



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**CAROL JEAN LOCICERO, CHAIRWOMAN**

Thomas & LoCicero

**JIM BALTZELLE, VICE CHAIRMAN**

Director of Digital Media, Southeast,  
The Associated Press

**FRANK DENTON, TREASURER**

Editor, *Florida Times-Union*

**JON KANEY, GENERAL COUNSEL**

Kaney & Olivari

**DICK BATCHELOR**

Founder and President,  
Dick Batchelor Management Group, Inc.

**MIKE DEESON**

Deeson Media

**SKIP FOSTER**

President & Publisher, Tallahassee Media Group

**GARY GREEN**

Deputy News Editor and Digital Director,  
Innovation News Center

**CINDY McCURRY-ROSS**

Executive Editor & VP of Content, The News-Press

**SAMUEL J. MORLEY**

General Counsel, Florida Press Association

**TIM NICKENS**

Editor of Editorials, *Tampa Bay Times*

**PATRICK RICE**

Editor, *Daytona Beach News-Journal*

**DEAN RIDINGS**

President & CEO, Intersect Media Solutions

**APRIL SALTER**

President & Chief Operating Officer,  
Salter Mitchell

**BOB SHAW**

Retired Editor

**CAITIE SWITALSKI**

Reporter, WLRN Public Media

**PETE WEITZEL**

Director Emeritus

**CHARLEY WILLIAMS**

Past State Board,  
League of Women Voters of Florida  
Director, Business Development, GEC

**DAVE WILSON**

Senior Editor, *The Miami Herald*

November 30, 2017

The Honorable Steve Leary, Mayor  
City of Winter Park  
401 South Park Avenue  
Winter Park, FL 32789

Dear Mayor Leary:

We have been contacted by Winter Park residents expressing concern about recent one-on-one meetings between members of the City of Winter Park Commission. From a quick check of the City's website, there was an "informal discussion" between you and Commissioner Seidel scheduled for yesterday morning.

While such one-on-one meetings *may* meet the technical requirements of our Sunshine Law – the meetings are publicly noticed and presumably minutes are taken – we believe the meetings violate the spirit and intent of the law.

The practice of holding one-on-one meetings is not only bad public policy, it is also legally questionable. Florida's courts have routinely and consistently held that the Sunshine Law is to be construed so as to avoid all evasive devices. [*City of Miami Beach v. Berns*, 245 So. 2d 38 (Fla. 1971); *Town of Palm Beach v. Gradison*, 296 So. 2d 473 (Fla. 1974); *Blackford v. School Board of Orange County*, 375 So. 2d 578 (Fla. 5<sup>th</sup> DCA 1979); *Wolfson v. State*, 344 So. 2d 611 (Fla. 2<sup>nd</sup> DCA 1977)]

The purpose of our open government laws is to provide the public an opportunity to oversee its government and hold it accountable for its actions. The practice of holding one-on-one meetings, particularly during the workday, creates an unnecessary and unwarranted barrier to the public's ability to attend such meetings.

Citizens should be encouraged to participate in their government and these one-on-one meetings act as a disincentive and deterrent to civic engagement. We strongly urge you and your fellow commissioners to desist in this questionable practice.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Petersen, President

cc: Winter Park City Commission  
Randy Knight, City Manager  
FAF Board of Trustees