



FEDERATION  
OF  
MANATEE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

***APRIL NEWSLETTER***

**Next Meeting – April 18, 2017 at 6:45 P.M.**

**LOCATION – SYNOVUS BANK**  
2520 Manatee Avenue West, Bradenton, Florida  
Conference/Meeting Room – Enter through side door on 26<sup>th</sup> Street side

Please mark your calendar and attend with a friend to show support for your community and quality of life.

**AGENDA**

- GUEST SPEAKER – Bill Zoller, CONA (Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations)
- Reports and requests for assistance by homeowners and items of interest
- Reading of Minutes and Treasurer's Report
- County Bike Trails Update – Ed Goff
- Health Care Advisory Board Progress Report – Sandy Marshall

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – The Erosion of the American Public Trust**

Recent events continue to shed suspicion and misgivings upon our leaders in public and private sectors. Mismanagement, illegal use of funds, social missteps and controversial appointees, continues to be the top headlines for the media. Fake news and Alternative Facts are being badgered about. The events of recent date, are wearing thin on our citizens mental and physical well-being. We continue to be concerned about the products we utilize every day, and having enough disposable income to maintain our quality of life.

What then must be done to rebuild the public's trust in these areas of high profile? Companies, corporations, civic organizations, religious groups, and political parties are all being profiled by the media to show more concern over control, power and profits than they are about meeting objectives for the common good of the consuming public. This behavior causes continued skepticism and mistrust of our decision makers, private public and political. This is not a sustainable path for our collective future growth and raises the question of who is watching and controlling these actions?

So what are some things that we as individuals can do? Being aware of the issues and the actions of the people involved in the process is a must (educate yourself), then adjust your actions accordingly (vote, purchase goods, talk to others). With today's technology, and almost

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***"Eternal Vigilance  
is the price  
of Liberty."***

instantaneous publication, there is power to the people unlike ever before. Write your local newspapers opinion polls, send out an e-mail, publish a Blog, join a social media site and relate your position. The “power of the pen” is still a very real “weapon of mass communications.” This process albeit slow, deliberate and painful it is powerful and can bring about the needed change in our economic sustainable future.

It is the intent of our FMCCA family to reach the responsible parties to make them aware of our positions and actions, let them then respond accordingly.

It is important for us to have information from our members to help guide our efforts. Please mark the dates of our meetings and attend. We can make a difference. What will your actions be?

### **FMCCA RECOMMENDS BIKE-PED COORDINATOR**

Two SUN Trails will be passing through Manatee County, one east and one west. This multi-decade project will be a huge financial, safety and recreational asset for the county. It will require grant application writing, planning, feasibility studies, land purchase, land clearing, construction, and of course, lots of money. Fortunately most of the land is already owned by the county, is railroad or utility right-of-way, will be donated by developers, or is owned by HOA's which are anxious to have a trail come through their neighborhoods.

So far, most of the work has been shared between the Parks & Natural Resources and Public Works Departments. One grant in the amount of \$511,111 has already been received from the State. Unfortunately that represents only 0.4% of the total amount that has been awarded to all counties by the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails.

Unlike other counties we do not have a Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator who can devote all their time to coordinate and oversee this huge endeavor. That is why the FMCCA has recommended that the County hire a Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator. Not only could that person apply for more grants, he could coordinate all aspects of bicycle and pedestrian matters and make Manatee County a safer place for pedestrians and bicyclists. Please contact your commissioners (district and at-large) and tell them that you support hiring a bike-ped coordinator. (EPG)

### **IMMEDIATE SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION NEEDED**

Manatee County cannot wait for major expensive and lengthy solutions to our county traffic congestion problems. Simple “outside the box” proposed ideas from our local citizens and from around the country should be attempted.

A recent letter to the Editor in the *Bradenton Herald* from a New York resident pointed out immediate simple partial solutions. “Put a traffic cop” at major local intersections to issue traffic violations. Reportedly, this has been successful in New York City.

We cannot wait to build new bridges and widen roads. Simple cost effective methods to control traffic congestion have to be developed and employed now. County and City planners in Manatee County need to immediately meet and scour the state and nation to obtain from officials in these areas how they have employed simple cost effective methods before long term solutions can be developed and achieved. The Sarasota-Manatee Regional Traffic Management Center (RTMC) and the appropriate county and city law enforcement, road maintenance, planning departments need to form a task force to develop an “immediate” action plan suggested herein.

Our public officials should realize that our traffic congestion is not new. There are other meaningful solutions developed in other areas within and outside of Florida, which can be adopted here. The time to act is now. Not later! (ESM)

## HOME RULE

The Florida Legislature adopted the Home Rule Powers Act in 1973. Prior to then, all local governing power came from the State.

The most precious powers a city or county in Florida has are its Home Rule powers. The ability to establish its form of government through its charter, and to then enact ordinances, codes, plans and resolutions without prior state approval is a tremendous authority. To further be able to enforce them “at home” and to make necessary changes as a city or county grows is a great reflection of the trust that citizens have in their respective leaders. Of course, local laws cannot conflict with state or federal laws. Home Rule powers ensure that the cities or counties are effectively and efficiently providing for the wishes of their citizens.

Under Home Rule Counties:

- The structure of county government is specified in the local Charter as approved by the electorate. The structure can be tailored by the local electorate to meet the needs of the county.
- Counties have all powers of self-government unless they are inconsistent with the Constitution or State law.
- County Charter may provide for initiative, referendum and recall at the county level.
- County Charter can require an Administrative Code detailing all regulations, policies and procedures.
- County Charter can provide that a “municipal utility tax” is levied in the unincorporated area.

All the cities in Manatee County have Home Rule governments that are governed by charters that give them more governing power than they would otherwise have. Manatee County itself is not a Home Rule County. Manatee County does not have a Charter and is controlled more by the State than Counties that do have charters that spell out more local powers allowed by the state.

For example Sarasota County has Home Rule. It has a Charter that specifies a number of powers that Manatee County, as a non-Charter government, does not have. For example:

- “Should any elected or appointed official fail to carry out his or her respective duties as delineated in this Charter, any citizen of the County shall have the right to seek any appropriate judicial writ from a court of competent jurisdiction.”
- The Board of County Commissioners shall provide for an annual audit of all the fiscal transactions of the County government by independently certified public accountants. The audit report shall become public record.”
- “The procedures for the recall of a County Commissioner shall be as set forth in general law. The procedures for the recall of other elected County officers, including, but not limited to, the Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser, and Clerk of Court shall be the same as those for the recall of a County Commissioner.”
- “No candidate for any county office for which compensation is paid shall accept any contribution from any contributor, including any political committee, as defined by state law, in cash or in kind, in an amount in excess of \$200.”
- “Changes to this Charter may be proposed by (i) a petition, signed by at least five percent (5%) of the number of registered voters in Sarasota County; (ii) a special law enacted by the legislature; (iii) an ordinance, or (iv) a recommendation by the Charter Review Board.”

The Sarasota Charter has been amended eighteen times since it was adopted in 1971. The complete Sarasota Charter may be seen at:

[https://www.municode.com/library/fl/sarasota\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTICHSACO\\_ARTIIGEPRHORU\\_S3.7COLA](https://www.municode.com/library/fl/sarasota_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTICHSACO_ARTIIGEPRHORU_S3.7COLA).

There are several groups in Manatee County that support a change in Manatee County to Home Rule including The League of Woman Voters, Our Manatee, Stone Soup Community Unity, and The Federation of Manatee County Community Associations (FMCCA) also known as “The Federation”.

Finally, to be clear: 1- Home Rule and Charter Governments ARE the same thing and 2- Charter Government and Charter Schools are completely different entities. (EPG)

### **SECRETARY'S CORNER**

Below is a brief synopsis of our guest speaker at the March 21, 2017 Federation Membership Meeting and serves as a courtesy to our members unable to attend our meetings.

Stephen R. Jonsson, County Commissioner, District 3, is from Chatham, New Jersey. He holds a BS degree in Economics and attended University of Florida Graduate School to study accounting and finance. He has been a Manatee County resident for 40 years and a banker for 40 years. His primary focus is on county budget, looking for citizen input. The Commissioner fielded questions from our members and discussed various topics as follows: Sun Trail, Need a Pedestrian Grant Coordinator for Manatee County's Sun Trail. Impact Fees, Transportation portion of impact fee should be allocated for Schools. The county is requesting a new study from the School District. Member Ed Goff provided his knowledge on this topic and said a study was done in 2015, citing a new study is unnecessary. Charter Government for Manatee County, Commissioner Jonsson would like to know more about this proposal. The County Noise Ordinance was brought to the Commissioner's attention by member Diana Adams who lives adjacent to a Bradenton business in vicinity of Manatee Ave./51<sup>st</sup> Street. The small business creates continuous loud noise to its adjacent neighbors and there is no recourse in ordinance for the neighbors to remedy the problem. (KLD)

### **MEETING DATES AND SPEAKERS**

Come to our meetings. Be a part of the solution, not the problem. Join the FMCCA. Here are the dates of our scheduled meetings for 2017.

January 17 – County Commissioner Pricilla Whisenant Trace, District One

February 21 – Travis Vengroff, One Stop Housing

March 21 – County Commissioner Stephen R. Jonsson, District Three

**April 18 – Bill Zoller, CONA (Sarasota County Council of Neighborhood Associations, Inc.)**

May 16 – TBA

September 19 – TBA

October 17 – TBA

November 21 – TBA

**“Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

**Margaret Mead, cultural anthropologist**