

Town & Gown Advisory Committee

The Town & Gown Advisory Committee has made tremendous progress as we try to bridge important issues that affect the city of St. Augustine and the Flagler College campus. This year we are building on that momentum as we continue collaborating on several issues and priorities that will bring benefits throughout downtown’s historic district. Our goal is simple: To build ties between the college and the St. Augustine community that benefits everyone. Our advisory board of residents and Flagler College representatives believe 2017 will be another important year as we continue to achieve this goal.

Mission Statement:

The Town & Gown Advisory Committee shall serve as a channel for representatives from the College and the Community to discuss relevant issues that impact the campus and city and report such issues to the respective individuals at the College and City. These issues may include, but not be limited to, items identified by the Town and Gown Task Force, such as student behavior, mobility, transparency of growth and expansion, and derelict housing/landlord responsibilities.

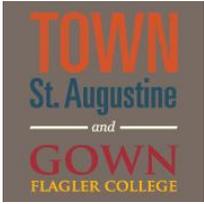
Advisory Committee Members:

Residents	Flagler College
Becky Greenburg Susan Rathbone Judith Seraphin Clyde Taylor John Versaggi Irene Arriola	Paige Armstrong Dan Stewart Laura Stevenson

Highlights from 2016-17 include:

- The establishment of a student-only online rental blog in which students can inform one another about available apartments and interactions with landlords.
- Established a reporting system to handle behavior complaints made to SAPD or Flagler College. Complainant now receives feedback to assure action was taken.
- Town and Gown Advisory Committee, along with other College Advisory Boards, participated in the selection of the new President of Flagler College.

A detailed annual report on the Town and Gown Advisory Committee’s action items can be found below.



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2016-17 Accomplishments and Future Priorities

Off Campus Housing:

A subcommittee was created to improve safety and general conditions of off campus student housing. While many landlords oversee their properties and tenants, some landlords condone poor and unsafe conditions, and un-neighborly tenants. Such conditions are the source of complaints by adjoining neighbors. These situations apply to all long term rental properties, not just those offered to students.

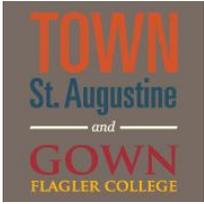
The subcommittee met three times with City Officials to suggest improvements. The City of St. Augustine has weaknesses in ordinances for control of rental properties. Business licensing and safety inspections are not required except in limited situations. Code violations for parking, sidewalk obstruction, and disturbances typically require a citizen complaint for enforcement. Budget has been cited by the City as the reason for not having a citywide licensing and inspection ordinance and for not having proactive code enforcement.

Actions:

- Continue periodic meetings with City Officials to strengthen rental property ordinances.
- Flagler Student Government established online blog to rate rental sites and landlord support.
- Quarterly Award for “Good Citizen Rental Property” to recognize positive conditions and behavior of student occupied rental properties in work for Fall 2017 implementation.

College and Community Relations:

A subcommittee was formed to create venues in which students, faculty and staff, and area residents to socialize. It is felt that socializing in the absence of any issues is one good way to foster positive relations among all involved.



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Actions:

- “Block Party” set for October 22 (cancelled due to Hurricane Matthew) rescheduled for September 2017.
- Extend invitations to neighboring residents through Neighborhood Association network.
- Venue to be Flagler College West Lawn.
- Engage alumni merchants to provide food, music.

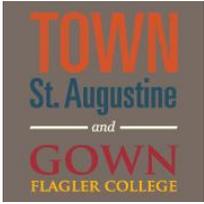
Student & Resident Behavior Issues:

Most students practice good behavior in the community. It is the minority few causing problems leading to resident complaints. Residents felt their complaints to SAPD or Flagler College were not being addressed. SAPD had difficulty validating if the subjects of complaints were students or not.

Since implementation of the process described below, overall incident level has dropped, particularly repeat offences.

Actions:

- Engaged SAPD to establish a process such that any student cited would be reported to Flagler Vice President of Student Services.
- Vice President of Student Affairs meets with the student(s) to educate and deliver a warning. Feedback is then given to the community member who originated the complaint.
- A database of student names has been provided to SAPD to facilitate enrollment verification.
- Director of College Relations met with local Neighborhood Associations to make Residents aware of the process. Hand cards were distributed with points of contact.
- SAPD has altered patrol hours to better align with problematic time of evenings.



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Transparency of Growth:

Residents have expressed they felt uninformed of Flagler College expansion plans and vulnerable to more neighborhood intrusion. The College felt that their plans must be closely held to prevent exploitation by owners of strategic property. Past attempts to share expansion plans before applying for Zoning or Building Permits were not productive.

The Flagler College Malaga St. Parking and Dormitory Complex was a recent project example in which concerned residents were invited to preview the plans. Dr. Abare and two Board Members presented the renderings to approximately twenty-five area residents. The Residents appreciated the insight and supported to continuation.

Active and long-term projects identified by Flagler College are listed below and can be shared with Residents.

- a. Renovation of the Anderson Cottage for use as Alumni Center
- b. Upgrade of Kenan Hall, including improved Science Laboratories
- c. Lacrosse Field at Sports Complex
- d. Future development of land owned by Flagler College on Hwy 207.

Continuing and Future Goals:

- Advocate an Annual State of Affairs Report prepared by College Leadership suitable for local publications to keep area Residents informed of future plans.
- Join International Town & Gown Association. Send delegates to annual meetings.
- Have input into Strategic Planning process to represent the Community.
- Advocate sharing of non-sensitive Strategic Plans with community.
- Pressure CoSA to implement regulation of all rental properties.
- Publicize Quarterly Good Citizen Award for ideal Tenant and Landlord conditions.
- Annual Block Party Fall Quarter.
- Identify new ways to engage the community in college sponsored events
- Encourage CoSA to develop and issue a citywide climate survey using College resources to formulate quantifiable questions..
- Facilitate discussion between Flagler College and CoSA to determine implications of diminishing inventory of rental properties in the City. Trend to convert properties to AirB&B and VRBO may create a shortage for future students.- Some communities have imposed regulations to prevent further growth.