



**CHARLES W. BURKETT**  
MAYOR

I want to address the upcoming ballot questions, and explain why our commission put them forward. We did so simply because of our lesson over the last two years, watching how three tainted votes on our commission can change our paradise forever. These (5) questions will take the power, to completely transform our town, away from potentially corrupt officials and give that power to our residents.

1. Do residents want the “corridor,” all the properties between Collins and Harding, from 88th to 94th Street, to be a hodgepodge of different uses, like giant parking garages, ballrooms, budget hotels and office buildings, or do they want it to simply be high-end, low density, low rise residential units?

I say we want to encourage beautiful, charming, low rise residential uses only, so our corridor stays quiet and beautiful, and compliments the adjacent high-end oceanfront hotels and condominiums, and our quiet residential neighborhood to the west.

**I recommend a YES vote.**

2. Should our residential district, where all our homes are located, forever remain only single- family houses?

I know this seems like a silly question, but after our experience with the Danzinger, Rose & Landsman alliance, it occurred to residents how easy it would have been for that group to allow their developer pals to rezone our residential district and turn it into something completely different! This measure takes the power away from potentially corrupt officials and puts it in the hands of our residents.

**I recommend a YES vote.**

3. Again, this question stems from the alliance mentioned above. For the last two years, that alliance had been busy rezoning our town to benefit their developer/speculator pals. One of the really, more destructive actions they took, was to allow their pals to slice our existing lots into much smaller pieces, simply to be able to sell them off for more money. Remember the “Greed is Good” speech in the movie Wall Street, where the Wall Street guy buys the small airline, fires everyone and sells off all the parts of the airline, because it generated more cash-flow? That’s what the last guys running our town allowed to happen to residential lots in Surfside. This measure will forever prevent that from happening again, unless residents vote to allow it!

I recommend a YES vote.

4. Should developers, who owe the town millions of dollars, be required to pay back the money they owe to the town?

Again, this question stems from the Danzinger, Rose & Landsman alliance. Our town is owed many millions of dollars by builders and developers. What is frightening, is that with the wave of a wand, those debts can be completely forgiven by only 3 votes in a corrupt bargain. Residents don’t want that to happen, on the contrary, they want builders and developers to pay the millions they owe, thus this question.

**I recommend a YES vote.**

5. Should we prohibit any type of development on, or in the water areas of our town, specifically on Point Lake, North Canal and South Canal, which are the waterways fronting Hawthorne Avenue, Irving Avenue and Bay Drive?

This measure would protect the water areas next to the above streets from ever having any type of development in or on them with just 3 votes of the town commission. I know this sound far-fetched, but given the experience with the last crew in office, our commission wanted to make sure this decision was put in the hands of our residents, not a potentially corrupt group of elected officials.

**I recommend a YES vote.**

Five **YES** votes will protect our town’s charming ambiance and quality of life, and leave the power to make changes that could threaten our quality of life **only** in the hands of our residents – right where that power belongs!



**TINA PAUL**  
VICE MAYOR

The month of October is all embracing, with holidays that are both meaningful and fun. We begin the month with Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year celebrating the creation of the World, ushering in the Days of Awe that concludes with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. We reflect on the past year and look for forgiveness and ways to improve our lives and how we interact with others. We hope for a Sweet New Year and to be inscribed in the Book of Life. Sukkot is also celebrated this month, it is a pilgrimage festival where temporary shelters are built using Palm leaves for the roof to see the sky,

and commemorating when our ancestors wandered in the desert for forty years. We recite prayers over four species of plants, and on Shemini Atzeret we pray for rain. The holiday season culminates with Simchat Torah, a celebration of reading the Torah from the end to the beginning, representing the continuous cycle of wisdom and learning.

Sadness is felt this holiday season on the anniversary of the brutally violent attacks of Israeli civilians on Oct. 7, 2023 and the 251 hostages taken that day, with 97 hostages still unaccounted for. In Israel and Gaza, the past year has reflections of death and survival with innocent casualties of war on both sides. May the New Year 5785 be a year of Peace, hope and strength. As we end the month with Halloween, a favorite fall holiday with pumpkins and the annual Surfside Spooktacular event filled with enjoyment, costumes, candy, and scary fun, we are ready to celebrate the newly designed 96th Street Park!



**RUBEN A. COTO**  
COMMISSIONER

While campaigning, I had the honor of speaking to many Surfside neighbors and learning what they loved about our Town. Proximity to the beach, award-winning schools, walkability, and a responsive police department were frequent themes shared.

The answer that I received the most by far, however, was “I love my home!” Many Surfside residents moved to our beachside Town because they loved the architectural style that developed in South Florida during the post-war period. Defined by concrete masonry, distinctive angles, and asymmetry, the tropical mid-century architecture found throughout Surfside is fun!

Recently I have received MANY calls from residents concerned about how the newly constructed larger houses are affecting their homes and quality of life. The sunlight, so important to residents of a seaside town, is disappearing. High concrete walls are contributing to flooding. Setbacks appear to be ignored.

Can you imagine if one of these giant box homes were to be built on two sides or even three sides of your home? Like we recently heard during the last P & Z meeting, “these houses and builders are destroying the soul of our town” we cannot allow this to continue.

I am extremely proud that our new Planning and Zoning Board is committed to maintaining and protecting the charm of Surfside. These professionals focus not only on the technicalities of design when evaluating applications, they also are very sensitive to how new construction will affect the neighbors. They are dedicated to ensuring that new homes are harmonious with the character of the neighborhood and the safety of our residents.



**GERARDO VILDOTEGUI**  
COMMISSIONER

One of my favorite things about being a Commissioner is being able to see ideas come to life, transforming from mere words in the text of a resolution or ordinance into institutions and physical structures that improve the quality of life in our Town. Last month, I got to experience that particular feeling of satisfaction on two occasions—first, at the groundbreaking of our long-awaited project to improve stormwater drainage, and then again on September 19th,

when I attended the second meeting of our new Community Relations Board. You’ve all heard a lot about the drainage project, but the new Board may be less familiar to you, and I’d like to use this column to introduce you to it.

The idea for the Board came from Dr. Terry Murphy of FIU, the longtime moderator of the candidate debates during Surfside’s elections. Surfside’s new Board is modeled after a similarly named board in Miami-Dade County, which dates back to the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s and to the time when the County had recently welcomed its first major wave of refugees from Communist Cuba. The idea is to assemble a group of prominent citizens to help nurture a spirit of community that includes all the members of our diverse Town. Surfside’s Board has gotten off to a fast start and has planned two events for the month of October: a party on October 13th where residents can meet, share some free pizza, and pick up materials for a sukkah, and another exciting event, soon to be announced.

Here’s to new beginnings in October, and best wishes for a Happy New Year (5785) to all!

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