



SIB *islander*

CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

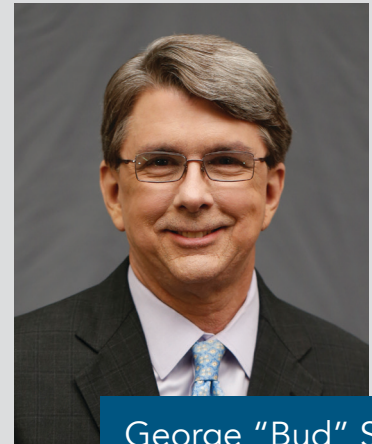
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DECEMBER 2020

A MESSAGE FROM THE Mayor

“ I first want to wish everyone a happy holiday season. We made it through a long year filled with hardship, loss, and stress. Though we are not out of the woods just yet, there is still reason to celebrate with family and enjoy the holidays.

”



George "Bud" Scholl
Mayor

The year may be winding down, but unfortunately, the pandemic is stronger than ever. Across the country, states are experiencing a hard-hit winter resurgence and the reality of the situation is that we could be in this until 2022. But we are all in this together. We will keep moving forward while ensuring the safety of our community during the holidays.

We should all carefully consider our holiday plans this year. Keeping your family safe is the most important consideration, and that might mean adjusting your holiday traditions. Evaluate your risks of travelling, hosting extended family and friends, or attending a large gathering. We are fortunate that our winter weather is still beautiful, which means we can continue to get outdoors. If you do plan on gathering with family or friends this holiday season, try to hold your celebrations outside in the fresh air with less risk of transmission. There are many ways we can connect with loved ones while still staying safe.

Our personal behavior is what will help thwart this virus, and that means adhering to our new normal. Making sure you have your mask and hand sanitizer before leaving the house. Being extra careful about washing your hands after touching public surfaces. Maintaining a safe distance when speaking with your neighbors. And limiting interactions with those outside of your own household.

We've seen the rising numbers and that is all the more reason to adhere to the recommended safety guidelines. If not for yourself, follow the protocols for your children, parents, grandparents, and siblings. We still have a long road ahead of us and we will have to continue to put in the work. Know that your city government is taking all of the necessary steps and adjustments to help protect our community. But we cannot do it alone. If everyone follows the health and safety guidelines while taking extra precautions this winter, we will keep Sunny Isles Beach safe. Thank you and Happy Holidays.

Message from the City Manager

Christopher J. Russo

As I discussed last month, the City is helping facilitate resident access to the State of Florida Condominium Ombudsman. Every other Monday, the Ombudsman is working out of the SIB Government Center and is available to meet with condominium unit owners, board members, and associations.

I want to introduce you to the State of Florida's Condominium Ombudsman. Spencer Hennings was appointed as the Condominium Ombudsman in July 2020 by the Governor. Originally from Florida, Spencer grew up in the South Florida area and his experience with transactional real estate law provides a strong foundation for his work. As a new Ombudsman, Spencer is eager for this unique opportunity to help individuals throughout the entire state of Florida with stimulating and rewarding work.

Spencer's role as Ombudsman consists of four main tasks: election monitoring, education, facilitating effective communication, and making recommendations for new condominium laws. He functions as an external liaison and neutral third party for the state of Florida with the primary purpose of resolving issues before they become official complaints with the State, arbitration or litigation.

One of the best resources the Office of the Condominium Ombudsman can offer is election monitoring. In condominiums, unit owners have no rights to run the

association or property beyond voting for the board. This makes elections of the utmost importance. If a condo creates a petition and obtains 15% of the unit owners' signatures, the Ombudsman will appoint an election monitor who is trained and independent. This individual will conduct the election to ensure there is no ballot tampering or misconduct.

Another way the Ombudsman can help is through education. By virtue of education about rights and responsibilities, unit owners and associations can cut an

arising issue at its roots. Condominium laws are changing nearly every year; between the special interest groups that lobby for unit owners, associations or attorneys, the laws are constantly evolving. The Ombudsman will not interpret the law for residents nor tell you what will likely happen in court, but he can tell you what the law says about your issues and let you know what the possible options are for your situation.

So why would someone in Sunny Isles Beach need to meet with a Condominium Ombudsman? We all know there can be three sides to every story and Spencer says that can be the most challenging part of condominium disputes. But by facilitating what he describes as a 'meeting of the minds' with all affected parties, they can move closer to resolving the issue with effective communication. He states that the cause of these disputes and issues is primarily a lack of transparency and communication. If a unit owner and a condo association are involved in a conflict, the Ombudsman can help navigate the issue in order to resolve it before it escalates. This could include disputes over records requests, disagreements about opening public spaces during the pandemic, or unwarranted application denials.

In a mutual agreement between the State and Sunny Isles Beach, Spencer will be working out of our Government Center twice a month to be more accessible to our residents and also our neighboring communities. The main office of the Condominium Ombudsman is located in Fort Lauderdale, with another office in Tallahassee. But now, anyone in Miami-Dade County is welcome to make an appointment and meet with Spencer in Sunny Isles Beach or call to utilize his expertise.

I want to again thank Spencer's colleagues from the DBPR, Director of the Division of Florida Condominiums, Boyd McAdams; Deputy Secretary of Business Regulation, Michael B. Johnston; and Secretary Halsey Beshears who all helped make this arrangement possible. You can make an appointment with the Condominium Ombudsman by calling my office at [305.792.1909](tel:305.792.1909). More information about the Condominium Ombudsman is available at sibfl.net/ombudsman.



Spencer Hennings,
Florida's Condominium Ombudsman

Valuing What We Have

Vice Mayor Larisa Svechin

Perspective is essential. Stepping back and taking stock of how much we have to be grateful for is important. I had that experience recently. In early November I had the honor of participating in Holocaust Education Week. It was a sobering event reminding me of how much so many families lost and how much my own family suffered.

I usually do not share personal stories, however I will share how stunned I was reading a children's book to students about Anne Frank. The line in the book that choked me up was, "Judenschwein" (Jewish Pig). Reading that line and then explaining to the children how awful that word is was like a punch to the chest. The look on my face clearly confused the eight-year-olds. As a Soviet Jewish immigrant, I've heard slurs, and I felt like I had just said a curse word. I explained to them

that children their age, including my late father, also hid from the Nazis, just like Anne Frank.



Seventy-five years later, I thought of all the children of the Shoah, who hid in deplorable conditions, who perished because of hate and prejudice. And then I thought about those who survived and built a legacy. We must value what we have, we must acknowledge how far humanity has come, and we must never forget.

This year, we will celebrate the holidays differently. Consider gifting kindness and empathy. Strive to raise up your neighbors and friends. I hope you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving. I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Chanukah filled with light and joy.

An Informed Community is a Strong Community

Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra

I remember the first time I voted. The only truly informed opinion I had was on the presidential race. There was no Google, cell phones or social media at the time. To be informed, you really had to do your homework. I did the best I could with the rest of the ballot and the local races, which are just as important as the general election. Today, with the internet at our fingertips, people can easily do an online search. Unfortunately, this very access also presents a great challenge. We still have to do our homework; it's just different now. The amount of information, and also misinformation, that is readily available can be a double-edged sword.

What can SIB residents do to be meaningfully informed on our issues? In addition to your current level of involvement, I encourage you to reach out to the City Commission. Bring your questions, meet the staff, get a better understanding

from the people in the trenches (even if it has to be through Zoom). Develop your own independent opinion on the issues that matter to you by using all available resources, including your very accessible local government.



An informed community is a strong community. When you have a good understanding of what your city government is doing, you are better equipped to navigate the flood of information and misinformation when it matters most.

Should you need help, my door is always open. You can reach me at jviscarra@sibfl.net or by phone at 305.792.1750.

Last but not least, I wish you all a very happy and healthy holiday season!

NIGHT OF ILLUMINATION

Celebrate the holidays in Sunny Isles Beach this December!

For one night only on Saturday, December 19, we're bringing a winter wonderland light display to Gateway Park. Residents can reserve their spot to walk through our spirited decorations from 6 – 9 pm.

See our 26-foot holiday tree along with other winter-inspired decorations safely in person with your family. You and your family will walk through during your reservation time and receive a special treat when leaving. Reservations are required and available only to residents with a valid city-issued SIB Resident ID Card.

Masks are required in the park. Sanitation protocols will continue to be practiced for your safety and the safety of our staff.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Last month we honored the Military Veterans who live in Sunny Isles Beach with a Virtual Veterans Day Celebration. The following names were added to our Veterans Wall at Heritage Park:

Henry Bank
Jesus Alberto Garrudo
Robert Aldon Semple
Barry Tannenbaum
Richard J. Tipa

MISSED THE VIRTUAL EVENT?
CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE RECORDING

Remember, new veteran nominations for the Memorial Wall at Heritage Park are accepted all year long. The deadline to be placed on the wall for each Veterans Day is September 1 of that current year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION, VISIT SIBFL.NET/VETERANS.

December Meetings

Virtual Special Magistrate Hearing

Thursday, December 3, 10 AM

Virtual Regular City Commission Meeting

Thursday, December 17, 6:30 PM

For complete details, visit sibfl.net/events.

City Holiday Hours & Closures

City Holiday: Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24

SIB Government Center Closes at 1 PM

City parks open 8 AM – 6 PM

SIBshuttle will discontinue service at 12 PM.

Federal Holiday: Christmas Day

Friday, December 25

SIB Government Center Closed

City parks open 11 AM – 6 PM

SIBshuttle will not run.

City Holiday: New Year's Eve

Thursday, December 31

SIB Government Center Closes at 1 PM

City parks open 8 AM – 6 PM

SIBshuttle will discontinue service at 12 PM.

Federal Holiday: New Year's Day

Friday, January 1

SIB Government Center Closed

City parks open 11 AM – 6 PM

SIBshuttle will not run.

2021 CALENDAR

NOW AVAILABLE



The 2021 City of Sunny Isles Beach desktop calendar is now available! Pick up your free copy at the SIB Government Center during regular business hours. We chose our favorite images from our annual photo contest that best showcase our photo-worthy city.

2021 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Beatrix Csinger	Harry W. Frahm
Irina Iksanova	Mykola Khodorovsky
Alejandro Meneses	Franklin Da Costa
Herlan De La Jaille	Nathalia Oliveira
Jimmy Baikovicus	Ekaterina Khramova
Matias Porporato	Yevgeniy Melnik
Gladis Henriquez	Sandra Encaoua

SIBFL.NET/PHOTOCONTEST

Next time you take a great photo of Sunny Isles Beach, be sure to enter it in our annual photo contest for your chance to be featured in the 2022 desktop calendar.

STAYING SAFE

during
the *Holidays*



COVID-19 is causing all of us to weigh our holiday plans this year. When planning your celebrations, it is important that you assess your circumstances to determine whether to postpone, cancel or limit the number of people at your gatherings.

Staying home is the best way to stay safe and protect your family. As always, celebrating with members of your own household or virtually holds the lowest risk for the spread of COVID-19. If you are gathering in person with family and friends not in your household, take advantage of our perfect year-round weather and hold your festivities outside. Limit your gathering to a small amount of people, the fewer the better; gatherings that are also shorter pose less risk than longer gatherings.

If you must travel away from home, consider going during an off-peak time when there are less people traveling. And drive if that is an available option for you. Driving offers a more controlled environment if traveling with family in your household. Plan your trip wisely mapping rest stations, gas stations, hotels and restaurants in order to minimize contact.

**WE ALL MUST DO OUR PART TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITY SAFE THIS WINTER.
FOR MORE COVID-19 RESOURCES, VISIT SIBFL.NET/CORONAVIRUS.**

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from Sunny Isles Beach

Let's continue to stay safe this winter.



Wear a Mask



Social Distance



Wash Your Hands



Avoid Crowds