

Coral Springs Forum

Thursday, September 10, 2009

Springs resident lobbies for bike rack project

A Coral Springs resident who is running for city commissioner wants the city to make use of a county program that provides free bike parking facilities.

Mark Gendal, an optometrist, brought the issue up before the city commission last week. "Bike racks are very important; it will encourage people to ride their bikes," he said. "When gas goes up again, more people can save money by riding their bikes. These bike racks are free, functional and beautiful. All you need to do is install and take care of them."

The bike rack project will provide bicycle parking facilities to commercial property owners, local government and businesses in Broward. Implemented by the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, the program will be funded through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century.

"The objective is to get cars off the road," Gendal said. "They want to encourage the use of bicycles for personal transportation as an alternative to motor vehicles. That will improve the air quality and reduce air pollution. We can use the program to make the city better."

"We [also] have a big problem with childhood obesity," Gendal said. "Over 30 percent of the city's population is under 18. I see kids coming in with diabetes when they are 15; their physical makeup is more like 50 than 15. We really have to do something about it [and encouraging bike riding will help]."

Mayor Scott Brook wanted the city to find out more about the project. "We will take a look at it and see if we can have a discussion in two weeks," he said. "I brought up the idea of adding more bike racks a few months ago. I am all for more bike racks; I will push for an ordinance that requires new buildings in the city to install bike racks."

"The good thing is that it's not just for cities," City Manager Michael Levinson said. "The racks can be installed on commercial and private properties. The funding can be utilized by commercial properties, HOAs and property associations."



STAYING IN SHAPE Dr. Mark Gendal and his wife, Stacey, enjoy a morning bike ride in their Coral Springs neighborhood. Gendal, who is running for commissioner, wants the city to make use of a program which pays for bike racks. STAFF PHOTO/BETH BLACK