



Town Hall Meeting

Wednesday
April 12, 2005

Commissioner Rebeca Sosa and Little Gables Neighborhood Association

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Little Gables Town Hall Meeting

April 2004

Commissioner Rebeca Sosa and LGNA

On Tuesday night, the 12th of April, your Little Gables Neighborhood Association (LGNA) presented a Town Hall meeting in cooperation with Commissioner Rebeca Sosa. This is a brief summary of the discussion at the meeting.

San Jacinto Park

Comm. Sosa introduced staff from the Miami-Dade Parks & Recreation Dept. who had been working on plans to improve San Jacinto Park. (San Jacinto Park serves as the open greenspace for residents of Little Gables & everyone else.) The plans presented are the result of almost 2 years of discussions and compromises with the adjoining neighbors. The plans include the installation of large native shrubs to act as a privacy buffer for the neighbors who live next to the Park; the installation of lower native shrubs and native ground cover under the Ficus trees; careful pruning of the Park's large Ficus trees, pressure-cleaning of the low-rise coral rock wall located in the Park, as well as removal of exotic vegetation from the rock wall. Low level, non-intrusive lighting improvements, park benches and double-rail fences are also included in the proposal. Mr. Alex Muñoz, Assistant Miami-Dade County Manager, informed the group that native shrubs like the ones proposed for the park did not require extensive watering or maintenance after they are established. Karen Shane, the President of LGNA, will oversee the careful pruning of the trees. (Ms. Shane has had extensive experience in arbor culture including writing the grants that have enabled LGNA to line many of our Little Gables streets with over 100 shade trees. She also serves on the board of TREEmendous Miami, a non-profit community based organization dedicated to planting trees throughout the county.) During the discussion at the meeting, concerns were raised about the health of the existing trees and tripping hazards posed by the existing trees' root systems. It was agreed that pruning of the tree canopy and tree roots would be done in a manner not to upset the balance of nature. Also, the planting of native ground cover under the trees should discourage people from walking around the roots. The Park will also get a new sign since the former sign had been recently stolen. By a show of hands of those in attendance, the recommendations were overwhelmingly endorsed. The funding for this project will come from Commissioner Sosa's office. Stay tuned for information regarding the ground breaking party.

Traffic Calming Devices

The second item of the agenda was a presentation of two of the eventual five traffic calming devices (or traffic circles) that are to be constructed in the Little Gables area to reduce north/south speeding on the avenues. The presentation was conducted by Mr. Muhammed Hasan, Chief of the Traffic Engineering Division of Miami-Dade County Public Works Department. The location of the first two circles will be the intersections of 12th Street & 43rd Avenue and 13th Street & 44th Avenue. Mr. Muñoz cautioned us not to worry about the presence of yellow plastic tubes when the circles are first installed, because after the initial evaluation phase, the temporary plastic tubes would be replaced with cement curbs and landscaped circles just like the traffic calming devices in nearby Coral Gables. Mr. Hasan informed us that the funds for this project would be coming from Comm. Sosa's office and not out of the regular county budget. Comm. Sosa will also be paying for the maintenance of these circles, including landscaping. The group present endorsed the project and also questioned whether more traffic circles would be installed at other busy intersections in the future.



Report from the Police Department

The final item on the agenda was a report from the Police Department. Officer Paul Hernandez reported that since a meeting with Chief of Staff in September 2004, they were able to get extra money to assign to serving Little Gables and Schenley Park. Officer George Arnau is assigned to us during the day and another officer at night. Officer Hernandez stressed the importance of us starting a crime watch program. He offered to have one or more officers attend a neighborhood meeting in the near future to give us a crime report and do a presentation of crime watch tips. Officer Hernandez also supported the installation of traffic circles in Little Gables by telling us that they work in reducing speeding and accidents.

The Little Gables Neighborhood Association (LGNA) has served as the means for residents of our area to advocate for their needs since 1982. LGNA is your organization, composed of residents who volunteer their time and professional services. Get involved, contribute, join! Your actions, even small ones, ensure that the needs of Little Gables residents are heard.