



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

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

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: July 11, 2011

SUBJECT: Starz "Magic City" series begins filming in Miami Beach

This Letter to Commission is provided to inform you of a new film production in our City. Last week, a new ten-episode series for the cable network Starz began filming in Miami Beach. The fictional series, titled "Magic City," is a period drama set in 1959. The show follows Ike Evans, the owner of the Miramar, "Miami Beach's most popular and celebrity-filled hotel," as he manages family, unionization and his financial ties to organized crime, just as Castro takes power in Cuba, making his hotel the center of tropical paradise. The series is written and created by Miami Beach native Mitch Glazer ("Scrooged," "The Recruit"), stars Jeffrey Dean Morgan ("Grey's Anatomy") and is produced by Emmy-winner Dwayne Schattuck ("Mad Men").

This production chose to film in South Florida not only because the setting takes place here and we have the greatest preserved collection of MiMo and Art Deco architecture required to create the illusion of the period, but also because of the State's film incentive and heavy recruitment by a select few, including Miami Beach's Tourism and Cultural Development Department. The show had better financial offers from North Carolina among others, but made a commitment to this community and intends to film here for at least five seasons, spending tens of millions of dollars each season, hiring hundreds of residents and using many local businesses and hotels, if the audience responds. They have taken over portions of the Bertram Yacht facility on Douglas Road by the airport and constructed immense interior sets of the fictional hotel, essentially creating a soundstage for this community with long-term applications. In addition to this incredible direct value, the exposure of this program globally, if successful, will undoubtedly lead to a wave of nostalgia-seeking tourists who can visit or revisit the era with our collection of historically-preserved properties, many of which will be featured in the show.

In order to create the illusion of the era portrayed, the production team is working with the Tourism and Cultural Development Department and other departments to remove and replace modern features like parking meters, signage and newspaper racks as needed, and is paying for this service. They also require reserving meters and often closing streets to ensure only period-era cars and clothing is seen while filming. As with all productions, the Tourism and Cultural Development Department works with the productions and the affected community to minimize impacts. This is done by scheduling and by communicating such impacts as thoroughly as possible to impacted residents and businesses. Naturally, on occasion, we may receive a complaint or two about unanticipated impacts to a business or residents and, despite best efforts, communication sometimes does not make its way to everyone. City staff will be on hand to ensure as smooth a process as possible and work to manage such issues as they arise, if not well before.

As much as the production and the City would ideally like to have substantial time to coordinate and communicate all elements, the very nature of scripted television series work often provides very little time between a script being delivered and the production team and City staff coordinating the chosen locations, oftentimes less than a week. One location that is recurring is the pool deck of the Deauville Hotel. City staff from the Tourism and Cultural Development, Fire, Building, Public Works, Parking and Planning departments met with the production and hotel representatives to discuss this location, which has had other outstanding issues. All elements for the film uses are cleared through all departments and are temporary in nature as sets and not accessible to the public during such timeframe.

Another filming element that will have an impact to the community is a planned stunt segment for Thursday, July 14, scheduled from 6am until 4pm, though the actual time of the stunt will be much less. On this day, the production will drive a period era vehicle through the guardrail on Collins at 24 Street and into Lake Pancoast at the end of Indian Creek. This will be performed in a coordinated maneuver, with no people in the vehicle at the time and the public kept at a safe distance, and the vehicle stripped and removed of any chemicals or elements that pose a risk to the waterway. A crane will also be used to move the vehicle in and out of the water. Tourism and Cultural Development has coordinated this with the Police Department, Marine Patrol, Fire Department, Public Works Department, Parking Department, as well as FDOT, DERM, MDTA and Coast Guard. The production has spoken to the directly affected properties and is noticing far beyond the immediate area; notice has also been given to the Collins Park Neighborhood Association. To execute this stunt, the production will temporarily replace the guardrail with a break-away one the day before and reinstall the new one right after. This will require a lane closure and staffing to ensure no motorists accidentally enter that area. During the filming day, southbound Collins will be closed in this area; with northbound converted to two-way traffic, with all traffic held intermittently during takes. Message boards alerting delays will be placed on 21 Street and 42 Street and Collins and at 41 Street and Indian Creek.

In addition to this production, our community is hosting a great number of significant shoots, including the feature "Rock of Ages," which will film at the Castle Resort for several days later this month, and "Charlie's Angels" for ABC, which will use many Miami Beach locations, including the Savoy as the exterior of the famous Townsend Agency. Our staff will update you on specific larger scale production elements that potentially impact residents and businesses.

As always, please feel free to call me should you require additional information.

C: Hilda M. Fernandez, Assistant City Manager
Max Sklar, Tourism and Cultural Development Director