

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 282-2014

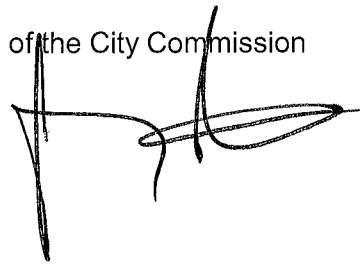
LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 14, 2014

SUBJECT: **Lummus Park Reforestation**



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The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to announce that the Parks and Recreation Department's reforestation efforts at Lummus Park have begun! "Reforestation" is defined as being "the action of renewing forest cover by the planting of seeds or young trees". The renewal of the Palm canopy at Lummus Park is of great importance for several reasons: To maintain the historic integrity of the park, for the aesthetic contribution to the area and for the much appreciated shade they cast, providing park visitors with a little relief from the hot Florida sun.

In the earliest days of Miami Beach, in 1886, Henry B. Lum and son Charles purchased 165 acres in South Beach and started a Coconut Plantation planting thousands of palms. The dense mangroves and the mosquitoes they attracted made working conditions unbearable and the venture failed. Right around the turn of the century, John and James Lummus began purchasing land in South Beach with a dream of building modest homes and creating a quite ocean front city. Soon however, they realized the potential for attracting tourist and thanks to Flagler's new railroad the tourists did indeed come and our City began to flourish. Then in 1915 the thirty-three registered voters in Miami Beach elected J. N. Lummus as the City's first mayor. One of his first official acts as mayor was to sell his ocean front property from 6th Street to 14th Street to the city for a mere \$40,000.00 and Lummus Park was born.

While it is not known just how many Coconut Palms were in Lummus Park at the time the City acquired the property, historical photographs from the 1930's depict the park looking much as it does today, with the main exception being that the palms were much smaller. During the course of the next several decades, many of the palms grew in height and many others were lost to disease, tropical storms or lightning strikes. During the 1960's, the disease known as Lethal Yellowing was introduced to Florida from the Islands and many more palms in Lummus Park were lost.

The 1980's brought about a renaissance for South Beach and in 1988 Lummus Park was listed in the United States national register as an historic landmark. The city continued to grow and thrive and through the 1990's and with funding from a bond issue, reforestation efforts commenced at Lummus Park. The City, working with local activists, installed approximately 500 small palms in the park to replace those lost in previous years and to start the next generation of palms in the park.

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In keeping with this great tradition, the Parks and Recreation Department planted fifty-six (56) Golden Malayan Coconut Palms in the northern blocks of Lummus Park last week. In the coming years, these small palms will grow in height and will help ensure that the magnificent, historic Palmscape that we all enjoy today and which will be there for future generations to enjoy and admire.

Should you have additional questions, please contact John Rebar at (305) 673-7730.


JLM/JMT/JR/EV

Cc: John Rebar, Director Parks and Recreation
Elizabeth Valera, Acting Assistant Director Parks and Recreation
Carla Maglio Gomez, Assistant Director Parks and Recreation