



GALT MILE NEWS

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GMCA
MARCH 2020

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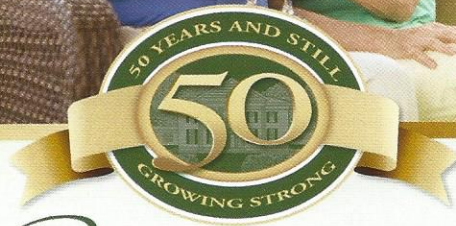
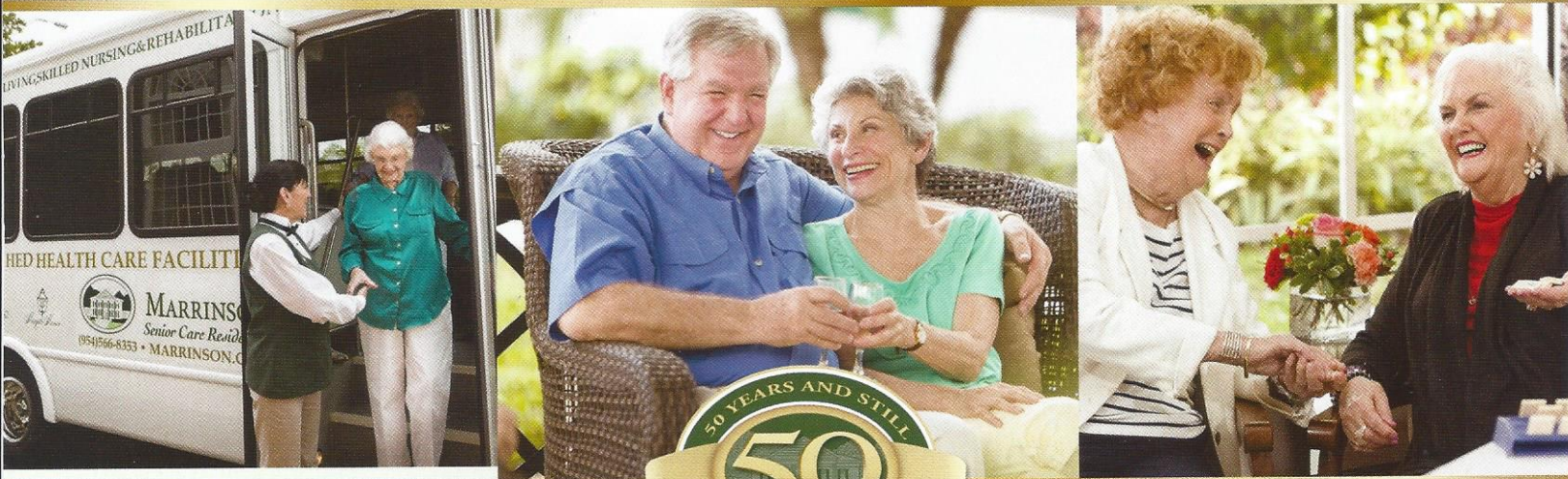
Register: dpjcc.org/baer

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From the Desk of Commissioner HEATHER MORAITIS



Fort Lauderdale's New Stadium Complex

2/14/2020 – Exciting times will be coming to Fort Lauderdale this March! Saturday, March 14 marks the opening of Major League Soccer (MLS) in District 1! At 2:30 p.m., Inter Miami CF will take the field for its inaugural home opener at the brand new, 18,000-seat professional soccer stadium located on the former site of Lockhart Stadium.

This new club will harness the city's great history and unmatched culture to create new traditions, rituals, and symbols that are admired around the world.



The historic game will match Inter Miami against the L.A. Galaxy, which happens to be David Beckham's former team. Beckham played for the Galaxy from 2007 - 2012, leading the club to back-to-back MLS Cup Championships in 2011 and 2012. The opening matchup should prove to be an exciting contest as Inter Miami boasts a host of talented young players led Head Coach Diego Alonso.

Inter Miami's debut marks a major milestone in the public/private partnership between the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Beckham group. Under the agreement, the Beckham group is investing \$130 million to transform the 64-acre Lockhart Stadium property into a soccer-centric community destination. In addition to the new soccer stadium, the complex will include a 50,000 square foot state-of-the-art soccer training center and seven professional fields. The facility will be home to Inter Miami's United Soccer League (USL) team and the Academy. Inter Miami is rebuilding Lockhart Stadium for Fort Lauderdale High School and Stranahan High School to use as their home field during football season. This stadium is being built next to the larger Inter Miami Stadium and will retain the Lockhart Stadium name. Maintaining this stadium for our public school was important to me as we negotiated the use of this property.

At the same time, exciting plans are moving forward for a signature community park that is also being funded and constructed by the Beckham group. The community destination will feature public gathering areas, open green space, shade structures, a dog park, playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, a walking/jogging/fitness trail, along with other amenities and ancillary facilities all for use by our community.

The City's partnership with the Beckham group breathes new life into this landmark property. It brings professional soccer back to our community; provides our youth with opportunities for expert coaching, training, and instruction; gives our City much-needed new parks and recreation areas, athletic fields, and stadium access; and ushers in the return of high school games and athletic events.

This is truly a once-in-a-lifetime project that offers our City a unique opportunity to create a family-oriented destination on one of our largest remaining unused tracts of land, and in doing so, leave a lasting legacy for future generations to use and enjoy. This transformative project that will redefine the Uptown area of Fort Lauderdale and make a lasting impact on our community for generations to come.



Hope to see you at this amazing event on Saturday, March 14th or at another game during this inaugural season! For more information about the Inter Miami soccer team please visit their website at intermiamicf.com or follow them on social media at [@InterMiamiCF](https://www.instagram.com/InterMiamiCF).

Governor Ron DeSantis and State Rep. Chip LaMarca Continue to Fight for Home Rule on Vacation Rental Regulation

2/27/2020 – Today I would like to take a moment to recognize, and say thank you, to Governor Ron DeSantis and State Representative Chip LaMarca for their leadership and continued efforts in Tallahassee to protect home rule when it comes to vacation rental regulation.

Governor Ron DeSantis recently expressed serious concern with pending legislation in both the Florida House and Senate that would strip a city's authority to properly regulate vacation rentals. It is important for our municipalities, the government closest to the people, to maintain the ability to handle this local issue.

State Rep. Chip LaMarca has also voted No on this legislation to defend the residents and neighborhoods of Fort Lauderdale. I look forward to continuing to work with Rep. LaMarca and his staff to protect home rule.

I do agree with the Governor in that vacation rental regulation is not a state issue and there is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Vacation rental regulation is truly a neighborhood issue best suited for local government.

Thank you to the Governor and our State Representative for continuing to work hard for residents of Fort Lauderdale and the people of Florida.

Sincerely,

Heather Moraitis

Commissioner Heather Moraitis
District 1
City of Fort Lauderdale

Follow Commissioner Moraitis on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn
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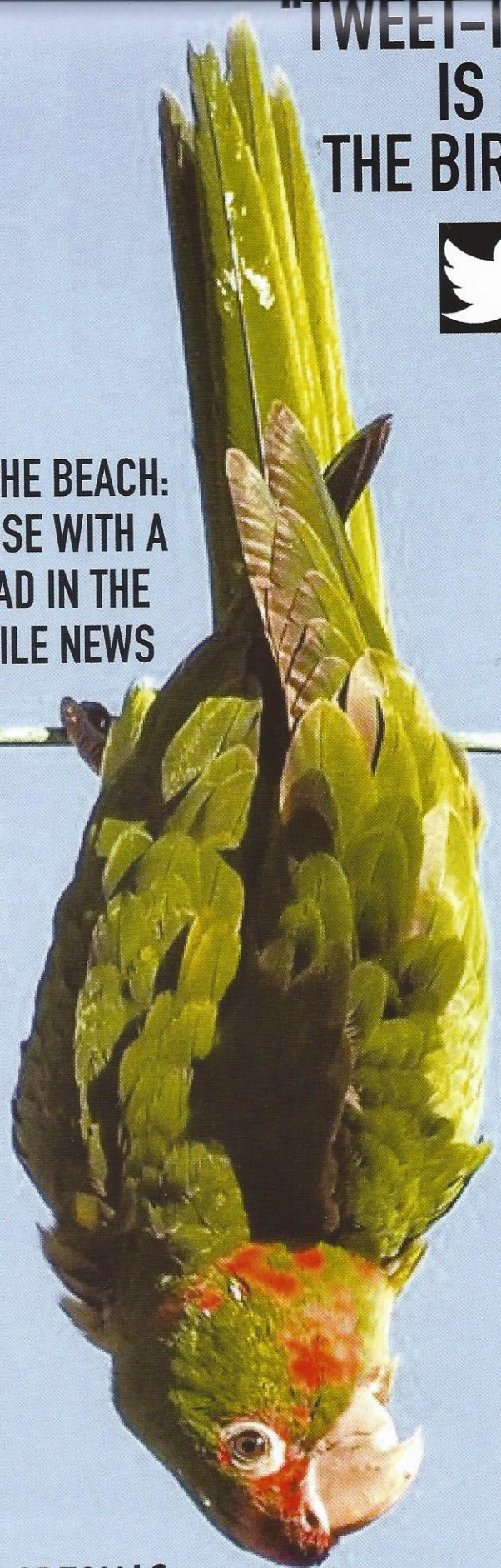
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TUE

WED

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Commissioner
Heather Moraitis:
Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center
3351 NE 33rd Ave,
Fort Lauderdale, FL
6:00 PM
Melissa Conings
(954) 828-5033
mconingsby@fortlauderdale.gov

Dr Seuss' Birthday

3

Fort Lauderdale
City Commission Meeting
City Hall
1:30 PM - Conference Agenda
6:00 PM - Regular Agenda

4

World Wildlife Day

8

Las Olas
Triathlon & Duathlon
Start: Fort Lauderdale
Beach Park
700 Seabreeze Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Time: 7:30 AM
Info: Call Aleck DaGrosa
(954) 213-6699

International Women's
Day

9

10

Council of Ft Lauderdale
Civic Associations
General Meeting
City Hall
100 N Andrews Ave
8th Floor Commission
Conference Room
Meet/Greet - 7:00 PM
Meeting - 7:30 PM
Marilyn Mammano (President):
(954) 309-2101

Harriet Tubman Day

11

Community Appearance
Board Meeting
City Hall, 8th Floor
Conference Room
100 N. Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL
6:30 PM - 6:30 PM
Info: Call Laura Gambino
954-828-6321

15

16

Commissioner
Heather Moraitis
Pre-Agenda Meeting
Beach Community Center,
3351 NE 33rd Ave,
Fort Lauderdale, FL
6:00 PM
Melissa Coningsby
(954) 828-5033
mconingsby@fortlauderdale.gov

17

Fort Lauderdale City
Commission Meeting
City Hall
1:30 PM - Conference Agenda,
6:00 PM - Regular Agenda

St. Patrick's Day

18

Fort Lauderdale
Planning & Zoning
Board Meeting
City Commission Chambers
(1st Floor),
100 N Andrews Ave
Fort Lauderdale, FL
6:30 PM
Ella Parker
(954) 828-3729

22

23

22nd Annual
The Best of Times
Senior Expo
South County Civic Center
16700 Jog Road
Delray Beach, FL
9:30 AM - 2:00 PM
Info: Call 754-246-2874

24

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31

MARCH 3: 20th Annual The Best of Times Senior Expo, Pompano Beach Civic Center (1801 NE 6th Street), 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM, Info: Call 754-246-2874
MARCH 6-7: Boca Bacchanal Wine & Food Festival, Various locations in Boca Raton, 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Info: Call 561-395-6766 ext 301, info@bocahistory.org
MARCH 7: North Beach Art Walk, Broward Art Guild - A1A, 32nd AND 33rd Streets, Fort Lauderdale, 7 PM to 11 PM
MARCH 7: "Square Foot Showcase" Exhibit, Broward Art Guild - 3280 N.E. 32nd St, Fort Lauderdale, 6:30 PM to 9 PM, Info: Call Gerard Delaney at 954-537-3370
MARCH 7: 43rd Annual MIAF Waterway Cleanup, 30 sites around Broward County, Florida, 9 AM to 1 PM, Info: Call Nicole Hoekstra at 954-524-2733
MARCH 15: 2020 Broward Heart Walk, NSU @ Alvin Sherman Library (3100 Ray Ferrero, Jr. Boulevard), Fort Lauderdale, FL, Start 8:00 AM, Info: Call Liza Guzman at (954) 364-5096
MARCH 28: 14th Annual KID Duck Fest Derby, Esplanade Park (SW 2nd Avenue and SW 5th Avenue), Fort Lauderdale, FL, 12 Noon - 4 PM, Info: Amy Evans (954) 390-7654 x1295

AP
MARCH

ONE SOURCE FOR COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

THU

FRI

SAT

THE FUN CONTINUES!

<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7 HSBC 30th Annual Walk for the Animals 2020 Huizenga Plaza 32 E Las Olas Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL Registration - 8:00 AM; Start - 10:00 AM Linda Sanders @ 954-266-6817</p>
<p>12 Bonnet House Concerts Under the Stars 900 N Birch Road Fort Lauderdale, FL 33422 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Info: Call Monica Estevez (954) 703-2614</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 Fort Lauderdale St. Patrick's Day Parade & Festival Huizenga Plaza & along the Riverwalk to Riverfront (Downtown Fort Lauderdale) Festival: 11 AM - 7 PM, Parade: 12:00 Noon - 2 PM Info: Call (954) 314-8699</p>
<p>19 G.M.C.A. Advisory Board Meeting Bokamper's Sports Bar & Grill 3116 NE 32nd Avenue, Fort Lauderdale 11:00 AM Fort Lauderdale Special Magistrate Hearing City Commission Meeting Room City Hall 9:00 AM</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 2nd Annual Miami Fine Art Show Coconut Grove's Regatta Park, 3600 Pan American Drive Miami, FL 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM Info: Call Patty Narozny at (248) 684-2613</p>
<p>26 Bonnet House Concerts Under the Stars 900 N Birch Road Fort Lauderdale, FL 33422 Time: 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm Info: Call Monica Estevez (954) 703-2614</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 8th Annual Dania Beach Arts & Seafood Celebration Frost Park 300 NE 2nd Street Dania Beach, FL Sat: 11 AM - 8 PM, Sun: 11 AM - 6 PM Info: Call (561) 924-6801</p>

MARCH 7-8, 14-15, 21-22
28th Annual Florida Renaissance Festival
 Quiet Waters Park
 401 S Powerline Road,
 Deerfield Beach, FL
 Time: 10:00 AM - Sundown
 Info: (954) 776-1642
 Toll Free: 1-800-3-REN-FES
 Fax: (954) 771-7045

MARCH 7, 14, 21, 28 (EVERY SATURDAY)
Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars
 Fox Astronomical Observatory
 Markham Park
 16001 W. State Rd. 84
 Sunrise, FL
 Sunset - 12 Midnight
 Info: 954-384-0442

MARCH 13-15
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden 18th Annual Orchid Festival
 Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
 10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables, FL
 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM
 Info: Call Susannah Shubin at (305) 667-1651 Ext 3375

MARCH 21-22
16th Annual Coral Springs Festival of the Arts & Crafts The Walk on University Drive
 2874 N University Drive
 Coral Springs, FL
 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 Info: Call (561) 746-6615

FOR A COMPLETE LISTING OF EVENTS, GO TO THE CALENDAR AT WWW.GALTMILE.COM

Daily: Bicycle Tours, Riverwalk, Las Olas, Himmarshee, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Info.: 954-562-5159
 First Saturday of Every Month: Photography Classes on Riverwalk, Info.: 817-266-2946
 Second Saturday of Every Month: Beach Sweep, Fort Lauderdale Beach Hub, 300 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., 7 to 11 a.m., Info.: 954-709-3197
 Second Saturday of Every Month: Burlock Coast Farmer's Market, Burlock Coast at the The Ritz-Carlton, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Info.: myfortlauderdalebeach.com
 Second Tuesday of Every Month: Orchid Greenhouse Tours, Bonnet House, 11 a.m. to Noon, Info.: 954-703-2606
 Mondays: Food Trucks at Artspark, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Youngs Circle in Hollywood
 Fridays (through May): Friday Night Music, El Mar Drive between Village Grille/Pump and 101 Ocean, 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., Info.: www.lbtsevents.com
 Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736
 Sundays: Las Olas Sunday Market, 333 East Las Olas Blvd. & SE 4th Ave., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 954-426-8436
 Sundays (through May): Farmer's Market at El Prado Park, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Info.: 561-714-2745
 Saturdays: Saturday Night Under the South Florida Stars, Fox Astronomical Observatory at Markham Park, Sunset to Midnight, Info.: 954-384-0442
 Thursdays: Master Dog Obedience Classes, Esplanade Park, 8:15 p.m., Info.: www.adogbestfriend.com



Are The COVID-19 Rules for Real?

***During the past weeks, most Galt Mile residents have responsibly complied with Coronavirus containment regulations issued by the State, Broward County, the City of Fort Lauderdale and their respective associations.**

Armed solely with pool talk, a few free thinkers either reinterpreted the Governor's Executive Orders (and local emergency ordinances), shunned them as a hoax, or insisted that they were wholly discretionary

One of seven Statewide COVID-19 mandates issued by Governor Ron DeSantis, Executive Order 20-70 was specifically tailored for Broward and Palm Beach counties. It was not crafted by the neighborhood association or the mainland Chinese government and the terms are being enforced by county and municipal police officials. Other provisions were executed by the City, County and State. To dispel rumors that range from creative to screwball, the text of this targeted containment order is as follows: - [editor]*

STATE OF FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
EXECUTIVE ORDER NUMBER 20-70
(Emergency Management- COVID-19- Broward and Palm Beach County
Closures)

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-51 directing the Florida Department of Health to issue a Public Health Emergency; and

WHEREAS, on March 1, 2020, the State Surgeon General and State Health Officer declared a Public Health Emergency exists in the State of Florida as a result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, I issued Executive Order 20-52 declaring a state of emergency for the entire State of Florida as a result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 16, 2020, President Donald J. Trump and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") issued the "15 Days to Slow the Spread" guidance advising individuals to adopt far-reaching social distancing measures, such as avoiding gatherings of more than 10 people, and in states with evidence of community spread, bars, restaurants, food courts, and gyms should be closed; and

WHEREAS, my Administration has consulted with Broward County and Palm Beach County authorities, both of which requested application of the CDC recommendations; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 poses a health risk to Broward County and Palm Beach County residents and minimization of contact is necessary to avoid COVID-19 infection for the residents of the counties; and

WHEREAS, restaurants, bars, taverns, pubs, night clubs, banquet halls, cocktail lounges, cabarets, breweries, cafeterias, movie theaters, concert houses, auditoriums, playhouses, bowling alleys, arcades, gymnasiums, fitness studios and beaches are potential gathering places for the spread of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Broward County and Palm Beach County seek to harmonize with Miami Dade County which has already restricted access to venues and closed its beaches to public access due to the risk of community spread; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate to take action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled, and that residents and visitors in Florida remain safe and secure; NOW, THEREFORE, I, RON DESANTIS, as Governor of Florida, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Article IV, Section (1)(a) of the Florida Constitution, Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, and all other applicable laws, promulgate the following Executive Order to take immediate effect:

Section 1. I hereby order all restaurants, bars, taverns, pubs, night clubs, banquet halls, cocktail lounges, cabarets, breweries, cafeterias and any other alcohol and/or food service business establishment with seating for more than ten (10) people within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Broward County and Palm Beach County to close on-premises service of customers. Notwithstanding the foregoing, such establishments may operate their kitchens for the purpose of providing delivery services, as authorized in Section 3 below, and employees, janitorial personnel, contractors and delivery personnel shall be allowed access to such establishments.

Section 2. This order shall not apply to grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations and convenience stores, except that those discrete portions of such establishments that provide alcohol and/or food service with seating for more than ten (10) people shall abide by the restrictions in Section 1.

Section 3. This order shall not apply to delivery services, pick-up or take out services provided by any of the establishments listed in Sections 1 or 2.

Section 4. This order shall not apply to restaurants that are ancillary to essential services, including the airports, port facilities, secure facilities and hospitals. Other essential services may be determined by the county administrators.

Section 5. All movie theatres, concert houses, auditoriums, playhouses, bowling alleys, arcades, gymnasiums, fitness studios and beaches shall close. This order shall not apply to gymnasiums or fitness centers which are: (i) amenities of hotels which have a capacity of 10 persons or less, (ii) are an amenity of a residential building, (iii) are interior to any fire or police stations or (iv) are located inside any single-occupant office building.

Section 6. The closures in this order shall remain in effect in accordance with the President's "15 Days to Slow the Spread", initiated on March 16, 2020. These closures shall expire on March 31, 2020, but may be renewed upon the written request of the County Administrator.

Section 7. The Broward County Administrator and the Palm Beach County Administrator shall have the ability to enforce, relax, modify or remove these closures, as warranted, pursuant to the directives and parameters as set forth in Executive Order 20-68.

Section 8. The provisions of this order shall serve as minimum standards. Municipalities may impose more stringent standards within their jurisdictions.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed, at Tallahassee, this 20th day of March, 2020



Ron DeSantis

Ron DeSantis, Governor

ATTEST:

Laurel M. Lee

Laurel M. Lee, Secretary of State



How to Buy a Statute

To permanently trash local laws that impede corporate cash flow, in 2011, the \$38 billion vacation rental goliath Airbnb enlisted (bought) former Statehouse Representative Michael Horner (R - Kissimmee) - and key review committee chairs - to sneak through House Bill 883, which preempted to the state the right of cities and counties to prohibit or regulate short term rentals.

In lieu of local oversight, Horner's legislation charged the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) with regulating vacation rentals - while cynically neglecting to provide the agency with the required funding. As a result, the DBPR pigeonholed the statutory mandate - and did nearly nothing - leaving Airbnb virtually unregulated. Horner later resigned when police discovered his name on the client list of an Orange County brothel.

The Airbnb Virus

By Eric Berkowitz

Part 1: Background

For decades, the state's vacation rental market was comprised of listings by Florida homeowners hard-pressed to make ends meet. They intermittently rented their homes (or spare rooms) to trustworthy tenants and shared their neighbors' concern about maintaining home values in a secure neighborhood. Local officials carefully crafted regulations that balanced this contribution to the tourism economy with the right of homeowners to protect the value of their homes and the residential character of their neighborhood, as well as the obligation of local governments to regulate local businesses. This equitable regulatory playing field was turned on its head by the emergence of Airbnb (i.e. Air Bed and Breakfast), HomeAway, VRBO (Vacation Rental by Owner) and other online listing companies that systematically steamroll any individual, community, law or elected official that impairs profitability - but they will dance on one foot for anyone with a press pass.

Exploiting a vehicle conceived to facilitate a modest rental subsidy for cash-strapped low or fixed-income homeowners, a growing number of real estate speculators and corporate investors camouflage their commercial lodging businesses as vacation rentals to dodge compliance with statutory requirements for licensing, taxes, safety codes and local zoning laws - in collusion with Airbnb.

After spending billions to skirt or violate laws across the planet, the online marketers had a corporate epiphany - craft new laws that eliminate all threats to their business model. In the lucrative Florida market, they bought lawmakers to enact legislation that replaces local oversight with statutory provisions that are either ineffective or unenforceable. Legislation annually filed for Airbnb could achieve the bulk of their objective - **this year**.

Profitable Wrecking Ball

On January 10, 2020, District 1 City Commissioner Heather Moraitis warned constituents about dangerous legislation being greased through the Florida House and Senate. In her message, Moraitis disparages annual attempts by Airbnb to fatten its bottom line by thwarting the enforcement of local regulations. To expand its rental inventory, Airbnb spends \$millions in Florida jurisdictions to quash local zoning laws that bar single-family and multi-family properties in residential neighborhoods from operating as transient motels or overnight fleabags. By packing a dozen people (or more) into rooms legally zoned for two occupants, and accommodating near daily turnover, the strategy often mirrors the impact of "**blockbusting**" by unscrupulous developers.

Since an endless stream of transients in homes serving as short stay motels breeds the kind of crime rate that plummets residential home values, local homeowners staunchly support local zoning and anti-blockbusting laws that ban commercial or industrial venues in residential neighborhoods. Criminal complaints against Airbnb "hosts" aren't confined to "disturbing the peace", life-safety code violations and illegal leases, as many of such sites nationwide have been identified or busted by local law enforcement for housing meth labs, drug drops, drug user shooting galleries and human trafficking operations.

The Epidemic

Since the ill-conceived prohibition was absolute, speculating landlords drawn to an unregulated operating environment could rent out a dozen moldy mattresses on the floor of a spare room or unventilated garage - in any Florida property. Millions of Florida homeowners were soon skull-blocked by the realization that local zoning or "block-busting" laws no longer protected the value of residential homes - placing their primary asset at risk. As a side benefit for avaricious landlords, turning homes into transient flop houses and crashing local property values also drives down acquisition costs.

While disenfranchised homeowners are primarily concerned about the devaluation of their homes and the collapse of their neighborhoods, City and County officials are apoplectic about the loss of home rule, the Statute's adverse impact on affordable housing, the increased cost for public services - and how chronically unpaid bed taxes increases the burden on local taxpayers. Given their immunity to local regulations, infractions ordinarily managed by code enforcement must instead be addressed by police officers - a wasteful misallocation of public safety resources.

Local taxes collected from tourists by hotels, bed & breakfasts or vacation rentals support the maintenance of roads & infrastructure - and help fund local public services (i.e. police, fire, EMS, etc.) - which are used by millions of visiting tourists each year. Although Airbnb handles the financial transactions, the company claims that since it is simply an online informational platform, it is not responsible for collecting or paying local occupancy taxes (i.e. bed tax) or compliance with the fire and life safety codes of their rental sites. Since public service expenses are otherwise funded with taxpayer dollars, when landlords who operate functionally commercial properties fail to collect sales, occupancy and Transient Rental taxes (or pocket those revenues), the resulting shortfall lands in **your tax bill**.

In the past 5 years, Airbnb has repeatedly declared in press releases, op-eds, and billboards that it wants to pay taxes. Since Airbnb refuses to identify their client tenants and/or landlords (flouting a State and local licensing mandate for vacation rentals), taxing authorities lack the means to verify the amount of taxes due or paid. When Palm Beach County passed an ordinance in October 2018 requiring Airbnb and other short-term rental companies to collect and pay the county's 6 percent occupancy tax on visits arranged through their websites, Airbnb sued the County. To dodge tax liability, it also sued Boston and Miami while waging courtroom battles with scores of jurisdictions nationwide, including San Diego, New York, Nashville, New Orleans, Honolulu and other cities, counties and states. Airbnb is also at war with dozens of jurisdictions in other countries, as their international lawsuits span the planet (i.e. Australia, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, Israel, etc.). Corporate juggernauts like Airbnb or Expedia subsidiaries HomeAway and VRBO - which seek to evade regulatory oversight by masquerading short-term rentals as "home-sharing" - also deplete the availability of affordable housing in most jurisdictions, as speculators snatch up depressed and other below market properties to exploit the lucrative vacation rental market. By scooping up inexpensive single-family homes and apartment units that might ordinarily serve as long-term affordable housing stock, and converting them into short-stay rentals, it strains an already short supply of low-cost homes. Although specifically built to address the needs of low-income working families, homes funded by government grants to provide affordable housing (built with your tax dollars) were cherry picked, and instead became revolving doors for transients.

(Continued...)



The Compromise

Websites and blogs exposing this corporate scam – like Airbnb Watch Florida, Airbnb HELL and Inside Airbnb – went viral. Faced with declining home values, a statewide outcry by millions of angry Florida homeowners and local officials prompted lawmakers to enact Senate Bill 356 in 2014. Seeking to partially re-empower local governments and salvage home values without capsizing the \$27 billion rental market, Former State Senators John Thrasher and Jeremy Ring enacted legislation that eased the broad state preemption on the local regulation of vacation rentals, and empowered local governments to marginally regulate short-term rentals through life safety and building codes, but Section 509.032(7), Florida Statutes, preserved the prohibition on local governments against regulating the duration and frequency of these rentals, or enforcing protective zoning laws that bar the commercialization of residential neighborhoods.

Aptly entitled “Home Rule” - the Statutory amendment enabled local jurisdictions to once again enforce noise, parking and signage regulations disallowed solely for vacation rentals in the 2011 State law. Cities could finally deter groups of young sociopaths from parking their cars – and tossing their garbage – on their front lawn (or those of neighbors), pull the plug on noisy week-long parties that wreak havoc on previously tranquil streets, bust illegal drug operations and require landlords to register vacation properties, providing a basis for the collection and remittal of transient rental tax, sales tax and licensing revenues.

Shopping for Lawmakers

Miffed about the tepid 2014 Statutory compromise – and dead set against paying any taxes, one year later Airbnb and the other listing companies threw additional millions at reviving all the rigid 2011 Statutory prohibitions against any local interference with their white-hot business model. Florida lawmakers generally go berserk when Congress preempts their authority to address State issues, citing Home Rule as a far more effective remedy. However, for a sawbuck at campaign time, those same lawmakers would gladly handcuff every Florida City and County to flesh out their corporate benefactor’s bottom line.

After Horner was cashiered for his after-hours activities, Airbnb went shopping for replacement lawmakers in the Senate and Statehouse who didn’t mind dismantling residential Florida neighborhoods and neutering local self-determination. Since unscrupulous realtors are among the primary beneficiaries of the Airbnb agenda, Airbnb recruited Osceola Realtor Rep. Mike LaRosa (R – St. Cloud) in the Statehouse, who realizes windfall commissions by hawking residential homes to aspiring short-stay landlords.

In the Senate, they bought Manny Díaz Jr. (R – Hialeah). Since his hometown of Hialeah Gardens doesn’t interest Airbnb clientele (or short-stay landlords), he observed that the rental issue **“is not a huge deal”** in his community, immunizing him to constituent blowback. To mute complaints by State budget hawks, Diaz grudgingly concedes that Airbnb should pay the state sales tax. Cooperating lawmakers were further enticed by the prospect of “repeat business” since the lobbying money would flow annually until the corporate agenda was realized.

In 2019, Diaz’ Senate Bill 824 (which preempted all Florida rental regulations to the state) passed all vetting committee stops – but died on the calendar. On December 4, 2019, Diaz filed Senate Bill 1128 (SB 1128) for the 2020 legislative session, which would wipe out the minimal 2014 homeowner compromise gains and return the draconian 2011 power of Airbnb to ignore any and all regulations enacted after 2011. On December 19, 2019, companion House Bill 1011 (HB 1011) was filed by Reps. Jason Fischer (R – Jacksonville) and realtor LaRosa.

Drawing on \$1,250,000 placed in an Airbnb PAC war chest cynically listed as **“People Versus the Powerful”**, Airbnb lobbyists bankrolling lawmaker handouts concluded that the bills would survive the 2020 election year legislative session intact, finally disabling statewide any effective regulation of Airbnb. In election years – like 2020 – the State Legislature degenerates into a buyers’ market, as lawmakers barter their votes to special interests for campaign cash. The conditions are perfect for enacting toxic bills. As such, Tallahassee watchdogs also believe that the legislation is poised to become law. Sen. Wilton Simpson (R – Trilby), next year’s Senate president, said **“We’re trying to take this one off the table.”**

Seizing this window of opportunity, Diaz filed legislation more egregious and far-reaching than prior versions, preempting to the state the right to regulate any Florida rentals, not just short-term rentals. Citing how cash-poor Florida homeowners have the right to share their homes to help pay their bills, Diaz’ SB 1128 opens by proclaiming **“Property owners who choose to use their property as a vacation rental have constitutionally protected property rights and other rights that must be protected, including the right to use their residential property as a vacation rental.”** It also states **“Vacation rentals are residential in nature, a residential use, and thus permitted in residential neighborhoods.”**

However, since the 2011 state preemption, a majority of the properties purchased in residential neighborhoods for this purpose are owned by hedge funds, investor coalitions or speculators who acquire hundreds of such properties and typically reside in other states – or other countries. Since the questionable constitutional property rights protection does not extend to clearly commercial enterprises, the bill blurs the distinction by misrepresenting corporate-owned transient motels as people’s homes. Not surprisingly, Diaz ignores the property rights of the 99% of Florida homeowners whose properties are devalued by this scam.

(Continued...)

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The Committee Two-Step

On January 13, 2020, homeowners and City and County officials from communities across the state testified to lawmakers in the Senate Committee on Innovation, Industry, and Technology about the fast-growing number of homes operating as transient motels in their residential neighborhoods, including Longboat Key, Delray Beach, St. Augustine, Miami, Holmes Beach, Miami Beach, Cocoa Beach, Jacksonville Beach, and other municipalities.

Nevertheless, the bill was approved by a vote of 8 Yeas vs. 2 Nays. While Senators Gary Farmer (D – Fort Lauderdale) and Kathleen Passidomo (R – Naples) opposed the bill, almost every assenting lawmaker warned Diaz that unless significant regulatory omissions were corrected by Diaz during the vetting process, they wouldn't approve the final version on the Senate floor.

Committee members also expressed doubts about the State's enforcement capabilities for such statewide rental regulations. Along with the registration of short-term rental properties, the bill charges the DBPR with addressing any reported abuses and violations. It estimates that the Department will need \$448,926 (\$412,005 recurring) for six full-time employees charged with overseeing more than 40,000 Florida vacation rentals in 67 Counties, forcing each staffer to regulate problems in more than eleven Florida Counties. Lawmakers also observed that it is impossible for one staffer to effectively manage abuses from nearly 6700 properties in hundreds of neighborhoods.

The Battle for Community Associations

The governing documents of most residential condominiums and co-operatives regulate the annual number and duration of leases offered by owners. Although the declaration is occasionally violated by slippery owners who circumvent association rental rules by mischaracterizing paid short-term tenants as visiting relatives or guests, effective tenant screening procedures and enforcement policies have helped preserve the residential nature of most associations – until now.

A list of Florida properties defined in the bill as vacation rentals includes the language, **"A vacation rental is a unit or group of units in a condominium or cooperative..."**. Airbnb's aspired preemption of local rental regulations also threatened to usurp the right of associations to regulate unit rentals, which would trigger their transformation into transient hostels.

Speculators are drooling over the prospect of snatching up condo units in well-maintained buildings they can morph into overnight flops. An explosion of transient tenants would render association security impotent and skyrocket maintenance costs. Association homeowners could either tolerate their home devolving into a motel, or move out. Although unit values would drop like a rock under those circumstances, the alternative of moving to a single-family home presents another problem. Since the bill enables any Florida residential property to become a flop house, no neighborhood in the State would be immune.

As objections by angry condo owners poured in from all over Florida, at its next committee stop, the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism passed a Committee substitute, replacing nine provisions in Diaz' bill with new language. Along with seven housekeeping measures and a minor concession to local jurisdictions, it strengthened a protective provision for community association homeowners.

Cities and counties would be allowed to conditionally regulate vacation rentals, as long as the local measures apply to all residential properties and are less restrictive than the paper-thin regulations included in the bill. To protect association homeowners, a poorly worded provision was amended with the new text, **"The application of this act shall not supersede any current or future declaration or declaration of condominium adopted pursuant to chapter 718, Florida Statutes, cooperative documents adopted pursuant to chapter 719, Florida Statutes, or declaration of covenants or declaration adopted pursuant to chapter 720, Florida Statutes"** By exempting condominium, cooperative and HOA declarations from preemption, the bill preserves association rental rules. On February 11, SB 1128 was approved in the Senate Committee on Commerce and Tourism by party line vote of 3 Yeas vs. 2 Nays. On February 18, the bill was forwarded to the Senate Rules Committee, its final committee stop.

Statehouse Committees OK Companion Bill

In the Statehouse, on January 21, House Bill 1011 was found favorable by a vote of 10 Yeas to 5 Nays in the House Workforce Development & Tourism Subcommittee. On February 4, a committee substitute was approved in the House Government Operations & Technology Appropriations Subcommittee by a vote of 8 Yeas vs. 5 Nays, as assenting lawmakers again threatened to withdraw their support unless the final version better addressed how the state will regulate short-term rentals. On February 24, another committee substitute was found favorable by a vote of 14 Yeas vs. 9 Nays in the House Commerce Committee – its last committee stop before consideration by the full House.

Later that day, Governor Ron DeSantis remarked that he was "leaning against" the bills, exclaiming "We have 22 million people almost. We are a very diverse state. For us to be micromanaging vacation rentals, I am not sure that is the right thing to do." In weighing how to best manage the threat to neighborhoods, DeSantis observed "My view would be, probably, that should be determined locally." On March 14, the House and Senate bills were both withdrawn from consideration. Given the prospect of a Gubernatorial veto, lawmakers abandoned this destructive scam, and sent the bills to the cornfield.

Wolf Still at the Door

Since Airbnb policy is based on their mantra, "If anticipated profits exceed legal and lobbying costs, go for it", industry watchdogs are confident that Airbnb will continue its campaign to shuck regulations, and seek to operate with the sovereign impunity of a nation-state. Hopefully, next year's incarnation of the corporate legislation, which may revert to forgoing the exemption for association declarations, will meet the same calendar death. If not, Airbnb will turn our homes into a box lunch. **More to come...**



BROWARD COMMISSIONER

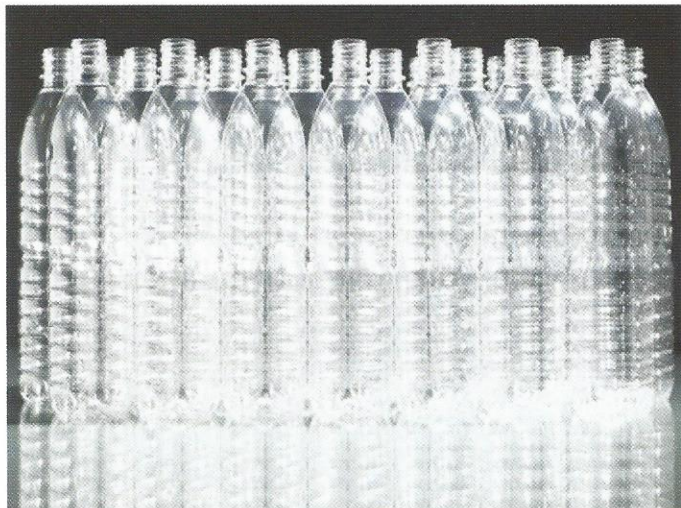
LAMAR FISHER

FEBRUARY 2020 UPDATE

Dear Residents,
 It is an honor and privilege to be your voice and to represent you, the citizens of our coastal and inland communities from Deerfield Beach to Fort Lauderdale. As your County Commissioner, I look forward to continuing to improve our resident's quality of life by focusing on several key issues in our community. Here are some recent headlines from around the County.

State Legislative Update

The legislative session in Tallahassee has officially begun and there are several issues that I am keeping a close eye on as they may affect our community. In December, I was pleased to co-sponsor a resolution in support of the Florida Competitive Workforce Act. The Florida Competitive Workforce Act would amend state law to prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Currently, State law does not prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, although 49 Florida municipalities and counties, including Broward County, have local human rights ordinances that do so.



In January, I sponsored a resolution urging the Florida legislature to approve Senate Bill 182 and House Bill 6043. These bills would repeal the preemption related to single-use plastic bags and polystyrene materials. All of us are well aware of the detrimental effect of single-use plastic in our coastal environment. Representing several coastal communities, I see, firsthand the effects of single-use plastics on our beaches, parks and even in our neighborhoods. This is one of those issues where 'home rule' definitely should be applied as local governments see the effects daily.

The budget process in Tallahassee is also well underway and one of the Board's major legislative priorities is Affordable Housing Funding. In January, I co-sponsored a resolution supporting the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget appropriation for State housing programs proposed by Governor DeSantis. Additionally, the Board also supports Senate Bill 306, which would prevent the Florida legislature from diverting funds from state and local government housing trust funds to the general revenue fund or the budget stabilization fund.

As of early February, the Senate's proposed budget fully funds affordable housing, which concurs with the Governor's recommendations. However, the House proposed to fund a separate \$25 million Hurricane Housing Recovery Program and sweep \$240 million of affordable housing dollars as demonstrated in the chart below. While there is still ways to go in the budget process, Broward County has made it very clear that affordable housing dollars should explicitly be used for that purpose only. We will continue to monitor and advocate for the proper allocation of these funds.

Program	House	Senate
State Apartment Incentive Loan (SAIL)	\$48,000,000	\$119,800,000
State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP)	\$73,200,000	\$267,200,000
Hurricane Housing Recovery Program_	\$25,000,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$146,200,000	\$387,000,000

(Continued...)

Convention Center Project Update

In January, Broward County community leaders gathered at the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center for an event celebrating the \$1 billion Convention Center expansion and Headquarters Hotel project. As I've reported before, this is a major undertaking by the County and one that is crucial for our local economy. Our Convention and Visitors Bureau listened to the needs of the hospitality industry and after years of planning the project will be a reality in a few years.

I am very excited to watch this project come to life as it is an integral part of our community that is long overdue. The expansion will provide larger meeting spaces for larger events, a 6-acre outdoor waterfront plaza and of course the new 800-room headquarters hotel, all of which will be an economic boost for our region bringing a great deal of consumer activity and numerous job opportunities for our residents.

For more information about this exciting project please visit www.Broward.org/ccexpansion.

Census 2020

Recently, the 25th U.S. Census Director, Dr. Steven Dillingham, visited Broward County to participate in Broward County's Census Complete Count Committee Meeting. The County received national recognition for being one of the first counties in the U.S. to form a Complete Count Committee with the addition of six sub-committees, educating and promoting the importance of the U.S. Census. Dr. Dillingham was impressed with how detailed and collaborative the Broward effort has been and shared his plans to use Broward County as a model community as he continues his tour throughout the country.

Census day is April 1, but you can submit your form as soon as the response period opens. You should receive a postcard in the mail between March 12 – 20, 2020. There are several ways you can return your census form. Online is the easiest way to complete your Census and it's safe and secure. In addition to online, you can also respond to the Census by phone, or call the U.S. Census Bureau toll-free at 800-923-8282 (TTY 800-877-8339) to request a paper form to mail back if you do not receive one by the dates listed above. Please visit www.Broward.org/commission/district4 and checkout my Census message to all! You can also visit Broward.org/census2020 for more information.

ePermitsOneStop Expansion

Last year, Broward County worked with the City of Pompano Beach to launch the first ever ePermitsOneStop at the City of Pompano Beach's City Hall. ePermitsOneStop is a centralized website that allows customers to submit permitting applications to be reviewed online for permits, licenses and final approvals. This initiative provides efficiencies by eliminating the customers need to travel to Broward's Government Center West in plantation.

I'm excited to announce that the City of Hollywood is the second municipality to work with the County and launch the ePermitsOneStop at the City of Hollywood's City Hall. I'm eager to see other cities follow in the same footsteps as Pompano Beach and Hollywood. As we continue to strive to bring the very best to our residents and those doing business with us.

For more information, you can call Broward's Environmental and Consumer Protection Division at 954-357-6666.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve you as your County Commissioner. Please sign up at Broward.org/Commission/District4 to receive email updates from our office. You can also follow me on Twitter and like my Facebook page. If there is anything that we can do to assist you with your vision for a better Broward, please do not hesitate to contact our office at 954-357-7004 or by email at LFisher@broward.org.

Best regards,



Lamar P. Fisher

County Commissioner

District 4

Second Sunday Film Series

Join David Posnack Jewish Community Center on the 2nd Sunday of every month at the NSU Art Museum in Fort Lauderdale for a special first-run film screening and museum tour.

SPEND AN AFTERNOON WITH THE ARTS!

The next film is *Picture Of His Life* which will be shown on Sunday, March 8 at 2:30 p.m.

World-renowned Israeli wildlife photographer Amos Nachoum is gearing up for the "picture of his life," and the most challenging expedition of his career: photographing a polar bear in its natural habitat, underwater in the Canadian Arctic.

Enjoy a highlighted docent-led tour before the film, if you choose.

Tour begins at 1:30 p.m. If you are a member of the museum, the tour is free.

Film cost: \$9/member, \$11/community

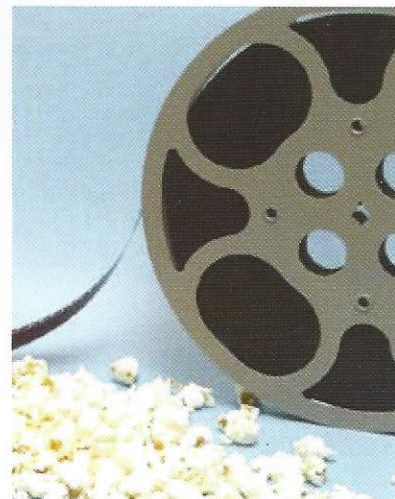
Film and tour: \$18/member, \$22/community



NSU ART
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