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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
NO. LTC # 073-2008

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti H. Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: February 28, 2008

SUBJECT: Relocation of the Miami Beach Police Department Canine Training Facility

This letter to the Commission will serve to inform the Mayor and City Commission of the City of Miami Beach of the pending relocation of the Miami Beach Police Department's (MBPD) Canine Training Facility to Stillwater Park, 8440 Hawthorne Avenue. Since the early 1990's the Canine Training Facility has been located at Pine Tree Park, 4499 Pine Tree Drive. Because of the increased visibility and perceived crime deterrent effect to the proposed new site, there has been strong neighborhood support including that of four North District homeowners associations. These area residents of Stillwater Park feel that the new training facility location will have a positive impact in their neighborhood.

As a result of this recommendation to relocate the canine facility to Stillwater Park, MBPD Canine Sergeant Henry Doce conducted a survey of both parks and determined that the new site is better suited for canine training than Pine Tree Park. Stillwater Park has available parking, a small building with rest rooms, running potable water, electrical outlets; and is no longer being used for recreational purposes. This building will provide protection from inclement weather and would be an ideal respite from the heat and rain for both the handler and dogs. Other than the parking, Pine Tree Park has no other amenities to support canine training. Contingent upon the relocation to Stillwater Park, the Parks and Recreation Department has offered to install a chain link fence and lighting for night training. It should be noted that the Parks and Recreation Department Director, Kevin Smith expressed no opposition to the Police Department's decision to change training sites.

Further impacting the decision to relocate the Canine Training Facility is that some residents in the area of Pine Tree Park have expressed the desire to use the current canine training area to enhance the existing dog park. As part of the consideration to move, it is anticipated the removal of the Canine Training Facility from the Pine Tree Park will have no negative effects on the immediate area. Having the benefit of Sergeant Doce's survey and the overwhelming North District community support, the administration believes the Stillwater Park location will better serve the interests of the City and its residents.

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