



NEWS RELEASE

TODAY'S DATE: November 1, 2017

RELEASE DATE: IMMEDIATE

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Future of Historic Downtown Stuart Depends on Waterfront Preservation and Revitalization Group, Stuart Main Street, Supports Planned Projects Building on Unique Downtown Character

STUART, FL – November 1, 2017 – What do curbside patios filled with diners, joggers winding their way around the downtown waterfront on the Riverwalk boardwalk, and weekly free concerts next to city hall and the Stuart Green Market, have to do with each other? They are all part of Stuart Main Street's unique vision for the future of Historic Downtown Stuart – a future that revolves around an active outdoor and waterfront experience for all.

The Downtown preservation and revitalization group, now celebrating its thirtieth year, has been a driving force behind Historic Downtown Stuart since 1987. Early projects included restoring Woodmen Hall and organizing a celebration of the city's 75th anniversary. "In recent years, Stuart Main Street has increasingly focused on downtown experiences that highlight the waterfront and outdoors," says Board President, Michael Houston.

- A 2011 Stuart Main Street study by Marcela Cambler & Associates, Inc. led to converting underutilized landscape islands and parking areas to outdoor dining patios
- In 2014 Stuart Main Street hosted a public input workshop to look at the Flagler Avenue peninsula. With public input, the stakeholder group supported relocation of City Hall



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within the Downtown, extension of Osceola Street, and maintenance of public space on the waterfront.

- In 2015, as part of its partnership with the Downtown Business Association of Stuart, Stuart Main Street helped expand the *Rock'n Riverwalk* concert series to a year-round waterfront event. That Fall the Riverwalk extension officially opened, a new section of boardwalk connecting the Riverwalk Stage to a mini park at the foot of Colorado Avenue, thanks to a Stuart Main Street initiative to help secure riparian rights from property owners on Seminole Street to allow construction of the boardwalk extension.
- In 2017 Stuart Main Street polled over 300 community members and held two days of workshops as part of a 30 year planning exercise. The resulting community- and market-based transformation strategy focus on a Waterfront Outdoor Active approach to keeping Downtown Stuart strong.

“Now we are seeing those Stuart Main Street initiatives being matched by private developers,” Houston added. This year the Stuart City Commission approved two waterfront projects on Seminole Street in Downtown Stuart. Seminole Bluff, a 20 unit luxury waterfront property featuring traditional design is slated to begin construction later this year. Hollub Investments, a mixed use project featuring just over 4,000 square feet of retail space and 20 residential units



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will be built on vacant land on southeast Seminole Street. A third residential project previously approved by the city commission is now in permitting; the 49 unit residential property, Azul, will be located on the site of the former Triangle Bar.

The future of a fourth project, NorthPoint, lies in the hands of Stuart voters. The project, located on 2.6 acres of city-owned property on the St. Lucie River just north of the old Roosevelt Bridge, would include offices, a restaurant, and a retail plaza. Other plans for a boardwalk, dock, and water taxi would add connectivity to the historic downtown. At its July meeting, the Stuart Main Street board unanimously passed a motion of support for the project. A referendum vote on November 7 asks city voters if the City should sell the property for at least its appraised value, in compliance with the City's Community Redevelopment plan and providing tax relief to tax payers. Two other questions on the ballot ask if voters support long-term leases for other city-owned waterfront properties where Mulligan's Beach House and the Pelican Café are currently located.

Stuart Main Street is a 501(c)3 historic preservation-based economic development program dedicated to creating and promoting a positive downtown experience for residents, businesses and visitors. First recognized as a Florida Main Street program in 1987, Stuart Main Street uses the Main Street Four-Point Approach® as established by Main Street America and practiced in over 1600 communities across the country. Specifically Stuart Main Street works to: Build



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community consensus and use resources collaboratively; Maintain a distinctive appearance in keeping with downtown's Old Florida charm; Stabilize the economic environment, strengthening and retaining existing businesses and filling vacancies; and Market a positive image of the downtown through advertising, public relations and digital media, and retail and special events. Recent projects include the Shop Local | Shop Smart program, expansion of the Riverwalk to Colorado Avenue, the downtown outdoor dining platforms, and the Rock'n Riverwalk free weekly concerts. Stuart Main Street meets the second Tuesday of every month at 4:30 p.m. in the City Hall Chambers at 121 SW Flagler Avenue, Stuart. For more information, call 772-286-2848 or visit stuartmainstreet.org.

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