



City of Sunrise Historical Commission Meeting

Monday, May 13, 2024, 3:30 p.m.

Sunrise City Hall, Everglades Conference Room,
10770 W. Oakland Park Blvd., Sunrise FL 33351

Minutes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chairperson Toby Ginsburg Cohen.

II. Roll Call

The following members were found to be present:

Toby Ginsburg Cohen
Heather Clough Robinson
Ketty Andre
Roberto Fernandez III
Philip Howell
Bernard Shaw
Stacy Sherman

Anne Pato, guest

Staff present:

Deputy City Clerk Meryl Girard

III. Open Discussion

No one was present.

IV. Approval of Minutes

MOTION A motion to approve the minutes of April 8, 2024 was made by Mr. Shaw was seconded by Mr. Howell. All were in favor.

V. Old Business

A. Historical Commission Coloring Book

Mr. Howell brought a coloring book from CERT as an example, and suggested they combine some pictures and some games, etc.

Ms. Sherman said that was discussed last month, having a coloring and activity book.

Members shared ideas for themes on the coloring pages, including: Chess, hockey, Sunrise Musical Theater, Amerant Arena, police cars, fire trucks, Sawgrass Sanctuary and all the parks in a crossword, the old post office, upside down house, the farm on Oakland Park Boulevard,

education, family life, senior center, Sawgrass Mills Mall, the new hospital and stand-alone emergency room.

VI. New Business

A. Interview with Ms. Anne Pato

Mr. Fernandez submitted draft questions to ask Ms. Pato. The board discussed and decided on the questions that would be asked.

The board discussed which member would be conducting the interview, and several volunteered. It was decided (by whom?) that Ms. Clough Robinson would ask the interview questions.

Mr. Fernandez left the meeting at 4:12 p.m. He apologized that he had a district meeting that he had to attend.

Ms. Pato was introduced to the Historical Commission members and they each introduced themselves.

Ms. Sherman gave a brief overview. Sunrise has grown over the years and eventually they would like to have a picture and some verbiage of people that have been a part of the City and document it through the years.

Ms. Clough Robinson began with the opening statements;

This is the City of Sunrise Historical Commission conducting an interview with Anne Pato at City of Sunrise City Hall, 10770 W Oakland Park Blvd, Sunrise, FL 33351 on May 13, 2024. Ms. Anne Pato, do we have your permission to record this interview?

Anne Pato gave her permission.

1. Please state your full name. Anne Pato
2. When did you come to Broward County? Why? With whom?

Ms. Pato said they moved to Broward County in 1967, her husband was transferred for his job. Her husband was Ivan Pato and worked for a textile firm. They moved to Sunrise with their two-year old son, also Ivan. Her husband saw ads for the Upside-Down House and wanted to move to Sunrise. They had a choice of a house on a canal or a house with sidewalks. Being from New York, and growing up with sidewalks, she chose sidewalks. She did not want to live in a house that was on a canal with a two-year old. Her son currently lives in Orlando and works for Orlando Utilities.

3. When did you begin working for the City of Sunrise?

Ms. Pato began working for the City in 1972.

4. Who were the most important people in the Sunrise community during your employment?

Ms. Pato responded Mayor John Lomelo.

5. Did you serve in the military?

Ms. Pato said she did not serve in the military.

6. What was your first job with the city?

Ms. Pato started in the Water Department taking utility payments, this is now called the Public Service Department. Next, she went to the Building Department as an inspection clerk. Mayor Lomelo brought her to his office as his secretary. After Mayor Hoffman was elected she was transferred to Code Enforcement as a supervisor. Her last job with the City was in Capital Projects as the office manager.

Ms. Pato said when she retired she had several photographs taken from city hall, and there was nothing else surrounding it. She left the photos with Capital Projects Director Alan Gavazzi.

7. Were there any signs or symbols of the Jim Crowe era in the City of Sunrise?

Ms. Pato said the only thing she remembered was the controversy over bussing students, both black and white. They bussed students in from other areas and bussed students out of the city as well.

8. What was the longest amount of time you stayed in any of the positions.

Ms. Pato replied it was either the Mayor's Office or Capital Projects.

9. What was your favorite position in the city? Please explain.

Ms. Pato said she loved her last job at capital projects, and also loved the working in the mayor's office.

Mayor Lomelo was very good to his staff. In 1977 for his fiftieth birthday they filled his car up with balloons. The press got wind of it, and it turned into a really big to do.

Mr. Shaw asked about his hiring practices.

Ms. Pato said she had not involvement with that.

Ms. Clough Robinson asked what her favorite part was about working in the Mayor's Office?

Ms. Pato said her favorite part was meeting so many people.

Ms. Sherman asked how she saw the city change while she was with capital projects, what kind of development did you see?

Ms. Pato said there was so much being built; condos homes, and businesses. They had just completed the Sunrise Senior Center.

10. What position did you like the least? Please explain.

Ms. Pato answered code enforcement was her least favorite job. She was the supervisor in the office, but it was not easy.

11. What were your wages when you first got hired? Documenting our city and was there a disparity with what women were paid.

Ms. Pato said she was not aware of that. Did not recall her wages when she began.

12. What year did you retire from the city?

Ms. Pato retired from the City of Sunrise in 2009.

13. How has the City of Sunrise changed within your lifetime?

Ms. Pato said when she came to Sunrise, Sunset Strip stopped at NW 68th Avenue. She moved away for two years (to Chicago). When she returned in 1972 Sunset Strip had been extended to University Drive. She said that you have to realize this was a very big deal. She got the job in Sunrise in 1972 after she returned to the area. Ms. Pato was born in Australia and moved to New York when she was three or four.

Ms. Sherman said sometimes they have to attend different events, what can you reflect back as the things you saw that really influenced you.

Ms. Pato said she did not really think about it back then. Businesses were booming. Sunrise Lakes was being built and caused a very big population growth.

14. How has your service and experience effected your life?

Ms. Pato said it was a real education. She learned politics form the inside out, and would rather not expand on that.

Ms. Girard asked who she worked with in the Mayor's Office. Ms. Pato said Anne Marie LaBelle, Mayor Lomelo, Bette Clarke, Joanne Corelle, Eleanor Saucy.

Ms. Clough Robinson asked if anything funny or interesting happened while she was there.

Ms. Pato said they always had a good time, even while she was in code enforcement. One day they had a wedding in the mayor's office for a public works employee.

Ms. Sherman asked if she had any involvement with Sunrise Musical Theater.

Ms. Pato said she got free tickets. Ben Segal was the developer and promoter of Sunrise Musical Theater. She was at the Frank Sinatra concert at Sunrise Musical Theater

Ms. Sherman said she was as well and it was great

Ms. Pato said she was working in code enforcement when Sawgrass Mills Mall opened. They set up an office in the mall, so the people from all the stores could come over and get their occupational licenses.

15. What do you hope your legacy will be both professionally and personally?

Ms. Pato said she never thought about it. She was an employee who came to work. It was nice to be part of everything. She was a go-to person because she was familiar with so many things.

CONCLUDING THE INTERVIEW

16. Is there anything we did not talk about that you would like to add?

Ms. Pato said when Bob Butterworth was interim mayor they had a cocktail hour after 5:00 p.m. every Friday. There was another interim mayor, but she did not recall his name.

Mr. Howell asked Ms. Pato to think about when she started working for the city in 1972; how did the city keep up, keep the pay relative to the cost of living, did it continue on a matching scale.

Ms. Pato responded as she went to different jobs, she was fortunate and got pay increases.

Mr. Howell asked if she were replacing a man, was she paid differently.

Ms. Pato supposed so, she did not know what people were making. She felt she was treated fairly.

Ms. Pato said the only problem she had was in code enforcement. When she went to work there, the chief code enforcement officer was a bully who did not want her there. Mayor Hoffman transferred her to code enforcement. He said he could not have John Lomelo's secretary work for him.

Mr. Howell asked what was the catalyst was for going to a City Manager form of government.

Ms. Pato said people felt the mayor had too much control.

Ms. Pato added when she moved to the city the upside-down house was there. Their home was at 6110 NW 19 Street. There were horses, cows and farms right down the street. It was a different place than today. She brought a folder with several old newspaper articles, which she said she wanted to donate to the Historical Commission.

Ms. Clough Robinson thanked Ms. Pato for agreeing to participate in the interview.

VII. Adjournment

Seeing there was no further business to come before the board, the meeting adjourned at 4:49 p.m.

Meryl Girard, Deputy City Clerk