

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 044-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: February 18, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jorge".

Subject: **WEEKLY UPDATE**

The purpose of this LTC is to provide the Mayor and Commission with an update describing some of the areas the administration has recently been focusing on:

Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) – On January 29, I met with Jorge Arrizurieta, the Executive Director of the FTAA, to receive an update regarding the progress of the FTAA.

On-line Permitting - The IT Department is in the process of upgrading the Permit Plus software to the version 5.0 (latest version) within the next few weeks. This will set the platform for the vendor installation of "Velocity Hall ", the internet permitting software. The first step was the upgrade to Permits Plus which was successfully completed on February 13. The anticipated "go live" date for the entire program remains April 1, 2004.

Potamkin Site – Staff met with representatives from Potamkin to continue discussing issues relative to the proposed project, with particular emphasis on the parking garage revenue and expense operations and the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) funding requirement.

Affordable Housing Charette - The Miami Beach Community Development Corporation (MBCDC) successfully hosted a charette titled "Providing Affordable Housing in a Fully Built Urban Environment" on January 29 at the Miami Beach Botanical Garden. The charette was attended by MBCDC staff, City staff, and City Commissioner Saul Gross. Also attending were representatives from Fannie Mae, the Florida Housing Coalition, the South Florida Community Development Coalition, the Miami Beach Housing Authority, local realtors, and local private developers. Among the topics discussed were the challenge of providing affordable housing in the local housing market, homeownership programs for Section 8 Program participants, inclusionary zoning, and utilization of Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funds as a source of alternative funding for affordable housing.

Charter Review Board – Met on February 2 and discussed administrative changes to several personnel related items as well as reviewed language in the Voter's Guide that the City has prepared for the upcoming March 9 election.

March 9 Election – In order to explain and educate Miami Beach residents on each of the seven ballot questions that will be presented at the special election on March 9, the Administration has prepared a Voter's Guide (English and Spanish) that will be mailed to all registered Miami Beach voters. In addition, we will be placing several ads in all local newspapers (English and Spanish) and producing a brief informative piece for Channel 20.

Organizational Development – As part of my ongoing organizational development initiatives, several staff members and I met with the City Manager and the Executive Staff from the City of Coral Springs, Florida to continue talking about how we can partner with each other to learn and help our respective municipalities. Coral Springs has twice been awarded the Governor's Sterling Award for performance excellence. One of the unique elements of our partnership is that their Organizational Development Coordinator also works with us part-time and will help our Office of Budget and Performance Improvement implement several Citywide performance measures. In addition, my executive staff and I held an executive staff leadership retreat on February 10 facilitated by Dr. Rick Jensen that focused on improving communication among our team and team building. A follow session which will focus on setting goals and implementing performance measures is scheduled for March 3, 2004.

Nightlife Industry Task Force (NITE) – Met on February 3 to discuss upcoming events taking place throughout the City in March, including various college spring-break related events. The group also discussed the adult entertainment and nudity ordinance, the ongoing flyer clean-up initiatives, issues involving patron age restrictions and the revised special events guidelines.

Black History Month – The City is Celebrating Black History Month by coordinating the following events: A video art exhibit featuring a historical perspective on the Black Rights Movement in South Florida will be shown throughout the month in the lobby of City Hall. The exhibit will start on Monday February 9 and run through February 27. The Mayor's Black Host Committee, in partnership with the City's Community Relations Board and the City, will host a reception to celebrate Black History Month. The event will take place on Thursday, February 26 at the Miami Beach Botanical Gardens. Finally, our annual employee luncheon honoring Black History Month will be celebrated on Friday, February 27. The event will include guest speakers, music, entertainment, a fashion show and delicious soul food.

Employee Celebrations – An employee-led committee is working on our annual employee picnic scheduled for Saturday, March 27 at the North Shore Open Space Park. This year's theme is an "All-America City Birthday Celebration" and will include food, games, and the celebration of the City's 89th birthday. The event is scheduled from 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. and members of the community will be invited to join in the festivities when we cut the City's birthday cake at 4:00 p.m.

Miami Beach Senior High School – Staff met with Principal Friedman to discuss various ongoing issues, including some code issues and violations, and talked about how to come to resolution on those issues.

Relay for Life – The City will again be participating in the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life," event to be held over a 24 hour period from May 15-16, 2004 on the field at Miami Beach Senior High School. Funds raised from this event will go directly to cancer research, clinical trials, legislative advocacy and education. An LTC with additional information has already been sent and more details will be forthcoming.

Penrod's (Nikki Beach) Concession Agreement - The Administration met with representatives from Penrod Brothers on February 6 to continue discussions regarding the concession agreement. A conclusion and agreement has been reached as to the terms and conditions of the concession agreement and we have received our first installment check of \$100,000 of the retroactive amount due to the City. Development of the final site plan is being completed for the Administration's approval, and the necessary documents are being prepared for presentation at the City Commission Meeting of February 25, 2004, at which time the Administration will make its recommendation to the Mayor and City Commission.

Budget Preparations – The Office of Budget and Performance Improvement continues to work on budget preparations for the next fiscal year. An internal meeting with all City Departments has been scheduled for February 19 to discuss this year's budget preparations. In addition, a Commission Workshop will be held on March 10 to begin to discuss budget issues with the Mayor and City Commission.

Greater Miami Conventions and Visitors Bureau – Staff and I met with Don Peebles and representatives from the GMCVB on February 6 to discuss their ongoing performance contract issues and the upcoming contract expiration and ongoing studies being conducted, including the studies by ERA and the County and the GMCVB Strategic Plan and Market Assessment.

Major Events Plan (MEP) – Staff worked throughout the past several weeks to ensure that various special events held on Miami Beach were successful including the Miami International Film Festival which held several events here from January 30 – February 7; the 2nd annual Miami Tropical Marathon which was held on February 1 attracting thousands of runners and visitors; FAB FEST, a beer, wine and food festival, was held at Lummus Park from February 6-7 and the 30th annual Miami Beach Festival of the Arts which took place from February 6-8. Preparations for the Boat Show continued with the event taking place from February 12-17. By all accounts, the Boat Show was as successful as ever drawing thousands to Miami Beach. Volleypalooza, a volleyball tournament will be held from February 21-22 and the Big Shot Volleyball tournament from February 28-29. Staff is also working with representatives from the South Beach Wine & Food Festival on this year's event which is scheduled to take place throughout the City from March 5-7.

Special Event Permit Requirements and Guidelines – A community meeting was held on January 27 to provide residents and the business community with an opportunity to review and provide feedback to the proposed changes to the special events ordinance. An LTC providing an update with the revisions of the Special Event Guidelines as well as outlining the next steps involved has already been sent.

Beach Erosion – I met with County Commissioner Jimmy Morales, County Manager George Burgess and Stephen Muss from the Fountainbleau Hilton on February 5 to discuss issues related to beach erosion.

Film & Print – MTV Productions filmed a promo for Lipton Brisk Iced Tea on Ocean Drive at 14th Street. FX's "Nip/ Tuck" will begin filming promos for season 2 in Miami Beach soon. Universal Pictures' sequel to "Meet the Parents" is primarily set in Miami Beach and will film here for at least a week in the spring and stars Robert Deniro, Ben Stiller and Dustin Hoffman. The Entertainment Industry Incubator's gala brought approximately 600 people to Miami Beach for an awards program.

Market Contracts - An on-site meeting with the Market Company and Fire Department staff took place on Saturday, February 7 to finalize the site plan for the Espanola Way location. Substantial agreement has already been reached on the Espanola Way Market Concession Agreement, and final agreement should be concluded in the coming weeks. The Normandy Market Agreement and Lincoln Road Agreement are expected to be completed shortly thereafter. A Commission item relating to the concession agreements with the Market Company is on the February 25 Commission agenda.

Portofino Discussions – Staff and I met with representatives from the Related Group on February 9 to continue discussing issues related to the mediation. Additional details will be provided to the Mayor and Commission at the February 18 Executive Session.

Neighborhood Leadership Academy – I met with about 30 graduates of the City's Neighborhood Leadership Academy on February 9 to discuss various issues the group was interested in learning more about. In addition, we discussed how to keep the group connected to the City and how we could work together on various projects to benefit the community.

Beach Patrol – I met with representatives from the Fire Department, Beach Patrol, and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Union to discuss the reorganization of the Beach Patrol unit and its move to the Fire Department. Additional details will be provided at the February 17 Neighborhoods / Community Affairs Committee meeting.

Indian Creek Greenway Project – Staff and I met on February 12 to discuss the Indian Creek Greenway project and the next steps involved in moving the project along.

Federal Lobbyists – Representatives from our federal lobbying firm of Jordan Burt were here on February 12 to meet individually with each of you and with me to discuss our ongoing federal legislative priorities.

If you have any questions or need any additional information, please feel free to let me know.

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