

January 18th, 2011

## **Collins Park Neighborhood Association 2010 In Review**

2010 marked the turning of a corner for our Collins Park Neighborhood. The city finally completed the total renovation of Collins Park making it the center piece and show place for our neighborhood and a great destination for both residents and tourists. There is one phase still left and that is to underground the utilities on 22nd Street which has started and will be completed by the 2nd quarter of 2011.

The City Center Streetscape project in the south side of our neighborhood is well underway and will be finished in late 2011 rejuvenating and beautifying all of our streets. A new sea wall has been installed along the Collins Canal between the end of 22nd Street and Washington Avenue. During 2011, the public works department along with a coordinated effort with Parks and Recreation will complete a linear park connecting Collins Park to the walkway that extends all the way to the Chamber of Commerce visitor's center. This walkway will be pedestrian and bike friendly connecting to the ocean and beach walk. We are already working on a program to create history markers along the pathway for tourists to learn about our roots and our past. This would be a first for Miami Beach. After pushing for 5 years to get the South Beach local to come to Collins Park, it was so successful, that it was extended to 23rd Street with a new stop at Liberty Avenue and another at 21st Street and Collins Ave connecting our entire neighborhood with the rest of South Beach.

The 7 building parcel known as Museum Walk bounded by the Collins Canal, Pine Tree Drive, 24th Street and Flamingo Drive has been totally restored back to its original grandeur and renamed the Tradewinds all in less than 9 months. Why can't the city work that fast? The first 3 buildings are already occupied with the final completion scheduled for March, 2011. It has made a huge transformation to the Lake Pancoast area of our neighborhood and with the City's CIP sewer and streetscape project set to begin in April, that part of our neighborhood should be completed by the beginning of 2012 leaving only the Woman's Club as a boarded up eyesore on 24th Street. That will be a focus of ours in the year to come.

Eden, a new place to sip, eat, drink and enjoy opened in the vacated Talula space and has been an instant success offering lunch and dinner plus brunch on both Saturdays and Sundays.

Yes, 2010 was a pretty good year in spite of all the cutback from a downturned economy. What else can we expect in 2011? For one, we will update and reprint our very successful Collins Park Brochure.

Boulon had a formal opening in January for their condominium sales and hopefully the retail will be rented, Serafina Restaurant is slated to come to the corner location overlooking the park where Wolfie's was.

The project at 2200 Collins Avenue will be finished bringing a dozen new rental residences and first floor retail in a spectacular new addition to our neighborhood. I would be surprised if there wasn't an architectural award for Vatche Simonian's design and preservation of the old Campenille Building.

The Artecity project should be completed and the sales team is already in place to move the marketing forward at newly reduced prices.

The City should finally start the long anticipated parking garage on 23rd Street. However, opening will not be until sometime late in 2012. Knowing the City that could roll over to 2013 but it IS coming.

Speaking of garages, Collins Park will soon have the City's first robotics parking garage, part of the massive renovation and restoration of the Shelborne Hotel that will be completely unveiled in the next few months as part of their 70th anniversary. Amazingly, they have stayed open through this unbelievable restoration of a major iconic structure.

The Bass Museum has instituted many new programs that will bring much more than just a museum to their walls and activate the park for both us and the tourists who visit. This kind of innovative programming is what will continue to keep us a major destination in Miami Beach.

SoBe Arts has started its 5th Year bringing music instruction to the young and even the old as well as classes in Theater. This company is responsible through its partnership with the city in bringing back, the formally boarded up, Little Stage Theater and Carl Fisher Clubhouse into a true working campus for our community and yes, it is part of Collins Park.

The Miami Beach Botanical Garden will also begin a major renovation as part of the City's CIP projects designed by Raymond Jungles in June. This along with a vision for a redesigned Convention Center on our western boarder that already has \$55,000,000 allocated for the first phase will really set our neighborhood out and apart from the rest of South Beach.

**But we have more to do and accomplish.**

We need to push for development of the 6 building project bounded by Washington and Park Avenues between 21st and 22nd Streets.

We need to work closely with the City and our Cultural Institutions to have good quality programming and event in Collins Park.

We need to continue pursuing getting a street makeover for 23rd Street and the Liberty Streetend between 23rd and the Collins Canal to make crossing the Street safe at that intersection.

We need to push for the walk bridges to refurbished and not just painted.

The Liberty bridge is a safety issue and has had no working lights for at least the past 13 years. This is disgraceful for our city.

Finally, we must be more vigilant working with our businesses and the city by being proactive in reporting any and all problems. Call the police at the non emergency number unless it is truly an emergency; call 305-604-CITY or go to [www.MiamiBeachFL.gov](http://www.MiamiBeachFL.gov). Don't leave it for the next guy. Do it yourself. Empower yourself. This is what will make us great, the team effort of working together for a better Collins Park Neighborhood.