



**City Commission Workshop**

**City Hall, Commission Chambers, 3rd Floor, 1700 Convention Center Drive  
April 6, 2009**

Mayor Matti Herrera Bower  
Vice-Mayor Edward L. Tobin  
Commissioner Victor M. Diaz, Jr.  
Commissioner Saul Gross  
Commissioner Jerry Libbin Absent  
Commissioner Deede Weithorn In at approximately 3:29 p.m.  
Commissioner Jonah Wolfson

City Manager Jorge M. Gonzalez  
City Attorney Jose Smith  
City Clerk Robert E. Parcher

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**ATTENTION ALL LOBBYISTS**

**Chapter 2, Article VII, Division 3 of the City Code of Miami Beach entitled "Lobbyists" requires the registration of all lobbyists with the City Clerk prior to engaging in any lobbying activity with the City Commission, any City Board or Committee, or any personnel as defined in the subject Code sections. Copies of the City Code sections on lobbyists laws are available in the City Clerk's Office. Questions regarding the provisions of the Ordinance should be directed to the Office of the City Attorney.**

Meeting called to order at 2:30 p.m.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Mayor's Blue Ribbon Tourism Task Force Report & Findings**

Stu Blumberg, Chair of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Tourism Task Force, ("the Task Force) stated that the Visitors and Convention Authority (VCA) under the leadership of Steven Haas, Past-Chair, Elsie Howard, Current Chair; and Grisette Roque Marcos, Executive Director, put the tourism industry people together in a think tank environment and asked where to go from here. Mayor Bower was asked to create another Blue Ribbon Tourism Task Force similar to the Task Force that was formed following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack. He thanked and recognized all the volunteers on this project and read their names into the record: Co-Chairs, Elsie Howard and Steven Haas; Cultural Arts/Special Events Committee: Grisette Roque Marcos, Executive Director-Miami Beach Visitor and Convention Authority and George Neary, Associate Vice President of Cultural Tourism-Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau; The residential committee: Wendy Hart, and Sandy Horowitz, Past Chair of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce; Administration: Wendy Kallergis, President and CEO of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce and Luis Martinez, Attorney at Law; Service and Attitude: Joan Remington, Associate Dean for Academic Programs-FIU School of Hospitality and Tourism Management and Nina Cohen, Marketing Consultant of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau; Convention Center and Meetings: Ita Morirariy, Senior Vice President of Convention Sales of the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau and Tom Mobley, Senior Vice President of the Convention Center Global Spectrum; Retail/NightLife/Dining: Steven Haas, General Manager/Co-Owner of Soyka Restaurant, Michael Comras, Principal, Comras Company and Steve Polisar, Attorney at

Law; Sales and Marketing: Co-Chairs were Elsie Howard, Chairperson of the Miami Beach Visitors and Convention Authority, Roland Aedo, Senior Vice President of Marketing and Tourism of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau and Aaron Perry, Vice President of Marketing for Gulfstream Park. The subcommittees under Sales and Marketing were: Public Relations/Branding: Co-Chair Bruce Turkel and Beth Nelson; Identify and Develop New Markets/Enhance Marketing: Co Chairs Eric Jellson, Area Director of Sales and Marketing at the EPIC Hotel, Paul Cookley, Director of Sales at the Ritz Carlton South Beach and Steve Adkins for the Gay and Lesbian Chamber; Airport/Seaport: Miguel Southwell, Deputy of Business Retention and Development at the Miami Dade Aviation Department and Juan Kuryla, Assistant Director for Maritime Services at the Port of Miami; Film/Fashion: Co-Chairs Bruce Orosz, President and CEO of ACT Productions and Leslie Wolfson President of Modern Luxury Miami.

Mayor Bower stated that many people volunteer hundreds of hours of their time to the City and she will keep recognizing all of them during her next year in office. She thanked the Task Force members.

Stu Blumberg gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Bruce Turkel gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Discussion held.

Else Howard spoke.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Diaz stated that the airport bothers him because the concourses are nothing but blank walls. Something should have been implemented a long time ago by the tourism industry and those that manage it to utilize the wall to promote South Florida. He suggested temporary exhibits that provide information about the destination and the beaches of South Florida. He added that other world class airports have tourism messages on the walls and Miami International Airport is lagging behind. Rather than waiting for a permanent display, look at what could be implemented quickly, such as good visuals encouraging people to visit South Beach and other destinations in South Florida. He emphasized that this should be done very quickly.

Discussion continued.

Commissioner Gross stated that he has been playing golf and he has noticed that there are more foreigners playing at the City's golf courses than locals and this is good. He suggested these are very good initiatives but asked who will drive these initiatives to the next level. He suggested referring to committee, after every one had a chance to review them. He stated that the VCA and the Bureau will be the driving force but the City Commission needs to give the City Manager feedback.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, stated that this could be handled at a committee and the City Commission can give input or highlight different areas. He explained that the timing is perfect and similar to eight years ago when it was time to discuss contract negotiations with The Greater Miami Convention And Visitors Bureau (Bureau) a lot of the ideas that came from the previous Task Force on tourism were immediately incorporated into the initiatives the City wanted the Bureau to accomplish and were incorporated into the contract. The contract is due in September and the City can tell the Bureau that as part of the City's contribution to their contract the city can tell the Bureau its priorities.

**Commissioner Gross stated that he is looking forward to the negotiations with the Bureau as the City Manager recommended; however, some of the initiatives (Listed in the document titled: "Here's What**

**... Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Tourism", April 6, 2009), may need to be given priority. He referred the initiatives presented by the Task Force to the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee meeting in May and requested the Commission read the document submitted and give their feedback on the initiatives they feel should be given priority. All of the initiatives in the document should be reviewed, not just the first ten initiatives. He congratulated the Task Force and indicated that he is happy that that the Visitor and Convention Authority (VCA) will continue to work on this. Patricia Walker to place on the committee agenda in May. Hilda Fernandez to handle.**

Mayor Bower requested that the Task Force stay together and to monitor the implementation of the initiatives.

Vice-Mayor Tobin stated that this initiative and presentation are very exciting and he asked that the City Commission direct the City Manager to give this project priority.

Discussion continued.

Mayor Bower thanked the entire Task Force for their efforts.

Meeting adjourned at 3:41:42 p.m.

Handout and Reference Materials:

1. Ad in The Miami Herald
2. Presentation titled "Here's What...Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Tourism; Implementable actions ensuring the future of the City of Miami Beach and its number one industry: Tourism, dated April 6, 2009

**End of Agenda**