changing conditions and times. In my opinion, this is a substantively good process for the city to engage in. Government does not work in a vacuum; it requires cooperation from all stakeholders, whether in support or opposition. And strange as it may seem, I want to give credit to all the people who engaged in this process, to the many experts on both sides who contributed to the dialogue, and mostly, to the elected officials who steadfastly held to their goal of finding solutions and representing the majority of citizens in the city.

A Look Back at 2019 and the Importance of Public Participation

from the desk of Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra



First and foremost, I want to wish all SIB residents a very happy holiday season and healthy new year. As I reflect on 2019, I am grateful for an interesting and rewarding first year as a city commissioner. Undoubtedly, there were challenges, but there was also the satisfaction of seeing residents engage and get a better understanding of some complicated issues. I hope you stay involved in 2020 and continue to distinguish the noise from the substance. Your public participation is essential to our community.

Public participation can take many forms. It can be as simple as joining a club or attending city activities. I, for one, bought my first canvas and explored my artistic side with some of our most creative residents in the SIB Oil Painting Club. In 2019, locals participated by supporting the SIB K-8 Children's Fund's first super raffle as well as St. Vincent D'Paul's fall bazaar – two very different initiatives serving the greater good.

Let's not forget, we were fortunate to have a variety of entertainment in our own backyard, such as the Hispanic and Russian Heritage festivals, a Chinese Acrobats performance, and "teens only" activities. You are always welcome to participate by attending and providing your feedback to the city. Everyone can contribute in some way; our children certainly understand that. Beach cleanups, for example, would not be the same without them! Last but not least, a simple way to participate is to reach out to your mayor and commissioners. If you've never done it, consider this my open invitation. Hope to hear from you in 2020!

My email is jviscarra@sibfl.net and my phone number is 305.792.1750.

Connecting to Your Community

from the desk of Vice Mayor Larisa Svechin



Winter holiday festivities are a time of joy. With so many parties, visitors and traffic, December can also feel hectic and overwhelming. Take a break and make personal connections. We are blessed to live in a thriving community with engaging, and often free, fun civic clubs, educational opportunities, and events.

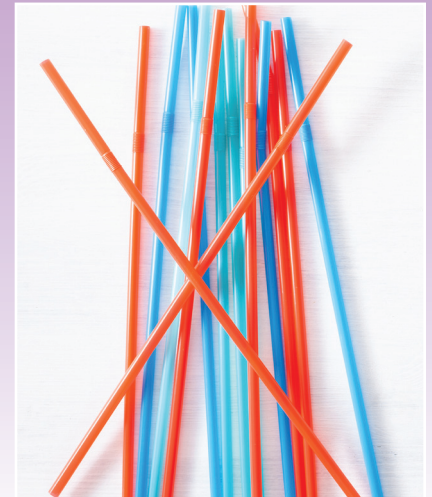
Did you know our library offers free toddler activities on Mondays & Wednesdays? On Saturdays there is free tutoring in math, reading, and science for school age kids. Russian club also meets once a month on Saturday in the Government Center. There are plenty of local civic and social groups you can join too, like the Sunny Isles Beach PTSA, Community Parks Interest Group, Concerned Citizens of SIB, and Environmental Interest Group. County-wide groups include the Citizens Coalition for Public Education, Kiwanis, and Social Citizens of North Dade.

Perhaps you desire something quieter. I host a free Painting Club every Wednesday evening. Come say hello, watch us paint, or sign up—no experience needed. When is the last time you went to a book store? The PTSA is having a book fair open to the public on Wednesday, December 4.

If you're looking for more activities, check out the latest in the winter *SIB Living* magazine, which lists city-sponsored cultural trips, events, classes, and information on how to register—available online at sibfl.net or pick up a copy at the Government Center.

I welcome you to reach out to me directly at 305.792.1754 or by email at lsvechin@sibfl.net.

Behind the Scenes with Code Compliance: Our Newest Eco-Friendly Ordinance



The most recent and historic step the city is taking to be more environmentally conscious is prohibiting the distribution of plastic straws and stirrers. In October, the City Commission voted to enact an ordinance, which officially prohibits the distribution or sale of plastic beverage straws in Sunny Isles Beach beginning January 2, 2020.

It is estimated that in America, more than 500 million straws are used every day. And most of these plastic straws end up in our oceans harming marine life and polluting the water. Straws are particularly harmful as they can be easily carried away by the wind and in most places, cannot be recycled. And though plastic can break down into pieces, it can never fully go away. So help us help our environment by skipping the straw.

Our City Commission is confident that implementing this ordinance will help the city be more eco-friendly and make Sunny Isles Beach a better and safer place to live for all. To learn more about the ordinance, visit sibfl.net/skipthestrav.

**December 3**

Tuesday, 10:00 am
Cultural Event: Bonnet House
Fort Lauderdale, FL

December 5

Thursday, 10:00 am–noon
Medical Lecture Series
SIB Govt. Center Commission Chambers

December 6

Friday, 9:00 am–1:00 pm
Mini-FLOW
Pelican Community Park

December 7

Saturday, 5:00–9:00 pm
Winter Fest
Heritage Park

December 8

Sunday, 10:00 am–6:00 pm
Ice Skating
Heritage Park

December 9

Monday, 10:00 am–12:30 pm
Modern Era Movie: *Seems Like Old Times*
Pelican Community Park

December 10

Tuesday, 5:00 pm
Sister City Recognition Ceremony
SIB Govt. Center Commission Chambers

December 11

Wednesday, 3:00 pm
Bingo
SIB Govt. Center Commission Chambers

December 11

Wednesday, 5:00 pm
Full Moon Yoga
Samson Oceanfront Park

December 11

Wednesday, 6:30–9:30 pm
An Evening with Hengchun
Gateway Park

December 12

Thursday, 9:00 am–noon
Blood Pressure and Glucose Screening
SIB Govt. Center Commission Chambers

December 14

Saturday, 6:00–9:00 pm
Holiday Ball
Pelican Community Park

December 15

Sunday, 6:00–8:00 pm
Holiday Concert
Gateway Park

December 19

Thursday, 6:30 pm
Regular City Commission Meeting
SIB Govt. Center Commission Chambers

December 20

Friday, 7:00–10:00 pm
Teens Only Event
Gateway Park

December 21

Saturday, 8:00–10:00 am
Beach Cleanup
Ellen Wynne Beach Access

December 21

Saturday, 6:15 pm
Cultural Event: New World Symphony
Miami Beach, FL

December 24

Tuesday, Christmas Eve
Government Offices Close at 1:00 pm
SIBshuttle stops running at noon

December 25

Wednesday, Christmas Day
Federal Holiday: Government Offices Closed
SIBshuttle does not operate

December 28

Saturday, 8:00–11:00 pm
Pre-New Year's Eve in SIB
Gateway Park

December 31

Tuesday, New Year's Eve
Government Offices Close at 1:00 pm
SIBshuttle stops running at noon

January 1

Wednesday, New Year's Day
Federal Holiday: Government Offices Closed
SIBshuttle does not operate

MDC-SIB Branch Library Programs

Miami-Dade County Sunny Isles Beach Branch Library: For more information about hours and the offerings below call 305.682.0726. Classes and programs are held in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Sunny Isles Beach Government Center, 18070 Collins Avenue, unless otherwise indicated.

Programs for Adults

Basic Introduction to Computers for ages 55+

Tuesday: December 17
10:00–11:00 am inside the library

Citizenship Classes

Saturdays: December 7 & 14
10:00–11:30 am

Poetry Reading

Saturday: December 14
4:00–5:00 pm

Russian Social Club

Saturday: December 21
3:30–5:30 pm

Programs for Children**Bedtime Stories**

Wednesdays: December 4–18
6:00–6:30 pm inside the library
Ages 3–5 yrs.

Homework Tutoring

Saturdays: December 7 & 14
11:00 am inside the library
Registration required.

Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing for Toddlers

Mondays: December 2–30
10:00–10:40 am
Ages 19 mo.–3 yrs.

SIB  **islander**

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CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH
CULTURAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES

18115 North Bay Road
Sunny Isles Beach, FL 33160
305.792.1706

December 2019



All persons are invited to attend these meetings. If a person decides to appeal any decision made at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all persons who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in any meeting because of that disability should contact the City Clerk at 305.792.1703, TTY 305.792.1589 no later than 48 hours prior to the proceeding.

CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

18070 Collins Avenue • Sunny Isles Beach, FL 33160

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*The official communication
of the City of Sunny Isles Beach!*



Holiday Concert

Our local youth will present a collection of holiday music at this outdoor concert.



Sunday, December 15 • 6:00–8:00 pm
Gateway Park • 151 Sunny Isles Boulevard

Featured performances include: the NSE/SIB K-8 Concert Band, the NSE/SIB K-8 Chorus and a special grand finale by the South Florida Youth Symphony Orchestra. Admission is free and free parking is available in the Gateway Park garage or ride the free SIBshuttle within city limits.

Pre-New Year's Eve Party

Ring in the New Year a little early with live entertainment, food, drinks and dancing.



Saturday, December 28 • 8:00–11:00 pm
Gateway Park • 151 Sunny Isles Boulevard

Tickets: \$10, or free with a valid city-issued SIB Resident ID Card. Purchase at: SIB Government Center, Pelican Community Park or online at sibevents.ticketleap.com. Free parking is available in the Gateway Park garage or ride the free SIBshuttle within city limits.