



SIB *islander*

CITY OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

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SEPTEMBER 2021

Farewell Mayor Scholl

Typically, the first page of the *Islander* is written by the Mayor. However, as many of you already know, Mayor George “Bud” Scholl has resigned effective September 1, 2021. If you have not read his farewell message, we invite you to read it at sibfl.net. We wanted to use this space to say thank you to Mayor Scholl for his over 13 years of leadership on the Sunny Isles Beach City Commission, first as a commissioner from 2007 – 2014 and then as mayor since 2014. He was a visionary even prior to his time on the Commission, serving on various volunteer boards and committees including the Charter Revision Commission, the Historic Preservation Board, the Planning and Intergovernmental Affairs Board, and the search committees for the City Manager and City Attorney.

George “Bud” Scholl was the City of Sunny Isles Beach’s third mayor, following Norman S. Edelcup and David P. Samson. Samson took office at incorporation in 1997 and served as mayor until his death on October 12, 2003. Edelcup was the sitting Vice Mayor at the time of Samson’s passing, thus becoming mayor in 2003. He was re-elected twice, serving as mayor until 2014, when Scholl was elected.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank and commend Bud Scholl for the dedication, devotion and personal commitment he has given to public office these past thirteen years,” says former Mayor Norman Edelcup. “As Commissioner, while I was then Mayor, and later succeeding me as the City’s next mayor, Bud has always made leadership decisions to make Sunny Isles Beach a ‘world class’ community for all its residents, visitors and businesses.”

Under his leadership, Sunny Isles Beach progressed substantially in terms of infrastructure, efficiency and finance. With his vision and direction, the City catapulted forward as an effective government, raising

the quality of life for residents without raising the millage rate. In his early days as mayor, Bud could be heard praising the past mayors’ achievements in building the city. He also knew it was his responsibility to ensure that SIB could sustain the new growth with infrastructure improvements, park land, and high-quality services, all while remaining fiscally responsible. Bud was a fair, forward-thinking, smart leader, keeping true to his role as a policymaker. He often referred to his ‘30,000-foot view,’ leaving the day-to-day operations to the administration as the charter requires. As a result, our city is thriving financially, socially, and culturally.

Throughout his time in office, Mayor Scholl championed technology, safety, capital improvement, financial, and arts initiatives that brought our city into a new era. In large part due to the Mayor’s Technology Challenge issued in 2016, we added free Wi-Fi to the parks, SIBshuttle buses, and on the beach; migrated to a mobile parking app for municipal lots; created an app to track the SIBshuttle; and installed solar-powered charging benches in most parks and car charging stations in select municipal parking lots. With safety reigning at the top of the priority list, Bud increased visibility by the patrol units, initiated a security camera program in our parks and facilities, and facilitated the creation of a Transportation Master Plan.

Around the city, we saw a successful drainage project on 174 Street, construction of the North Bay Road Pedestrian Bridge connecting 172 and 174 streets, the purchase and preservation of park land to ensure a park within walking distance of every resident, and the buildout of the new Gateway Center, a facility like no other in SIB. Financially, Bud also effectively initiated or completed over \$120 million in capital projects without the need for taking loans or issuing bonds. Always looking toward the future, we grew our unassigned fund balance in the General Fund from \$7 million to over \$22 million. The establishment of a Cultural Master Plan provided us with a detailed blueprint to enrich the quality and quantity of cultural events, along with the creation of a Public Arts Advisory Committee.

Sunny Isles Beach has prospered under the leadership of Mayor George “Bud” Scholl. He is leaving the Commission in good hands and in a good place for future growth and opportunities. We wish Bud all the best as he focuses on his important role as president and CEO of OneBlood and look forward to serving him for many years as a proud resident of Sunny Isles Beach.

Message from the City Manager

Christopher J. Russo

Many of our residents have lived in Sunny Isles Beach before it was officially incorporated in 1997. To say that our city looks nothing like it did nearly 25 years ago would be an understatement.

The first time I visited SIB was when I interviewed for City Manager back in 1997. I still remember the run-down one and two-story motels, garbage littering the streets, and rampant crime. There were no city parks, not even a blade of grass. There were street crimes, drugs, and prostitution as the City did not have its own police department yet. I was offered the position, but not able to come to terms with then-Mayor Samson; I did not accept the position of City Manager until 2000. But the City's leaders at the time, mostly retirees, made the best decision for the city: turning what was essentially a disjointed strip of land with businesses and condos into a community with prosperous services, utilities, parks, and programs.

In just 20 years, we transformed Sunny Isles Beach from a notorious, dilapidated location, into a desirable, family-friendly residential destination. And we did it on our own the old-fashioned way, through hard work. The Commission allowed total redevelopment on the east side of Collins Avenue, which brought in additional revenue, increasing our tax base while lowering the millage rate.

You may know that I left Sunny Isles Beach in 2005 and returned in 2012. In the nine years since I've been back, we were able to invest \$130 million in capital improvements such as infrastructure and parks, without borrowing a nickel. This is unheard of for a local government. Our TDRs (Transferable Development Rights) and zoning along the east side of Collins provided us not only with the funds to expand our services, utilities and amenities for residents, but also led to interesting, world-renowned architecture.

Some residents criticize the high-rises and development along the beach and around the city, ultimately longing for the 'good ol' days.' But this development, and the height that came with it, is the reason why our city

is so successful and the run-down motels and rampant crime are long forgotten. We cultivated a responsive local government, built 11 city parks and two community centers that offer diverse programming and free events for all ages, established an award-winning police department, and helped develop an A-rated school with a \$14 million donation. We are in the middle of a \$30 million utility undergrounding project along Collins Avenue (and getting ready to commence undergrounding in the Golden Shores area), which is moving all power lines underground, enhancing the streetlights and electrical equipment, and redoing all sidewalks. This is the most sophisticated and involved project our City will ever do. Without the rapid growth we saw over the last 24 years, a city our size would not typically have the means to provide the quality and quantity of services that we do.

We recently completed our citywide rebranding project, which provided us with a new logo and tagline, among many other tangibles. This project involved significant resident, business and community stakeholder participation and we are happy with the results. Our new logo, pictured here, and tagline, The Height of Living, boldly encompass what is considered an enduring attraction of our city, a rich quality of life, while also obliquely referencing the landscape of the high-rises that define our skyline.

I ask residents to think about our city and everything it offers to the community. Our height has provided us unprecedented opportunities for growth, prosperity, and a bright future. I am proud of the City and hope you are too.



Contact City Manager Chris Russo at crusso@sibfl.net or 305.792.1701.

Special Elections and Your Role in the Future of our Commission

Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra



By now you've heard that Mayor George "Bud" Scholl resigned effective September 1, 2021. Given the demands on him as President and CEO of One Blood, he felt he could no longer give the city the attention it deserves. To his credit, Bud stepped aside to allow a leader with greater availability to take the helm. Not many politicians would do that in the absence of scandal. I deeply appreciate his selfless example and willingness to put the city's needs before his own.

Obviously, Bud Scholl's departure creates a vacancy. In the interim, Vice Mayor Larisa Svechin will become our first female mayor, as stipulated in our city's charter. That said, there will be a special election for the Mayor's seat, which will take place on November 2, 2021. Any current elected officials who decide to run for mayor will have to resign their commission seats, at which point the newly elected mayor will nominate a qualified

person residing in the respective residential area to fill the vacant seat(s). The nomination(s) will be subject to confirmation by the City Commission at our November Commission Meeting. However, the appointment(s) will be brief as there will be another special election to fill the vacant commission seat(s) no later than January 2022.

If ever there was a time to pay attention to local politics, it's now. Your participation is essential. Attend or tune in to meetings and campaign events to stay informed. This is when YOUR voice counts most – cast your vote!

If you would like more information about the special election process, please contact the Office of the City Clerk or your commissioners.

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

Caring for Ourselves

Commissioner Alex Lama



The resurgence of COVID-19 with its Delta variant is overrunning Florida hospitals as our state accounts for almost 18% of new cases in the U.S. per Johns Hopkins University. Many health experts warn that this new outbreak is the most severe so far and continues to spread at an alarming rate. Florida's seven-day average for new cases is 21,681 as of August 16. These levels are greater than the outbreak we suffered during the summer of 2020.

With the high levels of the Delta variant taking a toll on the health and economy of our beloved community, it is imperative that we do all that is possible to combat this virus. We must follow common sense and logic to mitigate this situation. Wearing a mask indoors, avoiding crowds and keeping social distance are basic practices that we must have the discipline to follow in order to

protect ourselves and our loved ones. And if you are not vaccinated and are considering getting it, please consult with your doctor first.

Unfortunately, this virus has been politicized to the detriment of our society. Politics sometimes has a strange way of interfering with common sense and logic so we must not fall into this trap. Remember that, ultimately, we are responsible for our own actions and welfare.

It is important that we have the fortitude to remain rational and use our better judgment to care for ourselves, our family, and our friends. It is for our own benefit.

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

September Meetings & Activities

Mount Sinai Medical Lecture: What's New in Hip & Knee Replacement Surgery

Thursday, September 2 | 11 AM - 12 PM

Gateway Center | 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Light lunch provided after lecture. Visit activities.sibfl.net to register.

Federal Holiday: Labor Day

Monday, September 6

SIB Government Facilities Closed. SIBshuttle will not operate.

Special City Commission Meeting: First Budget Hearing

Tuesday, September 7 | 5:30 PM

SIB Government Center Commission Chambers | 18070 Collins Ave.

Blood Pressure & Glucose Screening

Friday, September 10 | 9 AM - 12 PM

Gateway Center | 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

With Cholesterol Screening

Registration required. Call [305.792.1706](tel:305.792.1706) to register.

For complete meeting and activity details, visit sibfl.net/events.

Teens Only DJ Dance Party

Friday, September 10 | 7-9 PM

Gateway Park | 151 Sunny Isles Beach Blvd.

Pre-registration required. Visit activities.sibfl.net to register.

Regular City Commission Meeting

Tuesday, September 14 | 6:30 PM **RESCHEDULED**

SIB Government Center Commission Chambers | 18070 Collins Ave.

Blood Drive

Thursday, September 16 | 10:30 AM - 5:30 PM

SIB Government Center | 18070 Collins Ave.

Presented by OneBlood. Appointments are required.

Visit oneblood.org/donate-now to register.

Concert in the Park

Saturday, September 18 | 7:30 - 9 PM

Samson Oceanfront Park | 17425 Collins Ave.

FREE EVENT

Special City Commission Meeting: Second Budget Hearing

Tuesday, September 21 | 5:30 PM

SIB Government Center Commission Chambers | 18070 Collins Ave.

INSIDE THE *Isles*

SHORT-TERM VACATION RENTALS

Condominiums and apartments in Sunny Isles Beach are popular for visitors looking for a great vacation. In order to address homeowner concerns, the City introduced Short-Term Vacation Rental (STR) licensing – requiring owners who operate any leases or rental units in a multi-family dwelling, occupied for a period of 6 months or less, to acquire licensing for each unit through the City. These STR licenses allow for our Planning & Zoning division to oversee these rentals and ensure that the high quality of life for our residents is not impacted.

Starting August 30, 2021, renewal applications for STR licenses are open. This past year alone, the Planning and Zoning division has issued 831 licenses. Now is the perfect time to submit your application – the earlier, the better. As a reminder, licenses expire on September 30, independent of the day they were obtained, and must be renewed each year. Please submit your STR application or renewal before September 30 to avoid late fees. Enforcement for short-term vacation rentals starts December 1.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 30 - Renewal applications open

September 30 - Renewal application deadline; licenses expire

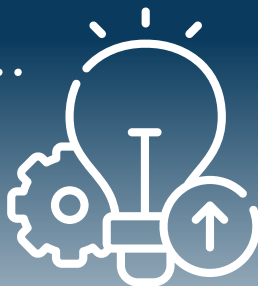
October 1 - Late fees apply

December 1 - Enforcement applies

For more information and to apply, please visit sibfl.net/short-term-rentals.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

PUBLIC WORKS



There are many reasons to celebrate the diligent work our SIB Public Works department accomplishes every day. As the department services and maintains our community's infrastructure, we want to highlight their achievements. Public



Works has been proactive this hurricane season by providing regular cleaning service to stormwater lines, renovating the Golden Shores pump station to prevent flooding, trimming trees that are close to powerlines, ensuring all City emergency equipment is functioning optimally, and securing City facilities in case of strong winds and heavy rainfall.

Whether they're sanitizing our facilities to reduce the spread of COVID-19, repairing our parks, or maintaining our roads, sidewalks, and buildings, they always go above and beyond to ensure high-quality, cost-effective, and environmentally conscious services to enhance the quality of life for our community. Thank you to our Public Works employees – you truly make Sunny Isles Beach shine!



RESIDENT ID CARDS

With fall programs in full swing, there are so many reasons to apply or renew your Resident ID Card.

FREE GIFTS

REDUCED PROGRAM PRICING

FREE EVENTS

Those who have a valid SIB Resident ID Card can look forward to exclusive perks including free gifts, reduced pricing on programs and activities, advance registration for programs, and free entrance to select events.



GATEWAY CENTER

Your SIB Resident ID Card will also grant you access to Gateway Center, the City's new state-of-the-art facility. Whether you are working up a sweat in Barre Pilates, centering yourself in a yoga class, meeting up with others to explore your creative side at Oil Painting Club, or relaxing in Social Alley, a Resident ID Card is your key to explore all Gateway Center has to offer.



EMERGENCY EVENTS

Your SIB Resident ID Card will also streamline the re-entry process during citywide lockdowns in the event of an emergency. In the unfortunate circumstance that you've been evacuated due to an impending hurricane or natural disaster, you'll want to keep your Resident ID Card close. Even though a driver's license that lists your Sunny Isles Beach address is sufficient to re-enter the City, your Resident ID Card will help our SIB police officers streamline the process, saving you time.



APPLY OR RENEW TODAY!

Applications are free and easy, so why wait?
Apply or renew your SIB Resident ID Card online at sibfl.net/residentid.

COVID-19

WE'RE NOT DONE YET

Miami-Dade County reported a 40% increase in new COVID-19 cases and a 62% increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations this past month.

We urge you – please follow all CDC guidance to keep our community safe.

WEAR FACIAL COVERINGS

GET YOUR VACCINE

SOCIAL DISTANCE

AVOID CROWDS

Our community has come a long way, but it's clear that we're not done yet.

WEAR A MASK

In July, the CDC updated their health recommendations for fully vaccinated individuals. Following the guidance that fully vaccinated people should wear a mask in public indoor settings, the City required that all guests and employees wear a mask when inside one of our facilities, regardless of vaccination status. We urge you to continue wearing a mask, especially if you are around large groups or people whose vaccination status is unknown.

VACCINES & TESTING

Vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19, including the Delta variant, and can reduce the risk of widespread transmission and severe symptoms. We encourage everyone who is eligible to receive a vaccine as soon as you can to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community. Our best shot at returning to normal, starts with your shot.

Mobile Testing & Vaccinations

SIB Government Center
1st Floor Parking Garage
18070 Collins Ave.
7 days a week | 8 AM - 5 PM

TESTING:

PCR Nasal Swab for ages 5+
[Pre-register online.](#)
Walk-ups are also welcome.

VACCINES:

Pfizer for ages 12+,
Johnson & Johnson for ages 18+
[Pre-register online](#) or
call 305.614.2014.
Walk-ups are also welcome.



For more information, visit sibfl.net/coronavirus.