

**Bel Mar Shores Civic Association Meeting**  
Tuesday, October 16, 2008  
Jan Platt Library

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Association officers in attendance:

Steve Elting – acting President  
Sharon Toro – Treasurer  
Pat Figley - Secretary

Also in attendance: 18 neighbors/Civic Association Members

1. Steve Elting began the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. He informed the group that Sheri Schobert has stepped aside as President of the Bel Mar Shores Civic Association. As acting President, Mr. Elting presided over the meeting.
2. Steve Elting and Toni Thompson-Amis talked about the Hillsborough County Civic Assn. conference they both attended.
3. Toni Thompson-Amis shared information about the grant writing workshop she attended. The City of Tampa funds a neighborhood grant program. The goals of the program include strengthening and bringing communities together.

To secure a grant the Association would need to:

- decide on a project
- plan the project out
- develop a budget
- and most importantly secure commitments for volunteer hours

Mrs. Amis presented an idea for a project: enhancing the medians along El Prado using a “green” approach – adding native Florida plants and xeriscaping concepts.

Additional project ideas suggested included:

- a bicycle safety clinic... after further discussion it was concluded that this was a good suggestion and one that could be conducted as a neighborhood activity. The Sherriff’s bicycle rodeo program was also mentioned. And it was suggested that Crime Prevention Practitioner Maryann Huntsburg may be able to suggest or offer additional resources.
- closing off the alley and making it a play area
- making improvements to the Bel Mar Shores neighborhood sign at the entrance to the neighborhood (El Prado/Westshore). Years ago the sign was more elaborate than the one currently provided by the City.

Mrs. Amis volunteered to write the grant and suggested the following timeline for the process:

- March 2009 – neighborhood meeting to discuss/select project
- July 2009 – grant due
- October 2009 – grants awarded

4. Lt. Johnson, Division I Sector, City of Tampa Police Department attended the meeting to educate the Association on how the police operate in the Districts.

Lt. Johnson reported that the crime rate is down 48% over a five year period because of a new approach the Police have been taking when crimes are reported. Previously with the “call taker” approach the details of the crime were taken and a report was filed. Now, with more research into the details of the crime it is more of a “crime fighters” approach. Police are focusing more on the six percent of career criminals that commit 70% of the crimes.

To prevent becoming a victim of crime, Lt. Johnson offered the following tips to make yourself a “hard target”:

- keep your home partially lit
- keep your bushes trim
- secure your valuables – deter something that may happen. For example, don't leave your purse on the front seat of your car.
- lock your car

5. Steve Elting talked about the Bel Mar Shores Civic Association website. He has used a free on-line template to create a website for the neighborhood. You can visit it at <http://sites.google.com/site/belmarshores>. Mr. Elting noted that the domain name is rather long and that the Association could consider a shorter name – something easier to use, one that would come up on a Google search however this would likely mean paying a monthly fee.

The group also discussed printing information out that is posted on the website for those that do not have internet access.

Much discussion followed about what could or should be posted on the website. Suggestions included things such as:

- babysitters
- meeting minutes
- events calendar
- old neighborhood photos
- e-mails rec'd from the City (ie: watering restrictions, crime watch info, etc.)
- lost animals
- items for sale
- referrals (ie: painters, lawn care, etc.)
- e-mail addresses

6. Several suggestions to increase membership and attendance at neighborhood meetings and events were discussed. Ideas included:

- a welcome committee to visit new neighbors... and perhaps deliver a packet that could include items such as gift certificates donated by neighborhood shops and restaurants, information on the Civic Association, a neighborhood directory, a list of area events/attractions (ie: Florida Orchestra)
- more consistent communication
- an outstanding spring party... one of the suggestions was to take digital photos of homes to use on the name badges
- regular block captain meetings. The group decided that block captains should meet the third Thursday of every other month. The first block captain meeting will be Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Joan Coleman has graciously agreed to host the first meeting at her home.

Block captain meeting dates for 2009 will be:

January 22	Joan Coleman's home (3626 Beach Drive)
March 19	location TBD
May 21	location TBD
July 16	location TBD
September 17	location TBD
November 19	location TBD

7. When the floor was then opened for discussion of any other items a neighbor expressed concern over the size of the gas station "beer and wine" sign at the corner of El Prado and Westshore.

8. Thank you to Randy and Missy Planthaber for donating the gift certificates that were raffled off that evening. The lucky winners were:

- Skip and Carol \_\_\_\_\_ - Ashley Street Grill
- Randy and Missy Planthaber -Wine Exchange

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.