



MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # 057-2007

LETTER TO COMMISSION

To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Date: March 2, 2007

Subject: Communication Protocol

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Due to the number of new hires in the Mayor and Commission Offices, I wanted to take the opportunity to both welcome your respective new staff members, as well as provide an initial guide to the established communication protocol between our respective offices. Successful and timely communication between the Administration and the Office of the Mayor and Commission is paramount to providing residents, visitors and businesses with the information and service they need and require. My purpose in this communication is to further my goal of meeting your expectations of providing timely and accurate information on issues important to you and to also assist your staff in being effective in collecting timely and accurate information from the Administration.

I established a communication protocol upon my arrival at the City, and it has now been in place for the last six years. My communication protocol with the Commission has always been based on openness and full access to departments, with a request that my office be included in all communications. I strongly believe that including my office in all requests made to the Administration allows me to track and ensure that each of your requests receives appropriate attention as well as a timely response that includes all of you so that all of you are kept up to date and apprised of City activities and actions. I am confident the Commission understands the importance of having my office included in communications, and to date, all of you have personally made sure to include my office in your correspondence to departments.

Moreover, in response to feedback provided by the Commission regarding the timeliness and amount of communication between your individual offices and the Administration, at the 2003 Commission Retreat an additional position was approved and funded for this purpose. Currently, the position is filled by Ms. Dolores M. Mejia, Special Projects Administrator, who as part of her duties is charged with assisting me with tracking and routing requests for service and complaints from the Office of the Mayor and Commission. I have made Ms. Mejia the point of contact for my office since it is difficult, if not impossible, to track items if they are not being received centrally, and then routed and flagged for response to the appropriate departments.

I want to make clear that as dedicated City employees, we are all committed professionals, who fully intend to continue providing all of you with all of the information you require in order for you to fulfill your respective duties as elected officials. To this end, I want to take this opportunity to review the protocol for submitting requests for

information and requests for service from the Office of the Mayor and Commission to the Administration, and kindly request that each of you share this information with your staff.

If the Mayor, Commissioners or their respective offices have a question which is informational in nature, such as dates for particular meetings, etc. each of you and your staff should feel free to contact the appropriate Assistant City Manager or Department Director either by telephone or e-mail, directly to ask the question. A simple question is entitled to a simple answer. Please note that the appropriate department director is your best source for this type of information and that employees below this level may not have access to information that is complete and/or up-to-date.

If your respective Aide and/or Executive Assistant have a request for service or a complaint which they are sending on your office's behalf, such as requesting staff support or attendance at a meeting or referring resident's complaint for a response by the Administration, I would respectfully request that these requests be routed through my office via Ms. Mejia and the appropriate member of my Leadership Team (i.e., specific department issues should copy the Department Director and their ACM or Executive Staff Member with oversight responsibility). This would also include requests that will necessitate research by staff.

If there is any uncertainty as to who might be the appropriate staff member, Ms. Mejia should be contacted and she will ensure the issue is routed appropriately and receives a timely response. If the request comes via telephone, please make the request to the appropriate Assistant City Manager, Ms. Mejia, or me.

Recently, on several occasions staff in the Office of the Mayor and Commission have contacted departments directly for requests for service as well as complaint referral. In addition, many times employees below the department director level are being referred these issues for their input or resolution. This type of behavior is generating redundancy of work as well as additional research for my office as well as the departments in trying to sort out where the complaint originated; what, if any, party has responded; the completeness and accuracy of the information provided; and more importantly, whether or not the information was shared with the full governing body.

Departments are instructed to work through the City Manager's Office when responding to requests for service and complaints received from the Office of the Mayor and Commission. Employees are placed in an uncomfortable position trying to provide excellent customer service to you while at the same time, being cognizant that they are expected and required to observe the policy established to have the City Manager's Office route these requests.

In turn, it is my expectation as well as that of my staff that the appropriate staff member for the Mayor and Commissioners is concurrently tracking items and issues sent to the Administration by or on behalf of their respective elected official in order to facilitate and expedite responses. As always, copies of all responses will be shared with all members of the City Commission in order to keep all of you informed, as well as to ensure that information is provided equally.

I appreciate your understanding and anticipate your continued cooperation in this matter. Should you have any questions, or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

C: Executive Staff and Management Team