



TO: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager
Rafael Granado, City Clerk

FROM: Commissioner Deede Weithorn

DATE: March 20, 2013

SUBJECT: Referral to Land Use and Development Committee:
Attracting Institutions of Higher Education to North Beach

The City of Miami Beach planning staff have, over the past several months, reengaged in discussions regarding the development of the parking lot located between 72nd and 73rd Street and Collins Avenue in addition to the development of the west lots between 79th and 87th Street and Collins Avenue.

Commissioner Weithorn recognizes the importance of building upon the assets owned by the City as we seek to stimulate the economy in North Beach. And, as such, it is Commissioner Weithorn’s desire to attract development and partnerships that contribute to the existing businesses, quality of life, facilities, housing, etc.

By means of this memorandum, Commissioner Weithorn would like to make a referral to the Land Use and Development committee to consider the solicitation of letters of interest from institutions of higher education for the development of our municipal assets in North Beach.

The economic impacts of universities and colleges have proven to be significant to the communities in which they are located. According to studies published on the impact of universities in communities, these institutions of higher education often seek to expand into areas where housing and transportation costs are attainable and affordable to their students. Recognizing this, in 2012 the City of Sweetwater engaged in efforts to annex Florida International University’s Engineering Campus. Sweetwater’s intention was to partner with FIU in becoming a pedestrian friendly environment that would dramatically boost economic development and quality of life in the area.

As part the studies conducted regarding the annexation of FIU’s Engineering Campus by the City of Sweetwater it was determined that the following could come about as a result:

- Struggling neighborhoods and nearby business districts will prosper in a growing college town atmosphere.

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- The annexation will create integrated approaches that actively mix solutions for transportation, education, environmental protection, economic development, safe and affordable housing, and public health.
- Revitalize underutilized and economically depressed areas through design improvements for public spaces to accommodate large-scale and high quality pedestrian movements.
- Provide for redevelopment strategies that are equitable and transformative.
- Create educational enhancements and engagement that will embrace the diversity of residents and business owners so as to make the City and nearby neighborhoods more livable for all.
- Create more jobs closer to home for people of all income levels, intentionally avoid residential and business displacement, and accelerate economic activity, technology transfer, and opportunity related to all the area institutions of higher education.

The above listed effects of a Sweetwater / FIU partnership are very similar to the end results we aspire to achieve in North Beach as we consider the development of the assets in the area.

The availability of City owned vacant land, existing businesses, affordable housing, and accessibility to public transportation in North Beach could present a very unique opportunity to attract an institution of higher education which could bring about significant contributions to the existing businesses, cultural centers, and housing inventory.

As part of this referral to the Land Use Committee, it is Commissioner Weithorn's desire for the Administration to study the feasibility and potential economic impact of an institution of higher education entering the North Beach area.

Should you have any questions and/or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at extension 6528.

Thank you,



Alex J. Fernández,
Deputy to Commissioner Weithorn