



City of Sunrise Historical Commission Meeting

Date: Monday, September 19, 2022

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: City Commission Chambers

Address: 10770 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Sunrise FL 33351

Meeting Agenda

I. Call to Order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson Toby Ginsburg Cohen

II. Roll Call:

Chairperson Toby Ginsburg Cohen

Vice Chair Bernard Shaw

Heather Clough-Robinson

Aleece Dawson

Philip Howell

Laura Males – absent (excused)

Dionne Smith

Also Present: Meryl Girard, Deputy City Clerk

III. Open Discussion

No one was present.

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. August 8, 2022

MOTION A motion to approve the minutes of August 8, 2022 made by Philip Howell was seconded by Bernard Shaw. All were in favor.

V. Correspondence

None

VI. Old Business

A. Follow Up Items

- August Utility Bill Insert: Placing information seeking historical memorabilia

Deputy City Clerk Meryl Girard reported the marketing team was unable to place information in the August insert, however they were working on placing it in upcoming edition. She will keep the board posted.

- Interview Questions Revised

MOTION Vice Chair Shaw moved to accept the revised list of questions was seconded by Aleece Dawson. All were in favor.

Deputy City Clerk Meryl Girard said there were donations of memorabilia made over the past few months, and it needed to be sorted and indexed. She asked if board members would be interested in meeting at 3:00 for the October 10th meeting, to work on this. The board members agreed, and there were enough members that confirmed attendance for a quorum.

VII. New Business

A. Guest, former long-time resident Mr. George T. Mora

Mr. George Mora said he was happy to be back, and brought some more items for the Historical Commission. He spoke about his great passion for the City of Sunrise. Mr. Mora presented and passed around the memorabilia, including:

City of Sunrise Magazine: 1971 and 1973 editions

Photographs including the first City Hall, current City Hall under construction, Police Officers, July 4th parade, City's first ambulance, Director of Social Services Elsie Staska, Mayor Lomelo. Mr. Mora said that several photographs were from the inauguration of the first city hall.

Sunrise Pops Program from March 1977, performance at Sunrise Musical Theater

Plaque "Ground breaking of Sunrise Industrial Park" 1981

Presidential Inaugural Committee Invitation to Inauguration of President Ronald Reagan, 1981 (Invitation to Mayor Lomelo and Councilmembers)

Framed photograph, rendering of current city hall

Broward Life Magazine, November 1979

Mr. Mora said he had a recording company called "Top Banana," and his motto was "for the politician with appeal." He said he recorded Mayor Lomelo, and had a sketch of him singing.

Mr. Mora said in the mid-70s the city had a Santa Claus driven around the city on the back of a fire engine. He visited different areas of the city at Christmas time.

Ms. Robinson asked how he felt about parting with this information, the donations. Mr. Mora said he felt it would be a plus for the museum, and give people some things to look at.

Chairperson Ginsburg Cohen commented that the board welcomed any memorabilia that Mr. Mora's friends might have.

Ms. Robinson asked about the parades.

Mr. Mora said that Walter Green was the Director of Parks & Recreation, which is now Leisure Services. There were many events that he participated in. They did a cultural exchange with the Bahamas. It was very successful.

At this point the board members asked Mr. Mora several questions.

- How long have you and your family lived in the City, and when did you become a resident?

Mr. Mora said his family moved to the first section of Welleby in 1974. Behind their house were the model homes. He moved here from Carol City, and before that lived in Opa Locka. He was born in Cuba, and came to Florida in 1954. He worked at the post office. He lived in his home in Sunrise for 47 years.

Ms. Dawson asked where the first part of Welleby was.

Mr. Mora replied the area of NW 94th Terrace off of Oakland Park Boulevard. There was a discussion about vacant land in the western part of the city during that time period.

Vice Chair Shaw said everything was built in the California style tradition then.

Ms. Smith asked where Mr. Mora lived in Carol City. He replied near the post office where he worked.

Mr. Mora spoke about when he first came to the United States. His father was very patriotic.

Ms. Robinson asked if Mr. Mora always lived in same house and what the area looked like.

Mr. Mora said he always lived in the same house. The area still had farms. Judge Fruscianté's father owned a lot of land. There was nothing west of Pine Island Road. Sunrise Lakes Phase 3 was just being built when he moved to the City.

Vice Chair Shaw said when he moved to the City, Oakland Park Boulevard was a dirt road west of Florida Medical Center.

Mr. Mora shared that Motorola was just being built. Mercedes Plaza was building across the street. This city had a great relationship with Mr. Mercedes.

- What was the most important development?

Mr. Mora replied when the City annexed part of Western Broward, and the utilities.

Ms. Robinson asked what was the diversity like when he first moved to the city. Mr. Mora responded that it was not great at first, but the city grew fast. One can see how beautiful and safe it is today.

Chairperson Ginsburg Cohen spoke about crime, Sunrise is a safe city, not like average cities.

Mr. Mora commented on the high employment rate.

- What was your civic involvement while you lived in Sunrise?

Mr. Mora said he was very involved. He was good friends with Mayor Ronnie Pierson of Opa Locka, who introduced him to Mayor Lomelo. When he came to Sunrise he went to Mr. Lomelo's office and introduced himself. He went around and tried to meet everyone. He was approached to run for the commission in the 70s, but he had some health issues. He decided he wanted to be a public servant, and stay behind the spotlight, where he could make the light brighter for others.

Vice Chair Shaw asked about taxes when Mayor Lomelo was in office, he heard they were so low that a person could own two homes.

Mr. Mora spoke about the promotion with the upside-down house, people were buying homes left and right.

- What do you feel is the most important resource of the city?

Mr. Mora replied the diversity and the vision.

- What is your fondest memory?

Mr. Mora said the passion of this city. He dreams of the city every day. He has written so much about the City of Sunrise, poems, etc. He feels love for Sunrise from the bottom of his heart.

Ms. Robinson asked what drove that passion. Mr. Mora it replied this is his city, and he wanted to be part of it. He wanted to be involved.

Chairperson Ginsburg Cohen said to keep making memories. Mr. Mora said to make sure you carry those memories and share them. This city had a great mayor and commissioners. The growth, and what was coming up was amazing. When they had a master plan for the parks with Beth Zickar, the former Leisure Services Director, he got involved. It is the people of the city too. At one time there was a little conflict between the east and west sides of the city. They were building up the western portion of the city at the time. This Mayor and Commission tore down that wall, and started redevelopment in the east corridor of the city. There is diversity in the east and west.

- How do you envision the city in the future?

Mr. Mora exclaimed that Sunrise will grow forever. He would say to the new generations, participate and get together. The image Sunrise had, went county wide. When they first built the Sunrise Musical Theater, and they said Johnny Carson would perform there, no one had heard of it. Look at the stars it attracted. Mr. Mora said they cracked the ice. They made a good noise, and everyone came. They put fertilizer on the ground, and there was no control.

Vice Chair Shaw said when Commissioner Scuotto had his old restaurant on Hiatus Road, there were people like Connie Frances who came to political events. That is where he met her. She was speaking to everyone.

Mr. Mora said he was involved with a big convention called Music Expo, and he represented the southeast. Anytime he could promote the city himself, he did so.

Ms. Robinson asked about coming from Cuba to Florida, and how the adaptation was, the acculturation.

Mr. Mora said he was very young, when his father explained everything to him, he saw a rainbow and said they were going to someplace beautiful.

Chairperson Ginsburg Cohen asked if he was involved with the Mayor's Chess Challenge.

Mr. Mora said he was involved with cultural exchanges and thanked Walter Green for allowing him to get the right entertainment, diverse and culturally different.

The board members invited Mr. Mora to come back anytime. He said he has many more stories to tell.

Ms. Dawson said she was appreciative of Mr. Mora and glad he was so involved.

There was a brief discussion about the art pieces that would be placed at Flamingo Road Linear Park. Deputy City Clerk Girard reported the City Commission approved design proposals for two pieces at their meeting last week.

VIII. Adjournment

Seeing there was no further business to come before the board, the meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Meryl Girard, Deputy City Clerk