




MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. 223-2008

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Matti Herrera Bower and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager 

DATE: September 4, 2008

SUBJECT: Sleepless Night

As you know, last year, the City of Miami Beach developed the inaugural edition of Sleepless Night, an all-night, FREE, citywide celebration of the arts, presented by the City of Miami Beach Tourism and Cultural Development (TCD) Department and Cultural Arts Council (CAC). The event was produced in-house by City staff as a result of the response from the community in the 2005 and 2007 Community Satisfaction Surveys, where residents identified a desire for more cultural activities. Sleepless Night was also developed as a result of the Cultural Arts Council's desire to create a signature, annual cultural event to celebrate Miami Beach's commitment to the arts. With the opening of the Carnival Center, and the discontinuation of the annual "Invitation to the Arts" season preview, the CAC felt it essential to present a new event that would focus the cultural spotlight on Miami Beach.

This innovative citywide showcase of culture first began internationally when Paris hosted the first "Nuit Blanche" event in 2002. The success of the event in Paris has made it an annual city celebration and has become an international trend, spreading to cities such as Rome, Madrid, Brussels, and Toronto. Sleepless Night is a collaboration of all the city's major cultural institutions, theaters, galleries and arts organizations, along with hotels, shops, nightclubs, restaurants, and international artists and presenters.

As a result of the tremendous success of the Sleepless Night 2007, the City immediately began planning for Sleepless Night 2008. As you know, government funding has been severely impacted over the last two years. While the City of Miami Beach remains committed to providing new and interesting cultural programming for our residents and visitors, unfortunately and unexpectedly, the current economic downturn in the United States has made the quest for private funding, including sponsorship funds that helped subsidize last year's event, more competitive than ever. This funding provided the seed money needed to ensure a successful event. We found ourselves unable to proceed with the planning for this year's Sleepless Night and have begun contacting our community partners. We remain confident that foundation and other private and public funds for this event are forthcoming in the future, but available funding at this critical stage of planning prevents us from proceeding this year. We are disappointed, but our belief in this event and its transformative power to create community and increase cultural awareness is unwavering. We have decided instead to apply our resources towards creating a truly spectacular Sleepless Night for 2009. We are determined that what turned out to be last year's most successful experiment in audience-building for the arts will return in full force on October 31, 2009.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions regarding this event.

C: Hilda M. Fernandez, Assistant City Manager
 Max A. Sklar, Tourism and Cultural Development Director
 Gary Farmer, Cultural Affairs Program Manager

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