



TOWN OF SURFSIDE

9293 HARDING AVENUE
SURFSIDE, FLORIDA 33154
(305) 861-4863 • FAX: (305) 861-1302
WWW.TOWNOFSURFSIDEFL.GOV

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Dear Surfsiders,

Thank you for attending my most recent Town Hall Meeting, held on Tuesday, March 19th, 2019. It is important to me to host these informal roundtable conversations on a regular basis in order to better understand the community matters that most concern you and to bring them back to my colleagues on the Town Commission for discussion.

To open the meeting, I asked the simple question: ***What kind of community do you want to live in?*** The responses shared by the attendees were diverse and passionate.

Similar to my last Town Hall Meeting, enclosed below you'll find a recap of the additional topics we discussed during the course of the meeting:

Overdevelopment - What does it mean to you?

- I'm acutely aware of and sensitive to residents' concerns about overdevelopment in Surfside. Therefore, I wanted to hear varying viewpoints on the matter with the goal of defining the term so that specific strategies can be explored to address the concerns.
- Clearly, overdevelopment means different things to different people and in many cases, it is simply a feeling. Some examples used to describe overdevelopment included commercial projects on multiple lots, new hotels and other non-residential projects.
- Concerns were raised about "construction fatigue," with recent and planned hotel projects referenced. Concerns were also raised about approved multi-family projects being replaced by hotel projects. Others referenced the pace of development.
- Some residents feel the addition of hotels threatens the small town community feel of our town while one resident cited that Surfside was once home to 17 motels.
- It is important to correct a misconception that the Zoning Code allows for "larger, unnecessary" development. Our Zoning Code, which was changed from a prescriptive code to a quasi-form based code in 2008, has **not** changed density, intensity or height limitations. While building length allowances east of Harding Avenue were initially



requirements and design standards including façade articulation requirements, building length is now limited in line with the standards prior to the adoption of the 2008 code.

- The Zoning Code specifically helps to preserve Surfside’s unique and charming small town feel. The Zoning Code allows for design, creativity, better quality buildings, and a more dynamic relationship between buildings and public spaces.
- The idea of a development moratorium was suggested.
- Concerns of increased traffic were also raised. Some residents said the addition of hotels in Surfside has led to an increase in vehicular traffic, which in turn raises safety risks for pedestrians, particularly children. The recently approved Eden Hotel project was specifically mentioned as an example.
- One resident stated that Surfside receives flow-through traffic from the south and north, and traffic is to be expected.
- There was a general consensus in the meeting that Surfsiders also contribute to the safety concerns. Accordingly, it is important to adhere to the speed limit and to drive with caution.

Beach Chairs

- The beach chair matter has been ongoing for years. While there is no perfect solution, the Town Commission is committed to balancing the needs and desires of our community that include single-family property owners, multi-family property owners, business property owners and the general public and has established reasonable regulations based on protecting the health, safety and welfare of all residents and visitors.
- It was encouraging to hear during the meeting that there is an overall consensus that the beach chair situation has improved over the past few months.
- Concerns were raised about the number of beach chairs that are being stored in the hard pack area of the beach, and the Grand Beach Hotel was cited as an example. Residents should be aware the hard pack is generally on private property.

Transparency, Civic Engagement and Trust in Elected Officials

- Lately, there has been an undercurrent of distrust directed at your elected officials. I addressed this matter in my opening [remarks](#) at the March 2019 Commission Meeting. If you are concerned about a specific issue, if something does not seem right to you, or if you have an unconfirmed suspicion, please inquire with your elected officials directly. We are here to serve you and need to know when there is an issue in order to resolve it.
- If you are uncomfortable engaging your elected officials, links to the FBI, State Attorney’s Office and the County Ethics Commission are provided on the Town’s website.
- The best way to stay informed is to participate at meetings and workshops. All are encouraged to attend, share your viewpoints and concerns, be a part of the community conversation and contribute to the solutions.
- Using outlets like SeeClickFix and Nextdoor can be beneficial for seeking input from other residents and to acknowledge concerns. However, there is often more to the “story.”

- Keep in mind that Surfside's elected officials are Surfside residents as well. What happens in our Town affects all of us, and we should all work to preserve the unique spirit of our community.

Additionally, I would like to take this opportunity to invite Surfsiders to participate in the National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation from April 1, 2019 through April 30, 2019. *My Water Pledge* is a friendly competition between cities across the country to see which communities can achieve the goal of being the most water-wise. Cities with the highest percentage of residents participating in the challenge are eligible to win a wide array of prizes. I encourage Surfside residents to make the pledge at [My Water Pledge](#).

I also want to congratulate the Surfside Police Department on its recent three-year re-accreditation by the Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation, Inc. (CFA). Led by Chief Julio Yero, the Police Department underwent a strenuous re-accreditation process with months of hard work and dedication. Their commitment to public safety and upholding the integrity of the community is unrivaled. As a reminder, the department provides free security assessments of residents homes. Please call (305) 861-4862 for further information.

Thank you once again for your participation at the March Town Hall meeting. I look forward to the next Town Hall Meeting. In the meantime, I encourage each of you to think about *What kind of community you want to live in?* Feel free to e-mail me at ddietch@townofsurfsidefl.gov.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Dietch", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Dietch, Mayor

Town of Surfside