

# SIB islander

CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

February 2020

*Illusions & Beyond  
at Gateway LIVE!*



Saturday, February 15 • 7:30 pm

Gateway Park • 151 Sunny Isles Boulevard

Enjoy a magical evening of grand illusions, comedy cirque acrobatics and stunning choreography all fused into one mind-blowing production. Justino and Daniela have entertained families across 45 countries with their mind-bending magic combined with futuristic technology, optical illusions and beautiful sleight of hand. Get ready to expect the unexpected!

Tickets are \$10 or free with a valid city-issued SIB Resident ID Card. Purchase tickets online at [sibevents.ticketleap.com](http://sibevents.ticketleap.com) or in person at Pelican Community Park and the SIB Government Center. Tickets must be picked up in person to receive the resident discount.

Free parking is available at the Gateway Park garage. For more information, visit [sibfl.net/gatewaylive](http://sibfl.net/gatewaylive).



*from our* Mayor



George 'Bud' Scholl  
Mayor

## STATE OF THE CITY

Citizens of Sunny Isles Beach, I am pleased to present the 2020 State of the City address.

This year I am delivering my sixth State of the City address. However, 2019 has been one of the busiest years the city has experienced in quite some time.

I am going to start on a solemn note, wishing farewell to former Commissioner Roslyn Brezin who passed away in February 2019. Roz lived in our city for close to 50 years, served on the City Commission for seven years and remained an active voice in our community right up until the time of her passing. We will miss Roz and her seemingly boundless energy. Our two newest commissioners, Jeniffer Viscarra and Alex Lama, completed their first full year of service. Given the myriad of issues we faced as a community and commission in 2019, they learned quickly what it takes to make objective decisions in difficult situations. Last year also brought a newly outsourced legal department which provided additional expertise and positive economic benefits to this important area of our staffing.

Once again, I want to highlight the excellent financial condition we have maintained. Our city's assessed taxable value increased by approximately 4% from \$11.1 billion to \$11.5 billion with \$919.5 million coming from new construction being added to the tax rolls. Our millage rate remains the fourth lowest municipality in Miami-Dade County at 2.2 mils per \$1,000 of assessed value.

In 2019 we made progress on our multi-year Utility Undergrounding and Streetlight Enhancement Project. As one of our biggest undertakings, this is the most visible project to our residents and often the most frustrating. Decorative streetlight installation continues and provides a noticeable improvement from 178 Street north to the William Lehman Causeway. While FPL is currently running underground wiring on the south end of the city, the overall completion of this project is mostly dependent upon FPL and the Florida Department of Transportation. As I pointed out last year, this is a long process that will continue to require lane closures and other frustrations, but the benefits to the city will be numerous once this work is completed.

At the end of August, we spent days watching, waiting and preparing for Hurricane Dorian as the predicted path looked certain to come within our proximity. We were fortunately spared the wrath of Dorian, however many of our residents participated in a city-sponsored donation drive for

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# State of the City from our Mayor

*continued from cover*

victims in the Bahamas. This year's preparedness received positive feedback with the addition of a sandbag distribution program, a re-entry card program in the event of an evacuation, and our first emergency utilization of the SIBAlert system to communicate directly with residents and business owners with storm updates. In late December, we were not so lucky when an epic rainstorm drenched our area. Golden Shores experienced severe flooding, prompting us to accelerate the pump station design and bidding process that had already commenced. Debris and build up inside the outflow pipe to the bay hindered the functionality of an existing high-powered pump, which significantly slowed our ability to remove the water quickly. Temporary pumps are in place to enable us to mitigate these types of events in the future. The Golden Shores Undergrounding Project is currently in the design phase including surveying of all properties. System design work will continue throughout 2020 with the cooperation of neighborhood utilities: FPL, AT&T, Atlantic Broadband and TECO natural gas.

Pedestrian safety remains a top priority and a lot of progress was made in 2019 to further several strategic safety initiatives. Bus shelter replacements resulted in wider sidewalks in some areas, while we continue to widen sidewalks and illuminate crosswalks wherever possible. Our two pedestrian bridge initiatives saw significant progress this past year. Design of the 180 Street Government Center pedestrian bridge continues. This has been a long process of multiple reviews by the Florida Department of Transportation and we are now nearing design completion. In 2019, land was secured for the 174 Street/Collins Avenue pedestrian bridge, a study was completed, and the request for design,



engineering and building services is out to bidders with a plan for award in spring 2020.

Resiliency efforts continue to drive important considerations for coastal communities. We have two studies underway that will assist in planning for the future environmental needs of our city. The first is a citywide Flood Adaptation Assessment, awarded to us through a competitive application process with the American Flood Coalition. The second is a stormwater retention study that analyzes the Florida Department of Transportation stormwater retention areas for additional storm water capacity. We are coordinating with county, state and federal governments to ensure the long-term health of our beach. Sixty thousand cubic yards of sand was added to our beach from three private developments in 2018/19, with another 24,000 cubic yards expected in January-March of 2020. This year we will also begin coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers for a federally funded renourishment of the entire span of our beach, which will include the rehabilitation of the submerged breakwater structures that were installed at the north end of the city by the Army Corps in the early 2000s. Maintaining and improving our citywide drainage system is an ongoing effort and a top priority. The first phase of the Central Island Drainage project is nearing completion, with most of the work performed in 2019. We will be adding two new wells on 172 Street and installing specialty valves on several pipes to mitigate water from coming into our city from the Intracoastal Waterway.

Our short-term rental program was officially implemented in 2019. By February 2019 we had received approximately 600 registrations for short-term rentals. During the year we encountered unit owners circumventing both our registration requirements and their actual condominium regulations in those buildings that do not allow short-term rentals. These experiences resulted in a modification of our ordinance to require inspections of proposed units to be used as short-term rentals. Additionally, we requested all internet platforms that advertise short-term rentals to post the city license number online.

At the beginning of 2019 it was discovered that a portion of our land use regulations had been misinterpreted for several years, resulting in six existing buildings being deemed non-conforming. This led to a series of some of the most contentious public commission meetings and social media campaigns in the history of the city. We ultimately imposed a building moratorium in the Town Center District, created a new southern Town Center district and passed a comprehensive plan amendment that was reviewed favorably by the state to bring the six buildings into conformity. Moving forward, we are going through a public process to decide how best to treat the land uses in the remaining northern portion of the Town Center District. Everyone involved in these issues received an education in the finer aspects of land use regulations and zoning.

It would be apt to coin 2019 the year of citizen engagement. We saw our highest levels of



## State of the City *continued*

resident social media usage via Twitter, up 10%, Instagram, up 41%, and Facebook, up 22%. Our commission and workshop meeting attendance also experienced upticks. And our SIBAlert subscribers doubled in 2019 to over 2,000.

Our Cultural Master Plan guides most of our cultural event programming and provides support to our volunteer Public Arts Advisory Committee (PAAC). The PAAC reviews the art component of zoning applications as well as other city projects by utilizing experts in art curation. Then they present their recommendation to the Commission. The conceptual design of the Meditation Garden at Town Center Park has been approved and is moving forward. The PAAC also reviewed the conceptual designs of the two pedestrian bridges under development. Given the success of the PAAC's process, as we closed 2019, the Commission agreed to fund seed money for additional PAAC projects. They now have the opportunity to apply for grants and other funding sources to continue to improve our quality of life.

Our city has become known for a high level of entertainment throughout the year. 2019 brought us some of the highest quality programs in our region through the Gateway LIVE! series. Chinese Acrobats, Dueling Pianos, and a Broadway style concert, What a Night, were among these popular events. We renamed the Jazz Fest to "Music in the Isles," which featured Jon Secada at Gateway Park. The annual City Anniversary Celebration was also hosted at Gateway Park for the first time this past year. This was all in addition to continuing our tradition of regular free concerts from rock and roll and doo wop, to full orchestras at various parks as well as free movie programs for all ages.

The Oil Painting club took off as a free program for residents and brought people with similar interests together. Our teens only events expanded to feature interesting and interactive activities such as an Escape Room and Sushi Making. This year we saw a surge in healthy senior living with increased interest in the bocce club and pickle ball programs as well as Tai Chi.

Full Moon Yoga continues to attract the largest crowd each month on the beach for yogis of all skill and age. We also began building out the long-awaited center at Gateway Park, which is expected to be completed later this year.

Soccer remains the most sought-after sport in town. Enrollment is consistently at max capacity and our one soccer field is always in high demand. The city offers three soccer programs to fit all skill levels: recreational soccer, select academy and travel soccer for the more advanced players. Last year our youth soccer team participated and won their division of the ESPN Memorial Day Soccer Tournament at Disney.

Our Sister City initiatives were quite active in 2019. In March of this past year I led our first sister city visit to Hengchun, Taiwan with Vice Mayor Larisa Svechin and Commissioner Jennifer Viscarra along with residents, Keith and Fang Oliver. Then in early December we had the honor of hosting Hengchun Mayor Lu and their delegation. This year we plan to welcome our third international intern by extending an invitation to Taiwan.

Media and technology played a big part in our safety and communications strategy. In addition to the double digit increases in social media utilization mentioned earlier, we also launched the city's official YouTube page with 78 public videos posted to date. We were featured on the cover of Public Management magazine highlighting our various digital initiatives including our free Wi-Fi on the beach, which utilizes solar panels on the lifeguard stands. We initiated an expansion to add more License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras to the city-owned roads starting with 189 Street south to 185 Street. We completed phase 2 of the security camera project throughout the city's parks and public spaces, ensuring complete surveillance coverage for our police department.

And speaking of our police department, 2019 brought the first full year of stepped up visibility and enforcement along Collins Avenue. From this, we have seen noticeably less speeding and a safer environment for pedestrians and motorists. Our PD partnered with

other agencies to host a major Put it Down campaign on Collins Avenue following the passing of House Bill 107 regarding distracted driving. Officers will continue to be highly visible both along our major thoroughfares and neighborhood streets. Mother's Day 2019 brought us a tragic event involving a shooting and the accidental death of a long-time employee of a Sunny Isles Beach car rental shop. Our police department was on the scene immediately and their rapid response was credited with preventing additional casualties and injuries.

Our city is always growing, and in 2019 we saw the substantial completion of Parque Towers and Armani Casa. Under construction during this past year has been Marina del Mar, Aurora Tower, Milton Tower and the Chabad of Lubavitch. The Milton Tower office building will be substantially completed in early 2020 and has attracted some high-profile clients from the northeast that brought us positive press in 2019. The Monaco was demolished in 2019 making way for construction of a new low-rise boutique hotel by Dezer Development.

Once again, I have the pleasure of reporting to our citizens a myriad of initiatives, events and improvements that might seem to simply appear in our city throughout the year. However, none of these would be possible without the dedication of our city staff. These full and part-time dedicated professionals do a fantastic job at carrying out the vision that the City Commission and you, our residents, provide to them. There is also a legion of volunteers that assist at many of our city events making them possible. I would like to personally thank everyone who keeps the momentum moving forward in all that gets accomplished. In the end, a real community is made up of civic minded residents who participate and enjoy the lifestyle their community gives back. 2019 demonstrated that our citizens are passionate about their community and willing to spend time and energy expressing their views. On behalf of myself, Vice Mayor Svechin and Commissioners Goldman, Lama and Viscarra, thank you for another great year and may God bless you.

## Strengthening our Community by Empowering Residents

from the desk of Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra



*"Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand."*—Confucius  
Throughout 2019, the Mayor and Commissioners, each in our own way, wrote about the importance of public participation. Whether it's for "building a unified community" as Vice Mayor Svechin said, or to "make our democratic process stronger" as Commissioner Lama reminded us, there is no question that our residents' civic engagement is incredibly important.

However, many residents don't know where to begin and/or are shy about reaching out, no matter how often they come across contact information. The question then becomes: how can the city transition from informing residents to involving residents?

At our January Commission Meeting we discussed the possibility of starting a Sunny Isles Beach Residents' "Academy." Similar to other Florida municipalities, our program, should it be approved, will provide adult residents a detailed look into SIB government over the course of a "semester."

If the program is approved, funding will be allocated for next fiscal year. Following the development of a curriculum, we would hope to start signing up students in the fall of 2020. The SIB-focused sessions are not only intended to familiarize you with your city's government and services but also to connect you with other civically engaged individuals. The ultimate goal is to strengthen our community by empowering you. Do you want to be in our inaugural class? I will help you get involved. Start here: my email is [jviscarra@sibfl.net](mailto:jviscarra@sibfl.net) and my phone number is 305.792.1750.

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## Credit Card Fraud: Easier Than You Think

from the desk of Chief Dwight P. Snyder



In today's world of online banking, it's rare to see people using currency for most purchases. Today we use the convenience of a debit or credit card to make even the most routine transactions such as for fast food, coffee, gasoline and grocery purchases. It's not uncommon for parents to authorize these cards for their teenagers and college bound students for living expenses. These spending trends have become normal in America, but have you ever thought how easy it would be to compromise these accounts by technologically savvy criminals?

Unfortunately, every time you lose sight of your credit card you risk having your account number scanned, cloned or otherwise compromised without your knowledge. Somewhere this very moment, an unsuspecting person is being notified about suspicious charges on their account, or worse, that their accounts have been completely drained.

The idea of not using our debit/credit cards does not sound like a practical solution, so the next best option is to learn how to protect your credit information. These are a few tips to keep your financial accounts protected.

- Ensure your bank sets spending limits and immediately reports suspicious activity.
- Never provide your card number online unless you know the site is reputable and secure.
- If possible, use your credit cards for large purchases, as they can be disputed if a fraud has occurred.

Check your credit report regularly to ensure no unauthorized accounts are open, or check [annualcreditreport.com](http://annualcreditreport.com) for more information.

Follow @SIBPD on social media, for safety tips throughout the year. Until next time, stay safe!

## Re-Envisioning the Town Center North

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Tuesday, March 10  
6:00–8:00 pm**

**SIB Government Center,  
1st Floor Meeting Room**

We want to hear your vision for the future of the Town Center North district. Participate in an interactive listening session involving short informal presentations and discussions about how you envision the new Town Center North. Stop by between 6:00 and 8:00 pm to let your voice be heard.

In December 2019, the City Commission created the Town Center North district through a Comprehensive Plan amendment. The Town Center North boundary consists of the westbound lanes of Sunny Isles Boulevard north to 172 Street, spanning east to Collins Avenue and west to the Intracoastal Waterway. We are now creating development guidelines for this newly formed area and this is your opportunity to share your input.

For more information about the Town Center North Public Engagement Project and the Interactive Listening Session, visit [sibfl.net/TownCenterNorth](http://sibfl.net/TownCenterNorth), email [infopz@sibfl.net](mailto:infopz@sibfl.net), or call 305.792.1740.



## February 2

Sunday, 8:00-10:00 am  
Beach Cleanup  
Pier Park

## February 2

Sunday, 3:00-6:00 pm  
Art in the Park  
Heritage Park

## February 6

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

## February 6

Thursday, 12:00 pm  
Cultural Event: Schokolad Chocolate Factory  
Fort Lauderdale, FL

## February 7

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

## February 7

Friday, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Family Movie Night: *Aladdin*  
Heritage Park

## February 8

Saturday, 5:45 pm  
Full Moon Yoga  
Samson Oceanfront Park

## February 8

Saturday, 7:00-9:00 pm  
Family Movie Night: *Aladdin*  
Town Center Park

## February 10

Monday, 10:00 am-12:30 pm  
Modern Era Movie: *Groundhog Day*  
Pelican Community Park

## February 12

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

## February 13

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

## February 13

Thursday, 6:45 pm  
Cultural Event: *Mamma Mia*  
Actors' Playhouse

## February 15

Saturday, 7:30 pm  
Illusions & Beyond at Gateway LIVE!  
Gateway Park

## February 17

Monday, Presidents' Day  
Federal Holiday: Government Offices Closed  
SIBshuttle runs holiday schedule, Orange Line #2 only

## February 19

Wednesday, 7:30-9:00 pm  
Sunny Serenade: Higher Ground  
Samson Oceanfront Park

## February 20

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

## February 21

Friday, 7:00-10:00 pm  
Teens Only: Pizza Making  
Pelican Community Park

## February 25

Tuesday, 6:00 pm  
Public Arts Advisory Committee Meeting  
SIB Govt. Center 4th Floor Conference Room

## February 26

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

## 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 Computer Classes for Seniors age 55+

Tuesday: February 18  
10:00-11:00 am inside the library

Citizenship Classes

Saturdays: February 1-29  
10:00-11:30 am

Poetry Reading

Saturday: February 8  
4:00-5:00 pm

Russian Social Club

Saturday: February 15  
3:30-5:30 pm

## Programs for Children

Bedtime Stories

Wednesdays: February 5-26  
6:00-6:30 pm inside the library  
Ages 3 to 5 yrs.

Homework Tutoring

Saturdays: February 1-29  
11:00 am inside the library  
Registration required.

Talking is Teaching:

Talk, Read, Sing for Toddlers  
Mondays: February 3, 10 & 24  
10:00-10:40 am  
Ages 19 mo. to 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  
February 2020



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

# SIB *islander*

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



## Family Movie Nights

Bring your kids and your own chair or blanket out to the park to enjoy a screening of *Aladdin*.

Friday, February 7 • 7:00 pm • Heritage Park  
Saturday, February 8 • 7:00 pm • Town Center Park



Don't miss *Aladdin* themed activities starting at 7:00 pm with the movie starting at 7:30 pm. Admission is free and free parking is available at each park or you can ride the free SIBshuttle.

## Teens Only Pizza Making

Satisfy your creative side with a fun cooking activity at this Teens Only event.

Friday, February 21 • 7:00–10:00 pm  
Pelican Community Park



Collaborate with friends building a delicious pizza and baking it in the brick oven. Preregistration is required and available online, in person at Pelican Community Park, or at the Government Center. Session size is limited. For details, visit [sibfl.net/teens](http://sibfl.net/teens).