



MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jorge M. Gonzalez, City Manager

DATE: June 6, 2007

SUBJECT: **REPORT OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2007.**

A meeting of the Neighborhoods/Community Affairs Committee was held on Wednesday May 23, 2007 at 2:30 pm in the City Manager's Large Conference Room. Commissioners in attendance: Richard L. Steinberg, Jerry Libbin, Michael Góngora, and Mattie Bower. City staff in attendance: Hilda M. Fernandez, Assistant City Manager; Robert C. Middaugh, Assistant City Manager; Jose Smith, City Attorney; Jorge Chartrand, CIP Director; Chris Parrino, Fire Department; and Randi MacBride, Neighborhood Services Department.

1. DISCUSSION REGARDING APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPE AROUND A UTILITY PLANT AT 51ST AND PINETREE DR.

Vice-Mayor Góngora opened the discussion by explaining that he was contacted by a constituent with concerns regarding the appearance of the utility plant at 51st Street and Pinetree Drive. Vice-Mayor Góngora stated that he visited the site.

Mr. Jorge Chartrand, CIP Director explained that this was all part of an overall pump station upgrade improvement project that the city has been working on for several years. He described the electrical improvements, installation of generating equipment, changing of the pumps as well as the electrical switch gears so they are able to operate better and operate during emergencies. The project is now essentially finished except for some testing and training. The Public Works Department will be able to open the station for operation very soon.

Vice-Mayor Góngora said that it looks much better now than when he first visited the site. Mr. Chartrand explained that a year ago the Commission approved funding to do the landscaping on all the stations because most of them are in residential neighborhoods.

Commissioner Bower asked why locations such as this one were selected because the equipment is a real eyesore. Mr. Chartrand responded that these stations have been in these locations for fifty years although the structure has been enlarged to add electrical stations to facilitate back-up power in the event of a power loss.

Vice-Mayor Góngora stated that this facility is very unattractive and is in one of the City's most attractive residential neighborhoods. Michael Sension, the resident that brought this concern to the committee's attention explained the issue and hopes if it cannot be relocated it can be hidden. Commissioner Steinberg asked if the color of the equipment can be

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changed from white to a shade of green so it is not such a contrast. Mr. Chartrand stated that some of the equipment can be painted however he will need to contact the manufacturer of the electrical panels as to whether they can be painted without voiding any warranty coverage.

Mr. Chartrand explained the landscaping plans include vegetation on all sides surrounding the stations minus the stairway. There will also be trees placed along the Pinetree Drive side.

Commissioner Steinberg stated that, as a rule of thumb in the future, the City should consider the surrounding colors in the neighborhood so that our projects are as unobtrusive as possible. Mr. Chartrand added that he anticipates that the landscaping will be completed within four months.

ACTION: The Committee made no motion.

2. DISCUSSION REGARDING COMMUNITY AWARENESS OF PANDEMIC FLU.

Vice-Mayor Góngora opened the discussion by introducing Dr. Anthony Japour, MD.

Dr. Japour made a presentation on the history and present threat of avian influenza. He explained that there were three major pandemics in the 20th century and that pandemics tend to occur about every fifty years so we are due somewhere between 2010 and 2018. Historically, most deaths were in young people between the ages of 15 and 35. This type of flu attacks the working people of the community and the government is taking this seriously.

Vice-Mayor Góngora asked if this flu is more deadly than regular flu. Dr. Japour explained that 50% of people infected will die from it. He added that from infection to illness the time frame is approximately 2-5 days, while death is quick, within 10-14 days. He emphasized that there is no avian flu in the world at this time. He reviewed the World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Activity Phases explaining that the time frame for Phases 1, 2 to transition to Phase 3 and from Phase 3 to Phase 4 can take years however the time frame from to transition from Phase 4 to Phase 5 and Phase 6 can happen in a matter of months. Since we are currently in Phase 3, it is important to do the planning now.

Commissioner Bower asked if there is a vaccine. Dr. Japour stated that there is a recent FDA approved vaccine that indicates an antibody response in about 50% of the people and it may require a second dose separated by a month to be protective. The federal government is stockpiling this vaccine for first responders. Dr. Japour added that this vaccine is not necessarily for the strain of virus that is transferred from human to human. Once it does become human to human, it will be called a pandemic strain and a vaccine will be needed specifically for that strain. An additional stopgap is antiviral medications including TamiFlu which the government is stockpiling.

Chris Parrino, Fire Department, added that Florida was one of the few states that declined to stockpile the TamiFlu. Dr. Japour explained that TamiFlu is helpful as a prophylaxis, meaning first responders might take it to prevent getting ill while they perform their necessary jobs. He added that what needs to be considered is how the city may continue to function in the event of a 30-40% absenteeism rate as a result of employees being sick or caring for the sick while remembering the TamiFlu is only effective while it is being taken. Commissioner Steinberg asked what the city is doing now as far as preparation for the

possibility of a pandemic from a staff standpoint and a resident standpoint. Mr. Parrino explained that encouraging people to get their regular flu shot is important. The City should be prepared to respond to people requesting information. If the City were as aggressive about preparing for the avian flu as it is about hurricanes, then people would think that it is as viable a threat as hurricanes are.

Dr. Japour stated that the federal documents state that the federal government's ability to respond will not even be the same level as it does for hurricanes and it does recommend that all local communities prepare.

Commissioner Steinberg asked what Dr. Japour recommends that the City be doing and he responded that it should really consider the impact on the city at all levels so whoever is responsible for hurricane preparedness should come up with the scenario and what the emergency operations plan would be. That would include what personal protection equipment is needed for emergency responders. The City should engage in a dialog with the county health department and the state in terms of their plans for vaccines and TamiFlu. The City may want to consider having at least a limited stockpile for first responders. The next thing is to increase the knowledge base of all citizens about influenza.

Commissioner Steinberg asked if the City has ever offered flu vaccines. He recommended that staff find out if the health department will partner with the City and if they will offer immunizations at the fire stations. Commissioner Steinberg added that the city should advertise, on MBTV Channel 77, where immunizations are offered, work in an appropriate informational video on the benefits of vaccination and try to incorporate some of the information in the Miami Beach Magazine. He noted that he is emphasizing the community information begin now because if the City begins the public information now, it will be ready for vaccination time which begins in August and September.

ACTION: The Committee moved to direct the Administration to take action on the following five action items and provide a report of the status in two months to Vice-Mayor Góngora:

1. To gain an understanding of the impact the pandemic flu could have on the community
2. Make sure the City has personal protection supplies for first responders
3. Contact the State and county regarding their stockpile plans
4. Stockpile TamiFlu
5. Initiate community outreach and awareness

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