

Melrose Business and Community Association
Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2010

The meeting was called to order by President Tom Lucas at 11:35 am. Dr. Phil Paine gave the blessing. President Lucas led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, after which lunch was served. Lunch was supplied by Blue Water Bay. There were 37(?) members and guests present.

Introduction of Guests: The following guests introduced themselves:

Rick Jordan of Jordan Vacations

Maureen Akey, who has opened a full florist service in Lather and Lace

Scott Steffens of Melrose Auto Repair

Mary Lou Hildreth, Mayor of Keystone Heights

Committee Reports:

Melrose Bay Park – William Chiappini reported that there is a problem with erosion and exposes roots at the park. It was mentioned that sand is available for \$50.00 a truck load. William will look into this and get several bids for the project.

Membership -- “Doc” Harris encouraged people to join our organization. Tom also reminded those who haven't paid their dues to please do so.

The Planning Committee should begin their activities in the near future.

Old Business: President Lucas announced the following:

MBCA will have evening meetings on May 13 and August 12 this year and the Annual Banquet will be November 19. All will be held at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall.

Sturgeon Farm – Tom mentioned the meeting on the sturgeon farm at the St. John's River Water Management District recently with about 90 people present. Input was given by concerned citizens, a representative for the sturgeon farm as well as the River Management representatives. However, no decision has been made yet.

It was announced that we have questionnaires available for people to give their input on New Directions for Melrose. We asked that everyone use the form to let us know what they want for Melrose in the future. While a lot of us don't want things in Melrose to change, it is best that we plan for future change rather than waiting for it to happen.

New Business:

Melrose Bay Park Association: Tom announced that we had set up this association in 2003 to recruit volunteers to help maintain the park as well as apply for funds for the park from the Eco-heritage Tourism group in Alachua County. The association will be reactivated as funds are still available from Alachua County. These funds, if we qualify, would be used to make improvements to the park. We would also ask the members of the committee to pay a small membership fee help improve and maintain the park. We will also seek donations for this purpose.

We now have an “MBCA” table at the Melrose Community Farmers Market on Friday afternoon. Tom asked for volunteers to help man the table. He passed around a sheet for people to sign up for this.

Announcements:

Jill McGuire had several items to announce. First she read parts of a letter written sent

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to St. John's River Water Management regarding testing for chemicals, drugs, etc. in the waste water from the sturgeon farm. She also announced a meeting on March 18 from 10:00 am to 12 pm with the St. John's River Water Management District at the Health Department in Gainesville.

Jill also reminded us of the Santa Fe Lakefest sponsored by Santa Fe Lake Dwellers on March 27 from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. There will be educational exhibits, music, food, boat rides, etc.

Tom announced that David Beete had a song about the sturgeon farm to perform for us. David's song gave a background on the sturgeon farm owner, the product and its lack of benefits to Melrose.

David also urged us to write or call Kirby Green, at St. John's River Water Management District, and let him know our thoughts. Mr Green will make the final decision on the sturgeon farm permit

Ed Sherwood gave us an update on the "Wings of Spring" festival next month. Plans are coming along nicely. He is designing a brochure for the event and is planning to charge \$50.00 for ads in the brochure.

Ed also said that he will extend the hours on the Farmer's Market as the the days lengthen, but he will first check with the vendors as to what they want to do.

Keith Bollum reminded us that Open Air Arts Festival starts today and artists will be working in the Melrose area for the next week. The festival gala will be on March 20 with all three local galleries participating.

Jo Harben announced that Ron Haase will be giving a talk on Monday, March 15 at 7:00 pm at Bellamy Road Gallery. Ron's topic will be "A Florida cracker goes to Italy".

Tom reminded everyone of "Coffee Talk" every Wednesday at Shake Rag Gallery from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Jennifer Pritchett announced there will be another "Successful Aging in Melrose" meeting March 18 at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall.

Speaker:

Tom then introduced our speaker, Mary Lou Hildreath, Mayor of Keystone Heights. She has lived in Keystone Heights for 9 years and has been Mayor for several years. She said that both communities need to plan for the future, as change is coming whether we want it or not.

She stated that while Melrose and Keystone Heights are close together in distance, they have different interests. She feels Melrose is "hipper" with its art galleries, etc.

Each community needs to evaluate its assets and build on them, but we should work together where we can – partnerships, festivals, etc. She feels that with the Rails to Trails, the lakes and other assets, we can become a "destination" area for people.

However, she stressed the need for hotels in the area so people coming for the activities will have a place to stay.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm.

Susan Lucas

Recording Secretary