

Windows cause trouble in Tarpon

Club appeals denial
of after-fact permit
request

BY KATHRYN WILLIAMS
Tampa Bay Newspapers

TARPON SPRINGS — After a permit denial from the Historic Preservation Board, a businessman found himself before the City Commission Oct. 18, hoping to overturn the decision on appeal.

The appeal proved successful, but not before some frank talk on both sides.

Joe Albino has been working to open a downtown night-
WINDOWS, PAGE 4

Honoring history

Oxi Day to be celebrated
on Oct. 28.
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Questions remain

Changes to animal code
put on hold.
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Tarpon company opens students' eyes to post-college options

Stamas Yacht
shows students
boat building

BY KATHRYN WILLIAMS
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TARPON SPRINGS — During their junior and senior years of high school, students hear one question more than the rest: What are your plans after high school?

For some it's easy. They know they want to go to college, what school and their particular major. For others, the answer can become more complicated,

in some cases because they don't know their options.

"These kids need another avenue if they're not going to college," said Anna Stamas, director and part owner of Stamas Yacht.

It's with this in mind that Stamas had the idea to open her company's doors for the first time to a public tour on Oct. 18, and introduce Tarpon Springs High School students to the world of manufacturing.

Past the doors of the lobby, through the white dust that seems to be everywhere, the group of close to

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KATHRYN WILLIAMS

Anna Stamas, U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, Stamas Yacht CEO John Stamas and Mayor Chris Alahouzos pose with the Tarpon Springs High School students in front of the company.

Group wants Tarpon to have official tree

Backing red
mangrove because
it is a 'survivor'

BY KATHRYN WILLIAMS
Tampa Bay Newspapers

TARPON SPRINGS — Rhizophora mangle and walking

trees — the red mangrove tree has many different names.

For Robin Saenger, founding director of Peace 4 Tarpon, there is only one way to describe the tree.

"It's a survivor," Saenger said.

Saenger came before the City Commission Oct. 16 to request that it proclaim the red mangrove the official tree of Tarpon Springs. Commissioner said they would give the request further consideration.

Red mangroves, like all

mangroves, are built to survive in wet, salty areas where other plants cannot thrive. They get the name walking trees because of their prop roots, which grow from their branches and down into the water,

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Options

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30 listen to their tour guide tell them about what it is he does.

Student Council members and students from the executive leadership committee entrepreneurship pathways and drop prevention programs took part.

Tarpon High Principal Leza Fatolitis and other faculty members were present as well.

Additionally, Tarpon Springs Mayor Chris Alahouzos and U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor, were on hand.

Johnny Walker, project manager at Stamas Yacht, led the tour and the conversation.

Walker explained everything from the different jobs, building of specific boat parts and the process that leads to assembly.

"There isn't anything that can happen to a

fiberglass boat that we can't fix," Walker said.

Walker also explained how the development of a single boat can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and how the entire industry has had to adapt to the changes in the way their customers use their boats.

"There's science involved in this industry," Walker said.

Adaptation and science are integral in what Walker and other employees do every day.

Although Walker doesn't consider himself a scientist, he says this career has forced him to dabble in science quite a bit.

Walker and the staff conduct quality control tests, which are at their core, experiments.

To test wear, they'll leave materials out in the sun for extended periods of time or spray those materials

with harsh saltwater.

"You've got gas and electric 40 miles in the ocean, you can't afford to make a mistake," Walker said.

Walker conducts what he calls "redneck engineering," where he gets hands-on with the materials, making sure they are working and hold up the right way. He calls it this because Walker doesn't have a formal science background.

In fact, his story is a perfect example of what Stamas was hoping to bring to the students.

Walker, a native of Cocoa Beach, was a surfer. After graduating high school, he went into the military, doing helicopter maintenance.

Then in 1982, he started working with Seaway Boats. He moved into a supervising capacity later on and even worked in Ireland for a time.

He did this, much of which involved engineering work, without a college degree.

"I wished I finished,

but I didn't," Walker said.

With this in mind, he reminded the students that he is a firm believer in college not being for everyone.

Walker said there are plenty of jobs in this country that will not require a degree. There are options.

He stresses, however, the importance of getting a degree, if possible.

"I couldn't get the job that I have now in some other companies because I don't have the education," Walker said.

Stamas Yacht's history

Soon after Walker finished telling his story effectively ending the tour, owner and CEO of Stamas Yacht, John Stamas, told the story of his company.

Anna and John Stamas own the company with their other two brothers, George P. and Bill P. Stamas. Although Anna is in real estate, George is a developer and Bill is a pilot, they all stay

involved in the company.

In fact, even their grandchildren are involved, Peter G. Stamas and Billy G. Stamas are members of the operations team.

Stamas Yacht is family owned and operated, and having been in Tarpon Springs for over 60 years, it is the oldest continuously family-owned and operated boating company in the United States.

The company has name recognition. Speaking with Alahouzos, Bilirakis said, when people from around the country, if not around the world, talk about Tarpon Springs, they mention three things.

"The sponge industry, Stamas Yacht, and Pappas restaurant," Bilirakis said.

The Stamas' siblings have continued to work to keep the company, and their father's legacy, alive.

It all started when Peter and Nicholas Stamas, high school

students in Tarpon, built a 22-foot boat in their back yard and won first prize at the Florida State Fair in the late 1930's.

"[People] asked them to contact people who want larger boats," John Stamas said.

By 1952, the brother had opened Stamas Yacht and in 1959 they started building their fiberglass boats.

The company has built boats throughout the country and around the world.

"Germany, Japan, Africa: you name it," John Stamas said. "We do have boats all over the world."


Nicholas Stamas has since passed away, and his brother Peter, now 93-years-old, has passed their reigns of his company to his children, who have kept the company going, even utilizing the same space.

"This is pretty much where we've built all of the boats over the years," John Stamas said.

Seeing as Stamas and her three brothers, as well as most of their children, attended Tarpon Springs High school, she said

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years, John Stamas said.

Seeing as Stamas and her three brothers, as well as most of their children, attended Tarpon Springs High school, she said she couldn't think of a better school to welcome into their doors.

"We wanted you to be a part of it," Stamas said. "We're very privileged to have you here."

Stamas Yacht is located at 300 Pampas Ave.

For more information on Stamas Yacht, visit <http://stamas.com>.

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