



# Islander

Follow us @CityofSIB |     YouTube

JANUARY 2025

## MESSAGE FROM THE City Manager



STAN MORRIS

As we begin a new year, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on my three years of service as City Manager for the City of Sunny Isles Beach. During this time, we have faced complex issues, celebrated significant milestones, and laid the foundation for continued progress. I am proud to share some of the key moments that have defined our efforts together.

When I was appointed in December 2021, the city was experiencing significant leadership gaps. At that time, there was no Police Chief, Finance Director, or Assistant Finance Director. Soon after, several other key positions, including the Cultural and Community Services Director, Planning and Zoning Director, and City Planner, became vacant, adding to the challenges we needed to address.

Through a comprehensive recruitment process, we successfully filled all these positions with professionals who bring a wealth of expertise. These dedicated individuals have worked tirelessly to elevate our services, whether through innovative programs or new finance software that streamlines our budgeting process.

Early in my tenure, I conducted a thorough financial analysis and identified approximately \$758,500 in arrears. Additionally, we reviewed and canceled unnecessary contracts, saving the city nearly \$113,000.

Beyond these financial accomplishments, we repurposed the Turnberry sales center trailer into a much-needed teen center, providing a safe and engaging space for our teen residents. Rather than spending on demolition, we transformed the trailer into a vibrant facility, further aligning with our commitment to better serve the youth in our community.

Despite these challenges, we have achieved several significant outcomes for our staff, residents, businesses, and visitors. We are proud to have appointed the first Hispanic female command staff member and the first female motor officer in the city's history. These milestones serve as a beacon of hope for young girls, showing them that the sky is not the limit, but merely the starting point for their aspirations.

We also launched a successful pilot program promoting a lifeguard and a dispatcher to police officers, fostering growth and opportunity for our employees. In the realm of public safety, our Police Department has earned accreditation, ensuring we meet the highest standards of service.

To increase transparency and public participation, we have established a successful and well-attended annual Residents' Academy, organized community outreach events, and revamped our Commission meetings to

ensure a more efficient and inclusive process. We also introduced monthly agenda review workshops open to the public, as well as workshops for discussion items and special presentations.

Additionally, the city launched the My Sunny Isles Beach Mobile App, providing instant access to city news, service updates, and important links right at your fingertips. The app also allows residents to report issues, including the option to attach pictures for easier identification. Staying connected with the City of Sunny Isles Beach has never been more convenient. We also launched a new website with a fresh, user-friendly design. In 2024, our Building Department went fully digital, streamlining the permit submission process for greater convenience.

As your City Manager, my priority is to ensure the well-being of the city. Looking ahead, I am focused on expanding our city's spaces. This includes the additional parcel of land now owned by the city, located adjacent to Pelican Community Park, which will allow us to extend the park. The construction of our Intracoastal Sports Park will provide much-needed recreational space for our residents.

Furthermore, our Building Department is in the process of becoming accredited, and our permit clerks are actively working toward their certification. With these exciting developments, I am confident that our city will continue to thrive and improve, enhancing the quality of life for all our residents.



# Art Uncorked Brings Contemporary Art to Sunny Isles Beach

Last month, the City introduced Art Uncorked, a new recurring art series that kicked off during Miami Art Week in partnership Paris-based gallery Espace Meyer Zafra. The inaugural exhibit showcased a stunning collection of contemporary works, including kinetic art and geometric abstractions, drawing art lovers

from across the community. The grand opening on December 11, 2024, was a huge success, and we're excited to continue bringing you more inspiring art experiences in the future. Stay tuned for upcoming Art Uncorked events by visiting [sibfl.gov/events](http://sibfl.gov/events).



For more information about individual pieces, contact gallerist [Liliane Zafrani](mailto:liliane.zafrani@gmail.com) at [liliane.zafrani@gmail.com](mailto:liliane.zafrani@gmail.com).

## Pedestrian Bridge Update

Exciting updates are coming to the Pedestrian Bridge between 172 St. and 174 St. The bridge is getting a fresh coat of paint to brighten up the area and make it safer for pedestrians and scooter riders. We're also exploring the addition of a dedicated bicycle lane to enhance accessibility for all. Stay tuned for more updates.



### CONGRATULATIONS!



Fabiola Stuyvesant was sworn-in as Seat 3 Commissioner on Dec. 2, 2024.



Jerry Joseph was sworn-in as Seat 1 Commissioner on Dec. 20, 2024.

# CALENDAR FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF EVENTS, VISIT [sibfl.gov/events](http://sibfl.gov/events)

## JANUARY OF EVENTS

### Federal Holiday: *New Year's Day*



**Wednesday, January 1**

City facilities closed.  
SIBshuttle will not run.  
Parks open from 8 AM - 6 PM



### Lunch n' Learn with Cesar Becerra

**Tuesday, January 7**

**11 AM - 12 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.  
Pre-registration is required.



**January 8, 15, 22, 29**

**Wednesdays | 3 - 4 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

### Gateway Market

**January 8, 15, 22, 29**

**Wednesdays | 5:30-10 PM**

Gateway Park, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

### Cultural Trip:

#### *The Bonnet House*

**Friday, January 10**

**9:00 AM - 1:30 PM**

Price: \$60

Resident ID Cardholders: \$30

Pre-registration is required.

### The Spot Grand Opening

**Friday, January 10**

**5 - 7 PM**

The Spot, 215 185 St.

### City Commission Workshop

**Tuesday, January 14**

**10 AM**

First Floor Meeting Room, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

### Full Moon Yoga

**Tuesday, January 14**

**6 - 7 PM**

On the beach by Samson Oceanfront Park, 17425 Collins Ave.

*Pre-registration is encouraged.*

### Teen Talk

**Tuesday, January 14**

**6 - 7:30 PM**

The Spot, 215 185 St.

### Special City Commission Meeting: Swearing-in Ceremony for Commission Seat 1

**Wednesday, January 15**

**6:30 PM**

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

### City Commission Workshop

**Thursday, January 16**

**3 PM**

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

### Regular City Commission Meeting

**Thursday, January 16**

**6:30 PM**

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

### Teens Only: *Winter Block Party*



**Friday, January 17**

**7 - 9 PM**

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

### Florida Arbor Day Tree Planting & Beach Cleanup

**Saturday, January 18**

**8 - 11 AM**

Tree planting at 9:30 AM  
Samson Oceanfront Park, 17425 Collins Ave.

### Federal Holiday: *Martin Luther King Jr. Day*

**Monday, January 20**

City facilities closed.

SIBshuttle will not run.

Parks are open for regular hours of operation.

### Senior Roundtable

**Wednesday, January 22**

**12 - 1 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.  
Pre-registration is required.

### Mini-FLOW: Florida Licensing on Wheels

**Thursday, January 23**

**10 AM - 1 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.  
Pre-registration is required.

### Dental Chat with Beach Smiles Dental Office

**Thursday, January 23**

**1:30 - 2:30 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.  
Pre-registration is required.

### How to do Business with the City Workshop

**Tuesday, January 31**

**10 AM**

First Floor Meeting Room, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.  
Register by emailing [purchasing@sibfl.net](mailto:purchasing@sibfl.net).

*Disclosure: Events are subject to change.*

# Miami-Dade County Sunny Isles Beach Branch

# JANUARY LIBRARY PROGRAMS

## Citizenship Class (ages 19+)

**Saturday, January 4, 11, 18, 25**  
**10 AM - 12 PM**

## Talking is Teaching – Talk, Read, Sing for Toddlers (ages 18 mos. – 3 yrs.)

**Wednesday, January 8, 15, 22, 29**  
**11 AM - 12 PM**

## The Kids Reading Club (Ages 6 – 12 yrs.)

**Saturday, January 11**  
**1-2 PM**

## Children’s Stories and Craft (ages 3 – 11 yrs.)

**Wednesday, January 15**  
**5:30 - 6:30 PM**

## Russian Social Club (ages 19+)

**Wednesday, January 15**  
**5:30 - 6:30 PM**

## Homework Help and Tutoring (students grades K-12)

**Saturday, January 18, 25**  
**10 AM - 1 PM**

For more information, contact  
tutoring@mdpls.org or call  
305.375.1413.

## Furry Tales (all ages)

**Saturday, January 25**  
**2 - 3 PM**

Read your favorite story aloud to a registered therapy dog!

For more information on Miami-Dade County Sunny Isles Beach Branch Library programs, call 305.682.0726 or email [vazquezh@mdpls.org](mailto:vazquezh@mdpls.org). Unless otherwise noted, classes and programs are held in the First Floor Meeting Room of the Sunny Isles Beach Government Center, 18070 Collins Avenue.



# Join Us for the Grand Opening of *The Spot*

The Spot is the ultimate place for teens in the City, ages 12-17, to hang out after school, connect with friends, and enjoy exciting programs and events. Whether they're diving into intense gaming tournaments, tackling homework in the study zone, or unwinding in the cozy lounge, there's something for the teens at The Spot.



To celebrate, the Cultural and Community Services Department is hosting a grand opening on Friday, January 10, from 5 - 7 p.m. Everyone – teens and teens at heart – are invited for a fun evening featuring a live DJ, light refreshments, and staff will be available to assist parents with signing their teens up for a Teen Membership Card. Parents must be active Resident ID cardholders. Memberships are required for access to the facility and all its amazing perks.

Visitors will also get a first look at the new murals adorning The Spot, created by a talented local artist and inspired by the creativity and energy from our community.

For more information about The Spot, please visit [sibfl.gov/The-Spot](http://sibfl.gov/The-Spot).

## Pick Up Your 2025 Desktop Calendar Today!

The 2025 desktop calendar is here, and you can get your free copy at any of our City facilities:

- **Government Center**
- **Pelican Community Park**
- **Gateway Center**

This year's calendar features stunning photos from our annual photo contest, showcasing the City's unique architecture, open spaces, and wildlife – all captured by talented photographers. Calendars are available during regular operating hours, so stop by and pick one up while supplies last.





# Islander

**PUBLISHED BY**  
**CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH**  
**MEDIA DIVISION**  
18070 Collins Avenue  
Sunny Isles Beach, FL 33160

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

**MAYOR** Larisa Svechin

**VICE MAYOR** Alex Lama

**COMMISSIONER** Jerry Joseph

**COMMISSIONER** Fabiola Stuyvesant

**COMMISSIONER** Jeniffer Viscarra

## ARTICLES & EDITORIAL

**EDITOR** Leah Einwalter

**MANAGING EDITOR** Francesca Constantini

## ART & PRODUCTION

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER** Elvira Gatina, M. J. Otero

## PHOTOGRAPHY

**VIDEO PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Vanessa Viera

**VIDEO PRODUCTION SPECIALIST**

Pablo Rodriguez

The views, opinions, representations, information, or statements made or expressed by any individual contributor in this newsletter are those of the individual contributor only and do not represent the views or beliefs of the City of Sunny Isles Beach or those of the broader community. The views, opinions, representations, information, or statements by individual contributors are provided on an "as-is" basis with no guarantees of completeness or accuracy, and the City of Sunny Isles Beach assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omission therein, or for the consequences of any action or inaction on the basis of any views, opinions, representations, information or statements made or expressed by individual contributors.

## STAY CONNECTED



**EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS**  
Sign up at [sibfl.gov/notifyme](https://sibfl.gov/notifyme)



**WEBSITE**  
[sibfl.gov](https://sibfl.gov)



**FACEBOOK, X,  
INSTAGRAM & YOUTUBE**  
[@CityofSIB](https://www.facebook.com/CityofSIB)



**EMERGENCY  
NOTIFICATIONS**  
Sign up at [sibfl.gov/sibalert](https://sibfl.gov/sibalert)



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**  
[sibfl.gov/events](https://sibfl.gov/events)



**SUNNY ISLES BEACH TV**  
Breezeline Channel 662  
Formerly Atlantic Broadband  
Hotwire Channel 1612