

Miami Shores Mayor Mac Glinn starts his goodbyes



ami Shores Mayor MacAdam Glinn, who was elected in 2017, will be resigning from the Village Council in April, having accepted employment that will relocate his family to Chicago. The following is an abridged Q&A with him as he reflects on his tenure here.

BT: What motivated you to run for Village Council?

I was mainly motivated by a desire to bring a different, consensus-based approach to the Village Council. The council seemed very fractured, and the animosity was clearly detracting from the ability to pass good, progressive legislation that would make the changes needed to move the village forward.

BT: What are the biggest achievements during your tenure on the council?

On the public safety front, we have invested in our task force and other initiatives, including strong support for the police actions at the motel property [Biscayne Boulevard and 105th Street] that have driven our crime rates down to extremely low levels, and we passed a new collective-bargaining agreement to reward our outstanding officers.

I personally pushed very hard for the new license plate reader (LPR) camera system and

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sponsored the effort to get it done -- an effort that finally came to fruition in November, after three years of hard work by council and the police department. The LPR system will be arguably the most valuable new technological tool for developing leads and helping to quickly solve crimes that we've ever given our department.

As far as revitalizing our downtown goes, this council has been incredibly active. Importantly, we passed an ordinance that modernized the rules around alcohol sales, a critical first step in getting new restaurant concepts downtown. This change allowed our first wine bar to open and enabled other establishments, including a new restaurant and a gastropub, to do the same. That ordinance was one I first had the opportunity to work on while on Planning and Zoning, and then again after I was appointed to council.

We also commissioned a very well-regarded consultant to create a framework for downtown redevelopment, and consequently we now have design guidelines to create consistency and improve the downtown's aesthetics.

Additionally, I'm proud to have sponsored a change to the code that created incentives to encourage retail and restaurant uses on the ground floors throughout downtown, based on those recommendations, while also spearheading efforts to get medians put in downtown to improve its appearance and enhance pedestrian safety. Importantly, this council has also been very supportive of bringing important new events to downtown, like Plaza 98 and the farmers market.

Finally, on the infrastructure front, we successfully completed a number of projects that have dramatically improved various aspects of village life. First, the downtown sewer project, completed last year, was critical in terms of allowing for downtown redevelopment, especially retail and restaurant uses.

We also acquired the 9900 Building and adjacent parking lots -- formerly the Catholic Charities building -- at an incredible value, and that space has been a valuable flex space for village recreational offerings until we either redevelop it ourselves or sell it at a significant profit, along with a deed restriction, to someone who will redevelop it themselves.

I'm especially proud of sponsoring two specific efforts that added new park space/amenities for

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residents in the form of (1) utilizing existing village property to create a dog park adjacent to the aquatic center; and (2) the recent property acquisition that doubled the size of Optimist Park on NE 2nd Avenue and currently houses the sculpture garden and our farmers market.

We've made important strides in other areas, such as sustainability, commissioning the climate change environmental vulnerability study, joining the American Flood Coalition, waiving permit fees for solar arrays, and preparing to join Mayors for 100.

At the same time, we've tackled bike and pedestrian safety, and transit and quality-of-life issues, including pushing for greater traffic enforcement; lowering the speed limits and beginning implementation of traffic calming; liberalizing hedge and fence rules, and landscaping requirements; and council support for a northeast corridor transit station in El Portal. And we've continued our partnership with our local public schools -- we've signed a school compact for the first time ever with Miami-Dade Public Schools.

BT: What are the biggest disappointments?

Clearly, the failure of the community center bond issue was the biggest letdown.

I think there were six primary reasons for its failure: (1) the manner in which it was conceived was flawed (before I joined the council); (2) the council was slow to recognize the public's displeasure with the proposal and to act to address those issues, including those of private businesses that felt challenged and excluded; (3) there was no "vote yes" coalition to counter the "vote no" effort; (4) the changing demographics of the Shores meant that many voters saw no use for it and weren't interested in spending their money for "the greater good"; (5) the sticker shock of the cost of the facility meant that it probably should have been done smaller and in phases, even if the final facility didn't accomplish everything we would have liked; (6) and finally, we did a bad job of countering the mischaracterizations and falsehoods spread by the opposition about facility costs, council's motivations, the process, etc. -- and therefore many of those inaccuracies became commonly accepted.

BT: What are the most profound challenges the village faces?

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The biggest challenges in my mind are twofold: combating climate change and sea-level rise and solving transportation infrastructure shortcomings.

As far as the climate-change and sea-level rise issue goes, council has taken some important steps to address this issue, including the commissioning of our resiliency study that provided an initial framework for steps that need to be taken, as well as making changes to the code to address elevations for new seawall and home construction.

However, there's a great deal of work left to be done, and it will require leadership by council to execute the plan, as well as additional and significant resources from the county and state.

As far as transportation infrastructure goals, I'm continually surprised at the additional density that is getting approved up and down the Biscayne Corridor without plans to address the traffic it will create. That density will only add to the existing gridlock conditions we experience several times a day on all of our adjacent roadways and highways.

BT: Anything else?

I love this community and I never thought I would ever leave our current home, which we essentially and completely rebuilt from the ground up. In the end, I really am hopeful that we will be back here one day.

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