



# SIB *islander*

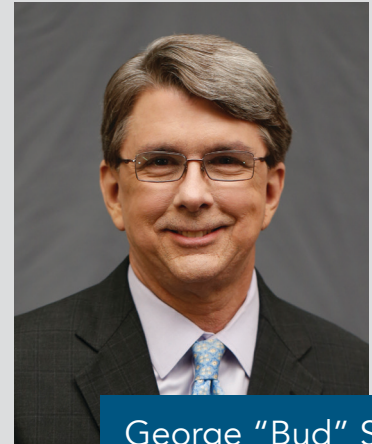
CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

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JULY 2021

## A MESSAGE FROM THE Mayor

“ It is with a heavy heart that I offer our deepest sympathies toward the victims and their families of the Surfside condominium collapse. ”



George "Bud" Scholl  
Mayor

This was a tragedy we never saw coming and one you pray to never see in your lifetime. Events like this cause us to take stock of what is important in our lives and, as a municipality, make us pause and review our procedures to see how we can ensure a devastation like this never occurs in our city.

In response to the collapse, our Building Department, under the leadership of Building Official Clay Parker, initiated a proactive inspection process for commercial and multi-family buildings built prior to 1982. For those who don't know, Miami-Dade County Code requires condominium buildings to be recertified when they become 40 years old, and then every 10 years after. Sunny Isles Beach has 59 properties that were built before 1982, and of these properties, 39 have already received their required recertification for continued occupancy. Twenty properties are currently in different stages of compliance toward their recertification.

As of June 28, 2021, our Building Department began conducting visual inspections to assess the condition of all 59 buildings built prior to 1982 and look for

unusual structural and/or electrical deficiencies in the structures. The department is also reviewing past inspection paperwork for each property.

The goal of our proactive measures is to gain a better understanding of the current condition of the buildings that are 40 years or older, and how we can mitigate any potential concerns. Once the inspection is complete, the Building Department will issue notices to the property owner of any defects and require proper action, including further evaluation by a Florida licensed professional engineer.

With approximately 97% of our residents living in one of more than 100 condominiums in Sunny Isles Beach, our top priority is ensuring your safety. I also want to point out that the majority of condominium buildings in our city are under the age of concern for re-inspection. We are proceeding swiftly and with the utmost caution to assure our residents of their safety and the safety of their homes. My thoughts and prayers are with the residents of Champlain Towers and their families as they navigate the aftermath of this devastating tragedy.

Contact Mayor George "Bud" Scholl at [mayor@sibfl.net](mailto:mayor@sibfl.net) or [305.792.1751](tel:305.792.1751).

# Message from the City Manager

Christopher J. Russo

For those who may not know, our Police Chief, Dwight Snyder, is retiring next month. Though we will miss him, Chief Snyder has had an extraordinary 46-year career, half of which was spent building and leading our police department.

A known quantity in the policing community, Dwight was among the first group of officers to join the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department. He was just finishing up 23 years of service with the Hialeah Police Department when he was invited to join and help build the new Sunny Isles Beach Police Department as it was establishing in 1998. He first started out as a patrolman, and 23 years and five promotions later, he is retiring as the City's third Chief of Police.

When Dwight first began working for the police department, Sunny Isles Beach was a completely different city. The east side of Collins Avenue was known for the



run-down motels along the beach, and street crimes and drugs were among the top concerns for the police department. Now, the City is cleaned up, crime rates have remained low, and PD is able to develop meaningful and productive relationships with the community.

Dwight's tenure as Chief began in 2018 after former Chief

Fred Maas retired. During the transition of chiefs in July 2018, Dwight's first defining moment was when a family was hit by a car on a Collins Avenue sidewalk. The next year we had the drive by shooting on Collins Avenue, and earlier this year was the tragedy on Sunny Isles Boulevard. Not to mention, he has spent the past 15 months navigating police work and keeping the community safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief Snyder was thrown into some of the most unprecedented and challenging incidents in just a short time span, and I want to commend his leadership when presiding over these devastating and delicate issues. He has also been a leader to his department of more than 50 officers

who have faced their own hardships and tragedies throughout the last three years.

Though his time as Chief was sometimes tumultuous and challenging, Chief Snyder has accomplished great

things in Sunny Isles Beach and has helped guide our police department into a new era of policing. Under his leadership, we continued our philosophy of community policing as the cornerstone of the department, expanded our zero-tolerance traffic enforcement, and made great strides in improving traffic and pedestrian safety. Additionally, Chief Snyder helped to enhance safety at the school, and during the school year, you could often see him directing traffic in the mornings at the school.

In 2011, Dwight received the great honor of attending the FBI National Academy due to his extraordinary leadership and police career. During this 10-week program, he diversified and enhanced his skill set bringing back unparalleled knowledge to our police department. Additionally, Dwight served as the Vice President of the Police Officers Assistance Trust for many years where he helped to raise money and aid officers and their families in times of hardship and personal crisis. During his retirement, he plans to continue serving his community through volunteer work.

Over the next few months, we will be working with a professional recruiter in the search for a new police chief. As we undergo this leadership change, I want to acknowledge and commend Captain Michael Grandinetti and Captain Edward Santiago, who have been instrumental in ensuring a smooth and uninterrupted transition. Both captains have been with the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department for 23 years, joining the SIBPD on day one alongside Chief Snyder. Mike has been a captain for 16 years and Eddie was recently promoted in February 2020.

A history and aviation buff, Dwight was an outstanding police chief, compassionate friend, and respected role model. He has helped enhance our police department's policies and community presence, and we wish him all the best in his retirement. Chief Snyder's last day with the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department is August 30.



Contact City Manager Chris Russo at [crusso@sibfl.net](mailto:crusso@sibfl.net) or [305.792.1701](tel:305.792.1701).

# Repudiating and Confronting Hate

Commissioner Alex Lama

*Race hate isn't human nature; race hate is the abandonment of human nature. – Orson Welles*

In the past couple of months we have witnessed a worrisome increase in hate crimes against Jewish communities in this country. Our area is home to a large and vibrant Jewish community and, unfortunately, Jewish residents of neighboring cities have been subjected to attacks and intimidation by ignorant and hateful individuals.

It is sad to see how humans can be so hateful and harmful to each other. The issue of antisemitism and hatred is ever present and of utmost concern to the City's elected officials, staff and police department. As a city we continue to take proactive and necessary measures to ensure the well-being and safety of our residents.

To further confront the issue of hate and antisemitism, the City Commission passed a resolution in January 2021 that condemns hate and extremism, and affirms the City's commitment to end the spread of hate and bigotry in all its forms. In February 2020 a resolution was passed that authorizes the City to join the Florida Hate Crime Coalition, which was established by the Anti-Defamation League to advocate for an expanded and comprehensive hate crime law in Florida. And at the end of

2020, the City Commission passed a resolution that amended Chapter 195 to existing Ordinance 2018-516 titled "Consideration of Anti-Semitism in Enforcing Laws."

The amendment included additional definitions of antisemitism that give our police department more robust and expanded language for enforcing criminal offenses based on antisemitism.

Our police department has also been very vigilant and diligent at keeping our residents safe. It has placed extra watches on all synagogues in Sunny Isles Beach, implemented intelligence sharing and periodic meetings with surrounding coastal cities, added additional officers on all shifts, established an open line of communication with our city rabbis, and provided off-duty officers to synagogues during large events and gatherings.

It is critical we stay alert and do not remain silent in the face of hatred. If you see something, say something. Please call our police department at [305.947.4440](tel:305.947.4440).



Contact Commissioner Alex Lama at [seat2@sibfl.net](mailto:seat2@sibfl.net) or [305.792.1752](tel:305.792.1752).

# From Tough School Year to Summer Fun

Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra

I hope you are all enjoying your summer. As a parent of a student who stayed online for the entire year, I can tell you it could not come soon enough. Others started online and finished in physical school, some with periods of quarantine. It's been a tough year. I commend our students and their families for their accomplishments despite the difficulties.

And let's not forget the teachers, PTSA, and everyone who made an education possible under these circumstances! To those who graduated, you should be especially proud of yourselves. You have accomplished something extraordinary. Congratulations!

We are now ready to put an entire pandemic school year in the rearview mirror and look forward to some fun. In fact, teen activities are making a comeback. Our adolescent participants had a great time at the painting night at Pelican Community Park on July 1, and next month is an escape room (my personal favorite) at Gateway Center in August. Registration is required, so plan ahead by visiting [activities.sibfl.net](http://activities.sibfl.net).

Wishing you all a wonderful summer!



Contact Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra at [seat4@sibfl.net](mailto:seat4@sibfl.net) or at [305.792.1750](tel:305.792.1750).



# July Meetings & Activities

## Federal Holiday: Independence Day

**Sunday, July 4**

SIBshuttle will not run Sunday, July 4.

SIB Government Offices Closed Monday, July 5.

## Blood Drive

**Thursday, July 15 | 10:30 AM - 4:30 PM**

SIB Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

*Presented by OneBlood. Appointments are required.*

## Regular City Commission Meeting

**Thursday, July 15 | 6:30 PM**

SIB Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

## 24th Anniversary Celebration at Gateway Center

**Saturday, July 24 | 4 - 10 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

*Read more details on the next page!*

## Mini-FLOW

**Friday, July 30 | 9:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

*Appointments are required.*

*For complete meeting and activity details, visit [sibfl.net/events](http://sibfl.net/events).*



# BEACH CLEANUP

**Wednesday, July 14 | 5 - 6:30 PM**  
Pier Park | 16501 Collins Avenue

Visit [activities.sibfl.net](http://activities.sibfl.net) to register in advance. Community service hours can be provided for students who participate.

*All participants will receive a coupon good for 50% off their meal at Beach Bar @ Newport Pier. Valid only on July 14.*



**BEACH Beautiful CONTEST 2021**

# SPOTLIGHT ON... TRANSPORTATION



**A HUGE  
Thank you**



**SIBshuttle**

to our stellar SIBshuttle drivers who work every day to transport our residents around Sunny Isles Beach and the neighboring area! This last year has not been easy, but their dedication to service and safety is unparalleled.

# INSIDE THE Isles

## GATEWAY CENTER

Gateway Center, our new elite facility located at Gateway Park, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd, will be open to the public beginning Monday, July 26. At the Center, residents may sample a selection of diverse programs, seniors have a dedicated space to gather, and you will soon be able to host your next high-end event.

Featuring a ballroom, catering kitchen, fitness room, classrooms and social gathering spaces, Gateway Center is unlike any other facility in Sunny Isles Beach. Built with a world class vision, state-of-the-art technology, and accessible amenities, the Center cultivates a welcoming and safe atmosphere for residents.

**Learn more about all Gateway Center has to offer at [sibfl.net/gatewaycenter](http://sibfl.net/gatewaycenter).**

SUNNY ISLES BEACH

# 24<sup>TH</sup>

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

AT

## GATEWAY

CENTER

**SATURDAY, JULY 24 | 4 - 10 PM**

Gateway Center | 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

**Gateway Center Reveal | Live Music | Food & Dessert Trucks**

Reservation required.

Celebrate Sunny Isles Beach's 24th Anniversary in style this summer. Be the first to tour Gateway Center, the City's new state-of-the-art recreation facility. Afterward, enjoy live music, activities, and food trucks on the Gateway Park lawn.

## EXPERIENCE GATEWAY CENTER

Gateway Center is complete and we want everyone to know! Sign up for an exclusive first-look tour to see what all the buzz is about. A facility like no other in Sunny Isles Beach, Gateway Center is the next generation of recreation and rental spaces.

Tours will run from 4 - 9 pm and guests will receive free gifts and samples following the tour.



For more information and to register for the event, visit [sibfi.net/anniversary](https://sibfi.net/anniversary).

July  
2021  
month . n r p a ' s p a r k a n d r e c r e a t i o n

# OUR PARK AND RECREATION STORY!

July is Park and Recreation Month and we have 11 reasons to celebrate. That's right, if you didn't know, we have 11 parks throughout Sunny Isles Beach that offer safe, fun and healthy amenities for all ages. If you live in Sunny Isles Beach, chances are you live within walking distance to one of our parks.

Parks are a safe place for the community to gather outdoors and experience the beauty of our

natural habitat. Now that our parks are back to regular hours, there are so many options for you to choose from. Samson Oceanfront Park borders the beach and offers children a playground to explore on. The exercise trail at Town Center Park is a great way to get active. And Heritage Park's splash pad provides some much-needed reprieve from those sweltering South Florida summer days. But don't miss out on all our other parks too!

Check out more details about our parks at [sibfl.net/parks](http://sibfl.net/parks).

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



The theme for this year's Park and Recreation Month is "Our Park and Recreation Story." We want to highlight some of the stories of our dedicated parks and recreation staff who work year-round to provide world class service for all residents.



**ARTURO GONZALEZ**  
*Parks Manager*

"Our entire Parks Division takes great pleasure and responsibility each day ensuring that our parks are safe, secure and well-maintained for families to use."



**SYLVIA FLORES**  
*Cultural & Community Services Director*

"Our success is in what we can provide for our families, for our seniors, and most importantly for our kids because they are our future."



**NICK RAKESTRAW**  
*Recreation Manager*

"The thing that makes working for the City so special has got to be the people, from my colleagues to the residents I engage with on a regular basis."