



Islander

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AUGUST 2025

Launching the Future of Public Safety IN SUNNY ISLES BEACH

Q&A with Sgt. Jonathan Konetz:

This month, we sat down with Sgt. Konetz, leader of the Sunny Isles Beach Police Department's new Drone Unit, to talk about the city's groundbreaking Drone as First Responder (DFR) program. As the first fully operational, non-beta DFR program in Florida, this initiative puts Sunny Isles Beach at the forefront of public safety innovation.

What will the autonomous drone be used for?

The drone will support emergency response in a wide range of situations, from searching for missing persons and locating fleeing suspects or stolen vehicles, to monitoring large crowds and traffic, and even assisting in medical emergencies. It's designed to help officers get real-time information quickly and safely, especially in fast-moving or high-risk incidents where traditional methods may take longer.

How does it work?

We're using Skydio X10 drones—known for their high autonomy, speed, and advanced imaging capabilities, including thermal and infrared cameras. These drones are housed in "Docks" that act as charging and launch stations.

When a call comes in, the drone can launch within 20 seconds and reach most locations in under 2 minutes. It sends live video to officers' phones or computers, often before they arrive on scene. Thanks to FAA authorization, the drones can even operate beyond the line of sight, providing a broader perspective on unfolding situations.

Tell us about the new drone unit.

Our Drone Unit is made up of officers who've earned their FAA Part 107 remote pilot certifications, which allows them to legally and

safely operate drones for public safety use. The team went through extensive training to prepare for full deployment.

This team also ensures we follow federal laws and city policies to maintain accountability and protect privacy. It's a collaborative effort that combines law enforcement, engineering, and technology to serve the community more efficiently.



How will the drone benefit the police department and residents?

The biggest difference is response time. With a drone, we can now assess emergencies before officers even arrive, allowing us to make informed decisions faster. This can be critical in missing person calls, active incidents, or high-traffic areas.

It also improves officer safety. A drone can scout an area from above, giving us better situational awareness before we go in. For residents, that means help arrives faster, and incidents can be resolved more effectively and safely. It also helps the city manage large events or daily traffic more smoothly.

Final thoughts?

This program could not have happened without the amazing teamwork between our Police Department, Public Works, and IT. Everyone worked together to bring cutting-edge technology to the people of Sunny Isles Beach, faster, smarter, and safer. We're excited about what this means for the future and proud to serve as a model for other communities.

BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY

August marks the start of another school year and we want to make sure your children stay safe as they head back to class. Here are some important reminders-- whether you're driving, scooting, riding or walking to campus:

TRAFFIC & SCHOOL ZONES

Sunny Isles Beach is home to Norman S. Edelcup/Sunny Isles Beach K-8 School, located at 201 182 Drive. The community around the school should anticipate different traffic patterns in this area. Please allow extra time to get around the school during arrival and departure times. Remember to always follow the designated 15 miles per hour (mph) speed limit in school zones and stay alert for pedestrians and crossing guards.

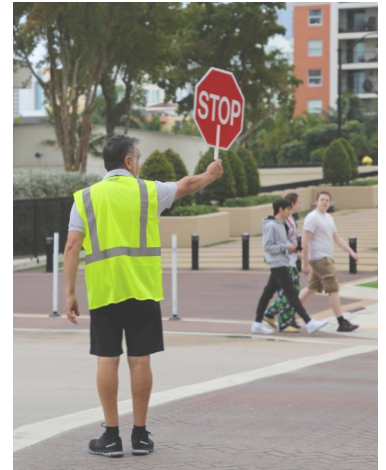
DROP OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Driving: If driving your child to school, obey school zone speed limits and follow the school's drop off and pick-up procedure. The designated drop-off and pick-up point is on the east side of the school on Atlantic Blvd. Make sure your child exits or enters from the passenger side of the vehicle in a timely manner to keep the line moving efficiently.

Parking: Do not park or drop off your child in the school's parking garage or the RK shopping plaza. Your car could be subject to towing by the private property owner.

Walking: If walking your child to school, please use pedestrian crosswalks and obey crossing guards.

Bicycles and Scooters: If your child bikes or rides a scooter to school, make sure they always wear a properly fitted helmet.



SCOOTER SAFETY GUIDELINES

Scooters are a popular way for students to travel to and from school, but it's important to do so safely. Here are some important rules for safe scooter operation:

- **Register Your Scooter:** All motorized scooters must be registered online at sibfl.gov/scootsafe. The process is free, and you will receive a decal in the mail to display on the front of your scooter.
- **Speed Limit:** Motorized scooters should not exceed 15 mph on sidewalks and should not exceed 20 mph on the roadway.
- **Solo Ride:** Scooters are meant for one person at a time, so no tandem riding is allowed.
- **Ride With Traffic:** Scooters must ride with the flow of traffic and follow traffic signals, using extra caution around intersections and driveways.

Officers will be issuing violations to riders who break the rules, ranging from a written warning to a maximum penalty of \$500 for a single violation. To learn more, please visit sibfl.gov/schooltraffic.

Proposed FY 2025/2026 Budget: Enhancing Safety, Parks, and Community in Sunny Isles Beach

Mayor Larisa Svechin

As your Mayor, I am pleased to share that we have nearly finalized our city budget. I would like to offer insights into our proposed fiscal year 2025/2026 Comprehensive Annual Budget, projected at approximately \$239 million, which is a 10.8% increase from last year's proposed budget. This is our blueprint for keeping Sunny Isles Beach the most sought-after place, while maintaining sensible public safety allocations. I am committed to being open about our spending.

We are investing more towards safety— upgrading parks and other public spaces while also maintaining and improving popular programs. Transparency remains paramount, with the full budget available at sibfl.gov.

We uphold fiscal discipline while delivering exceptional services. I invite you to review the budget and join us at upcoming meetings to shape our city's future.

Key investments include \$3.6 million for Ocean Rescue, and \$3.8 million for Parks Maintenance, enhancing safety and community spaces. Our budget process is always open to public

input through workshops and meetings, ensuring every dollar reflects resident needs.

What does this budget do for you? It keeps our beaches and streets safe with well-funded lifeguards through Ocean Rescue and a fully staffed and funded police department. Our beloved parks, beach access points, and pier will see much needed improvements, making them safer and great spots for picnics, sports, or just hanging out with friends. We are investing in street signage, roads, and sidewalks, so getting around is easier and safer. These efforts make our city a place where you can enjoy a high quality of life, with clean, safe, and fun spaces to live and play.

This budget supports the things that make Sunny Isles Beach special—ensuring the safest and most beautiful community. I encourage you to visit our website, read the budget, and join our meetings to help shape our city's future!



Contact Mayor Larisa Svechin at mayor@sibfl.net or call [305.792.1754](tel:305.792.1754).

Help Protect Our Neighborhood: Maintain Your Trees and Shrubs

With hurricane season underway, the Code Compliance Division reminds all residents and property owners of the importance of regularly pruning and maintaining trees, shrubs, and hedges on your property. This is a key part of keeping our community clean, safe, and storm resilient.

Tree branches and shrubs that extend into the public right-of-way can obstruct sidewalks, reduce visibility on streets, and potentially create dangerous conditions. Trees with weakened limbs or excessive overgrowth are more susceptible to damage from strong winds, which can lead to fallen branches, downed power lines, and blocked roadways during a storm. Keeping trees trimmed and healthy helps protect your property and the community during severe weather events.

The City recommends the following minimum clearances:

- 15 feet above streets to allow safe passage for vehicles, including emergency and service vehicles
- 7 feet above sidewalks to ensure clear and safe pedestrian access

Code Compliance officers will be inspecting landscaping throughout the City within the next few months and issuing notices for all properties that are found in violation. Thank you for helping keep our community safe.

Ensuring Cohesion: Clarifying Density and Land Use in Sunny Isles Beach's Comprehensive Plan

Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra

In our June commission meeting, we discussed text amendments to the existing Comprehensive Plan. A municipality's Comprehensive Plan serves as a strategic framework required by Florida law that articulates its long-term vision, goals, and policies for future development and land use. This document is essential for guiding civic initiatives, zoning decisions, and infrastructure investments, allowing communities to manage their growth effectively, preserve resources, and enhance residents' quality of life.

Regulations, such as the Land Development Regulations and its zoning ordinances, function as the detailed tools that implement the Comprehensive Plan. While the Comprehensive Plan outlines the broader objectives—like promoting sustainable growth, preserving green spaces, or enhancing public services—regulations provide the specific guidelines that dictate how those objectives are realized at a granular level. In essence, the Comprehensive Plan is the governing outline, while regulations detail the intricacies of building heights, land use types, and housing types. Alignment between

the Comprehensive Plan and its corresponding regulations is crucial. When they are synchronized, municipalities can create cohesive and orderly development that reflects the community's vision.

Conversely, a lack of alignment can lead to significant issues. For instance, if regulations permit developments that contradict the goals established in the Comprehensive Plan, it can undermine the municipality's objectives. In the case of Sunny Isles Beach, our Land Development Regulations incorporate “bonus” development, which increases density and floor area ratio allowances in exchange for public benefit improvements. However, our Comprehensive Plan does not contemplate this possibility. The proposed text amendments clarify the maximum density and intensity for each land use category on the east side of Collins and in residential categories for consistency with our Land Development Regulations.



Contact Commissioner Jeniffer Viscarra at seat4@sibfl.net or 305.792.1750.

Commission Recap

Below are some of the key approvals and decisions made by the City Commission in July. For the full agenda and meeting recordings, visit sibfl.gov/meetings.

Millage Rate

At a special commission meeting on July 31, the City Commission approved a resolution establishing the proposed millage rate at 1.7 mills per \$1,000 of taxable assessed value for Fiscal Year 2025/2026.

Governing Motorized Scooters and Electric Bicycles

The City Commission approved a resolution directing the City Manager to initiate public engagement activities and develop a comprehensive plan of action under new state regulations governing motorized scooters and electric bicycles. The City will host events to hear from residents and use that feedback to explore enforcement options.



CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF Sunny Isles Beach

The City of Sunny Isles Beach's 28th Anniversary celebration was a success. Crowds flocked to the beach at Samson Oceanfront Park to enjoy a night of music, barbecue, and fireworks. The City Commission was joined on stage by special guest Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava who shared a warm message with attendees about our wonderful city.

The evening came alive when Gypsy Band and Clubesque hit the stage to perform groovy disco tunes and some of today's popular hits. The night was capped off with a spectacular fireworks display lighting up the sky. We thank everyone who joined us in marking this special occasion and look forward to many more memorable celebrations to come.



New Lifeguard Towers Enhance Safety & Durability

You may have noticed a few new lifeguard towers on the beach. These new additions were approved during the April commission meeting and replaced a set of towers that were in disrepair and no longer suitable for use after more than 25 years on the sand.

The new lifeguard towers are constructed from marine grade aluminum, offering enhanced durability, and significantly reducing maintenance requirements and costs over time. They also feature:

- A bottom enclosure suitable for storing UTVs and other Ocean Rescue equipment
- Composite decking for improved longevity and safety
- Impact-resistant windows for enhanced storm resilience with accordion shutters
- 8-foot deck elevation

The current look of the new towers is temporary. Soon we will be wrapping them with a unique design to reflect the beauty and quality you have come to expect from Sunny Isles Beach.

CALENDAR

AUGUST OF EVENTS

Cultural Trip: *Topgolf*

Friday, August 1

11 AM - 1 PM

Bus will depart from and return to Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$40

Resident ID Cardholder: \$20

Back to School Splash & National Night Out

Tuesday, August 5

5 - 8 PM

Pelican Community Park, 18115 North Bay Rd.

Pre-registration is required.



August 6, 13, 20, 27

Wednesdays | 3 - 4 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Adaptive Beach Day

Thursday, August 7

9 - 11 AM

On the beach by Samson Oceanfront Park, 17425 Collins Ave.

Pre-registration is required.

Cultural Trip: *Flamingo Gardens*

Friday, August 8

12 - 3:30 PM

Bus will depart from and return to Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$40

Resident ID Cardholder: \$20

Beach Cleanup

Saturday, August 9

8 - 11 AM

Ellen Wynne Beach Access, 19333 Collins Ave.

Full Moon Yoga

Saturday, August 9

7:30 - 8:30 PM

On the beach by Samson Oceanfront Park, 17425 Collins Ave.

Teens Only: *S'mores Night*

Sunday, August 10

7 - 9 PM

The Spot, 215 185 St.

Pre-registration is required.

3D Mammogram Day

Tuesday, August 12

8 AM - 3 PM

Gateway Park, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Teen Talk

Tuesday, August 12

5 - 6 PM

The Spot, 215 185 St.

Cultural Trip: *The Phillip & Patricia Frost Museum of Science*

Friday, August 15

11 AM - 3 PM

Bus will depart from and return to Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$55

Resident ID Cardholder: \$35

City Commission Workshop: *Agenda Review*

Tuesday, August 19

10 AM

First Floor Meeting Room, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

City Commission Workshop: *Special Presentations & Discussion Items*

Thursday, August 21

3 PM

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

Regular City Commission Meeting

Thursday, August 21

6:30 PM

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

Cultural Trip: *Bayside Marketplace*

Friday, August 22

1 - 4 PM

Bus will depart from and return to Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$30

Resident ID Cardholder: \$10

Beach Movie Night

Saturday, August 23

7:30 - 9:30 PM

On the beach by Samson Oceanfront Park, 17425 Collins Ave.

Senior Roundtable

Wednesday, August 27

12 - 1 PM

Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Pre-registration is required.

Special Magistrate Hearing

Thursday, August 28

10 AM

Commission Chambers, Government Center, 18070 Collins Ave.

Cultural Trip: *EPCOT Theme Park*

Friday, August 29

5 AM - 9 PM

Bus will depart from and return to Gateway Center, 151 Sunny Isles Blvd.

Price: \$125 (Resident only)

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF EVENTS, VISIT sibfl.gov/events

Miami-Dade County Sunny Isles Beach Branch

AUGUST **LIBRARY PROGRAMS**

Citizenship Class (ages 19+)

Saturday, August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
10 AM - 12 PM

Homework Help and Tutoring (students grades K-12)

Saturday, August 2, 9, 30
10 AM - 1 PM

For more information, contact
tutoring@mdpls.org or call
305.375.1413.

Talking is Teaching – Talk, Read, Sing for Preschoolers (ages 3 - 5 yrs.)

Monday, August 4, 11, 18, 25
11 AM - 12 PM

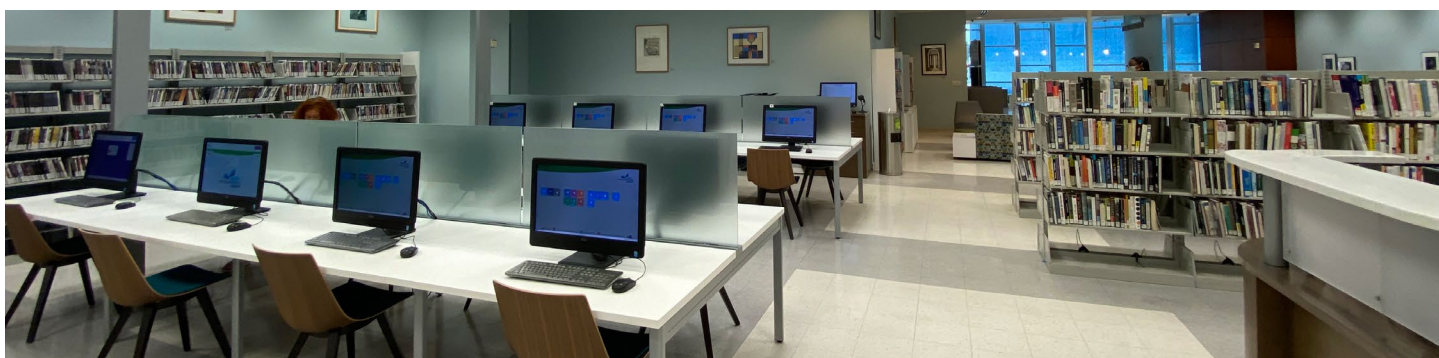
Chess Club (ages 9+)

Tuesday, August 5, 12, 19, 26
4 - 6 PM

Talking is Teaching – Talk, Read, Sing for Toddlers (ages 18 mos. – 3 yrs.)

Wednesday, August 6, 13, 20, 27
11 AM - 12 PM

For more information on Miami-Dade County
Sunny Isles Beach Branch Library programs, call
305.682.0726 or email vazquezh@mdpls.org
Unless otherwise noted, classes and programs
are held in the First Floor Meeting Room of the
Sunny Isles Beach Government Center, 18070
Collins Avenue.



CONDOMINIUM & APARTMENT SHORT-TERM RENTAL LICENSE RENEWALS

**A short-term rental is any condominium unit rented
to guests for a stay of 6 months or less.**

Renew by **September 30** each year
to avoid a \$50 late fee.

Renew now at
sibfl.gov/short-term-rentals
or scan the QR Code.



For more information, contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305.792.1740 or infopz@sibfl.net.

LOCAL BUSINESS TAX RECEIPT & CERTIFICATE OF USE **RENEWAL**

Renew by September 30



FOR MORE INFORMATION

305.792.1875 | businesslicensing@sibfl.net | sibfl.gov/code-compliance





Islander

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