

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Village of El Portal Council  
FR: Christia E. Alou, Village Manager  
DATE: April 27, 2020  
RE: April 2020 Village Manager's Report

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Please accept this memorandum as my April 2020 Village of El Portal Administrative Report to Council. During the month of April, the Village Administration observed state and county executive orders to send non-essential staff home to work remotely, to practice social distancing and self-quarantine for those experiencing symptoms of the Corona Virus/COVID-19.

During times of emergency and closures, as your Village Manager, I am an integral part of the Village's Emergency Management Team, with the Mayor and the Chief of Police. I am also a part of the Miami Dade County Managers Association, which meets at least once weekly to share information and resources and to advocate for our municipality. I am a part of the White House with Florida Department of Emergency Management and local leaders weekly meeting phone group to get updates and information, as well as the National COVID-19 weekly briefing, and I am a part of the Miami Dade County Parks group with all the municipal public works and parks leaders. I have attended trainings for COVID-19 for Employers training provided by the Florida League of Cities, and the FMIT free trainings with my staff.

Since the Administrative office closure at the end of March, the Administrative Staff and I continue to communicate, and we work remotely. There are some essential duties, such as payroll and some of the accounting that requires the finance staff to come into the office on occasion, and our Code Enforcement Officer has come into the office three times since April 13, 2020 so they have provided me information including bullet points for this report from home.

The Village's, cleaning contractor, Clean and Clear Cleaning, will continue to clean the Village Hall and its offices on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, while our Public Works and Maintenance staffer, Angel Hernandez does surface sanitizing every few hours in the Village offices and police station. Labor Finders, a temporary placement service provided a temporary Public Works staffer on a part-time basis to clean the parks and trash receptacles owned by the Village of El Portal from April to April 17, 2020. And most important, our police department will continue its duties and diligence on their existing schedule. Chief Magnusson and I agree that this is not the time to increase their workload with a more rigorous schedule.

In response to Governor's Executive Order, the Village will be utilizing Zoom for another virtual public Council meeting on April 28, 2020. The Emergency Management Team will host a Virtual Town Hall on "The New Normal" plans from the County and how that will affect the Village of El Portal.

## Special Projects

### **NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Business Corridor**

#### **State Appropriations**

No Update.

The Village of El Portal presented three legislative priorities for funding to this legislative session through our lobbying team. They are the septic to sewer conversion of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, stormwater improvements, and a traffic calming school safety project on the west side of the Village of El Portal. The septic to sewer conversion of NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (approximately \$500,000) and the school safety project (approximately \$300,000) made the legislative priorities of the house and senate and are presented to the Governor for funding. Mayor Cubillos, our lobbying team and I participated in phone conference meetings last week to answer questions and give more detail about the two projects that are recommended for funding by the state. We had very good discussions but were told that the Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic is the priority, and funding and the possibility of it will be on hold until the pandemic is over.

### **Cristo Rey Miami High School at The Sanctuary Rader Church**

No update.

Last month, I met with members of the Council, staff and the principles of the Cristo Rey Miami High School project to achieve special exception in the use of the property formerly Rader Church/Sanctuary Project. On March 10, 2020, the second reading of the Cristo Rey Miami High School was achieved at the Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. A development agreement is outstanding on the completion of this project.

### **Parking Plans**

No update.

The status remains as it was in February 2020 - PlusUrbia has been working with the office of Alice Bravo, Director, Miami Dade County Public Works and Transportation, to bring traffic calming, additional parking to NE 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue. They are presently setting up a meeting for the Village to discuss the parking matter and traffic calming. We do not have a date yet. In the meantime, **Dr. Margaret Okonkwo has closed her pediatric practice** and moved to Arizona. As the owner of the property, she is attempting to lease the property to another pediatrician. Before departing, she did document her continued request to have the potholes and paving replaced on the swale parking lot at her building on NE 2 Avenue and NE 88<sup>th</sup> Street. We have not been able to repair/replace the paving due to flooding in the area. Paving companies encourage us to install French drains or more storm drainage to curtail the flooding problem that caused the potholes and broken asphalt. The cost of just repairing the paving is between \$12,000 and \$16,000.

## **Biscayne Boulevard Development**

### **Kavista at El Portal/Annexed Area**

The Barrington Brothers submitted plans to the Village of El Portal for the Kavista project at the March 10, 2020 Planning and Zoning Committee meeting. They are also tasked with holding a town hall meet

and their special exception and variance was scheduled for the March 31, 2020 Council meeting, but that meeting's agenda was canceled by the Council.

### **Former Trailer Park Development**

No update.

There has been no activity to report this month. Fullview, the property owner, is aware of the development of the Kavista at El Portal project as well as the Skate Park at Don Bailey's on Biscayne Boulevard.

### **Hurricane Irma Recovery**

FEMA has obligated over \$2.1 for reimbursement funds to the Village of El Portal. We are awaiting further instructions and timeline of actual funds being received. It has been six months since we were informed that there was a potential problem with our reimbursement due to an audit review of our Contractor, DP&O. Mayor Cubillos, Interim Attorney Powell and I met with DP&O to get an update on its status with the audit review. DP&O stated that the review has been minimal, and they have complied with every request. Interim Village Attorney Powell sent a letter requesting an update from FEMA and the Department of Emergency Management. We have not received a response.

Our line of credit with Synovus Bank remains in good standing with interest payments being met as we await the reimbursement. We will have to negotiate either another extension of the line of credit (if Synovus allows it) or prepare loan documents and repayment of that loan as this current line of credit becomes due. During the Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic, interest rates have dropped, we have asked Synovus to present any lower rate options to the Village for us to consider and possibly take advantage.

We, with Miami Shores and Florida City, are also in a holding pattern as we await the results of the DP&O audit review and hopefully will receive our reimbursements in 2020. I have reached out to Governor DeSantis to ask for a meeting with Florida Department of Emergency Management to inquire about the status of the audit review. I was told that the Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic was priority at this time, and that we could resume this matter after. State Senator Jason Pizzo emailed information to me and fellow City Managers on March 18, 2020 regarding an executive order from Governor directing DEM to release Hurricane Irma funds to municipalities. Our lobbying team is also assisting us with follow ups to the executive order. On April 16, 2020, I participated in a call with local leaders, the White House and Florida Department of Emergency Management, where Director Moskowitz answered my submitted question that other municipalities are in receipt of their FEMA funds (\$350 M), but he did not respond to the second part of my question about whether El Portal will be receiving its funds. This call was coordinated by the Florida League of Cities, who followed up with me and Mayor Cubillos that they would attempt to get that answer since we could not. But they were not successful in getting us any new information. At Councilperson Roman's request, she and I will be sending a follow up letter to FDEM Director Moskowitz requesting another response this week. In the meantime, our lobbying team, Mayor Cubillos, DP&O, the Interim Village Attorney and I are working together to produce a white paper and additional strategies to get a response to our continual request for the reimbursement.

### **Village of El Portal Transportation Shuttle and Transit**

No update.

Ongoing – There is no update on this project at this time. I reached out to TPO Director Aileen Boucle on two occasions for an update but no response. The Village remains at the ready, for the County's CITT and TPO shuttle transportation to and from the Virgin/Brightline train station in downtown Miami. The Village's surtax and CITT funds will be utilized for this pilot program that will provide Village residents access to the new train transportation for free. Our pilot program was set to start in November 2019 but has been pushed back by the County to early 2020. I will keep you informed as I continue to work with the TPO on this project. The Village was required to present the County with a report on how we will spend the funds that are available for utilization under our CITT Transit category. I requested an extension on that report until May 2020, so that I may speak with Ms. Boucle about the total cost of the shuttle pilot, when, if ever, it will start, and review the funds we will be able to utilize for transit related spending. Councilperson Roman requested two bus stop shelters. Bus Shelters are approximately \$15,000.00. And I am considering sidewalk installation and/or repairs. Both are allowed under the CITT Transit spending, but we have a very limited amount of funds to use. We have used the CITT Transportation funds as collateral for a FDEP loan for the septic to sewer conversion which is still on-going. Please see status in Public Works section.

## Departments

### **Police and Public Safety**

The PBA's President Steadman Stahl sent a letter to all the Miami Dade County Municipalities asking for some special considerations for police officers during this time of pandemic and office closures. I am working on a response for that request presently. I will keep the Council in copy of the response.

The PBA, through of-counsel attorney, Brenden Coyle has brought suit against the Village of El Portal for unfair labor practices/failure to utilize negotiate in good faith based on a request made in the Summer 2019 Re-Opener labor discussions that resulted in the take-home cars pilot program being implemented.

Interim Attorney Powell scheduled a series of meetings to negotiate the step-increases and promotions being requested by the PBA and Mr. Coyle. The Village Administration is not making a counter-offer regarding raises and step-increases under the PBA's request. A notice of Impasse was filed by the PBA representative this month. We had the Pre-Hearing Conference Call with the PBA today at 11AM. The PBA v. Village of El Portal Impasse Hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, July 1, 2020 at 10AM. This meeting is open to the public. It may be a zoom meeting or an in-person meeting depending on where we are in the recovery from Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic.

The EPPD continues to have difficulty with the fleet. Interim CFO Chris Wallace prepared an analysis of the last three years cost of maintain the EPPD fleet. I will forward that to you all today.

Chief Magnusson continues to address the Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic strategies and the needs of the department. The entire EPPD staff was tested for COVID-19 following one officer's positive test results on Saturday, April 25, 2020. The Village Hall was deep cleaned again on Monday, April 26, 2020. He provided the below bullet points for the month of April 2020.

### *From Police Chief David Magnusson*

- Police made three Domestic Violence arrests towards the end of March. Fortunately, this appeared to be isolated incidents and not indicative of sheltering in place. The DV uptick has NOT continued into the first three weeks of April.

- Chief Magnusson is Miami-Dade Chiefs of Police Association COVID-19 Committee Chairperson and as such has been disseminating a lot of up-to-the-moment information from the Health Department and Governor regarding COVID-19
- Sgt. Borrell attended line supervision class. It was the last class before training had been shut down by the County.
- Police participated in River Clean Up on Saturday March 14th...The last event prior to the shelter order.
- Village Hall and Police Station decontaminated on Friday 27 March 2020
- Had Public Safety meeting on 3 March 2020
- Got established with CarFax (they provide law enforcement a service to help run cars with minimal information based on their data base.)
- Continued to focus on 87th Street speeding in March before lockdown
- Improved communication with FDOT following a construction project where we were not notified and traffic backed up heavily on 87 Street for a few days
- Numerous Zoom meetings with Chief Magnusson, Manager Alou and Mayor Cubillos as part of the El Portal EMT
- Officers ensuring business (Big Daddy's) abiding with mask usage and 6 foot spacing

The Police Vehicle fleet (also the Public Works Truck and Code Enforcement vehicles) need to be considered quickly. According to Enterprise, the deadline for purchasing Dodge vehicles is May 2020. We would normally expect delivery by August/September; however the COVID emergency may cause an extended delay. Otherwise we will not be able to order vehicles until October and expect delivery in January approximately.

### **Code Enforcement**

On April 8, 2020 I received a letter from the South Florida Water Management District outlining the permanent Water Conserving Landscaping Irrigation Ordinance. It essentially allows landscape watering for even and odd number addresses for specific days. This ordinance also came with specific requirements that the municipality update its ordinance to include the new and permanent restrictions. I will be working with the Interim Village Attorney to bring that code updating ordinance to the committee and council. In the meantime, Code Enforcement Officer King is self-educating on this update as well.

We must replace the Code Enforcement and Public Works vehicles as soon as possible.

*From Code Enforcement Officer Emir King*

The code vehicle needs jump starts to run. I have reported to the Village for ride throughs and to check BS&A, and to do code enforcement. The El Portal Police Department have provided me some citations from their code enforcement efforts. This is a slower time, and there have been neighbors requesting permit information about other residents, but none have proven to be unpermitted work.

## **Building Department**

I have executed two release of liens during this time, and coordinated with CAP Government and Building Clerk Herrera for a re-occupancy certificate. We received many calls and emails requesting building permits and follow ups during the Safer At Home order. Building permitting is not essential work but was being done with limited capabilities through remote work for Ms. Herrera. We successfully addressed all outstanding matters and coordinated inspections with CAP Government. Ms. Herrera has been to the office twice to do work that could not be done remotely. I will be opening the office for work only, not for the public in the beginning of May 2020. There may be a staggered work schedule with this return to work plan as we are still testing the waters, so to speak, and following Miami Dade County regarding non-essential work in the office.

*From Building Clerk Miriam Herrera*

I have finalized 2 projects and approved revisions for a job that is in progress Marc Edelman coordinating with CAP inspectors are working with me, diligently running inspections Tuesdays and Thursdays. I also permitted 3 new jobs (simple jobs) with not much paperwork - new septic tank install, windows and doors, driveway, new pool and a Re-Occupancy. During this time, I conducted lien searches and assisted with answering emails, and coordinating projects remotely.

The following have no new update

The Village met with CAP Government's lead inspector and Raul Rodriquez in December 2019 to discuss building permit fee increases. CAP Government provided me a comparison of other neighboring municipalities' fees. The Village of El Portal is significantly lower. According to CAP, the Village's building permit fees have not increased since before they came on-board in 2005. I believe this is an opportunity for the Village to increase its building permit fees and to increase our venues to aid in operations. I presented this information and the recommendation to the January 21, 2020 Administration and Finance Committee.

CAP Government's new engineer, Miguel A. Diaz, is reviewing a submittal from Pennoni that was sent to the Interim Village Attorney this month that discusses their request for an increase in fees to finalize the design of the septic to sewer conversion on the west side of the Village. We will bring this plan to the Public Works Committee and/or the Administration and Finance Committee when we have Mr. Diaz' recommendations.

Due to the pandemic, this project is on hold but will remain on my report until it is resolved. Ms. Aramburu of 120 NW 88 Street whose **blueprints were lost by the Village of El Portal in 2016** and she is now asking that the Village replace the blueprints. She is very upset and is demanding the blueprints. I was made aware of this situation by Mayor Cubillos last month and have reached out to the County Clerk's Office to obtain blueprints. The County's records only go back as far as 1950. We will have to commission this work from an architect. I discussed the matter with PlusUrbia, who is able to complete uncertified blueprints on behalf of the Village in the amount of \$2/square foot.

## **Planning and Zoning**

For the month of March, PlusUrbia's Juan Mullerat and Camila Zablach worked on the Cristo Rey Miami High School, the Kavista at El Portal Development and the Skate Park Miami (at El Portal) variance and special exceptions. The Special Planning and Zoning and Council Meetings for those items were

canceled. The skate park and Kavista at El Portal variances will appear on this April 2020 Council agenda.

PlusUrbia is recommending, and I concur, that the fencing update to the code, that passed at the January 2020 Planning and Zoning Committee, be moved forward to the May 2020 Council Meeting agenda, in the interest of moving it since it has passed committee and residents are requesting the change. PlusUrbia also presented an architectural guide to the Planning and Zoning Committee this month that focuses on continuity in the esthetics of the Village and its future development. This project was initiated by Mayor Cubillos. The guidebook will be presented the El Portal residents with the comprehensive plan amendments and building fees changes in a town hall/workshop in the coming months.

### **Public Works (includes Parks and El Portal Tree City status)**

The Village of El Portal passive parks, Tequesta Indian Mound, the El Portal Nature Trail, Sherwood Forest Park and River Estate Park will open 7AM until 8PM daily, per the Phase 1 New Normal Re-Opening of Miami Dade County Open Spaces per Executive Order of Miami Dade County Carlos Gimenez. The El Portal Tot Lot will remain closed until further notice as it is not a passive park and is a space that will induce social gathering.

Public Works and Maintenance Staffer Angel Hernandez painted walking direction arrows on the path of the nature trail so that users remain in compliance with the County Executive Order. Park Rangers and other County staff will monitor the passive parks to ensure visitors remain in compliance with the face covering and social distancing (6 ft.) and no groups of 10 or more in the passive parks.

Mr. Hernandez planted five new Florida Pine trees in Sherwood Forest Park with our Grants Consultant, Robert Ruano on Friday, April 24, 2020 in observance of Arbor Day2020. Councilperson Roman sent out a video of their plantings that commemorates the “celebration” as we are not able to have an Arbor Day celebration due to the Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic.

I met with new Councilperson Luis Pirela on April 21, 2020 for an in-depth discussion about Public Works, Planning and Zoning and Code Enforcement. Councilperson Pirela is the new chairperson of the Public Works Committee and is a member of the Code Enforcement and Planning and Zoning committees.

### **Septic to Sewer Project (Pennoni) and El Jardin Stormwater Improvement (Craig A. Smith) Project**

Pennoni – The S2S project in the west quadrant of the Village is stalled again due to engineering firms increase of fees:

1. The Village Council passed the easement agreement with the Miami Dade School Board at the October 22, 2019 Regular Meeting. Interim Village Attorney Powell attempted to finalize the negotiations with Pennoni Engineers and coordinated a phone conference between us and Pennoni’s Steven Elias to finish the design work of the lift/pump station. Elias states that Pennoni has “lost momentum” and will be asking for an additional \$45,000 to \$50,000 to complete the remaining 8% on the project. We asked for the reason for more money in writing and have not received this proposal as of this day. The Village is required to make the initial payment to Horace Mann Middle School in order to finalize the easement agreement. The initial payment is \$18,000. I have met with the Interim CFO, and we are processing the payment to accompany the executed contract this week. The next payment of \$6,000 is due in twelve months, and the final payment of \$6,000 is due in twelve months after the second payment is made. Interim CFO has booked these

payments so that they are distinguished from other payments in the Village's budget. We are still in review of Pennoni's new addendum regarding the payment to finalize the design of this project. Please see Building section for more details.

2. CDGB grant funding request was made of Miami Dade County for road construction related to the stormwater improvement project. We received \$157,000. The Village is in good standing on this project.
3. Craig A. Smith and Associates – El Jardin Stormwater Improvement. Engineer Orlando Rubio executed alternate designs to the El Jardin stormwater outfall project that was presented in the January 7, 2020 Public Works Committee meeting and passed to full council. The new design has been approved by FDEP.

Arbor Day Membership and Neat Streets Matching Tree Grant - The Village of El Portal, through our grants consultant, Robert Ruano and I applied for and received the Neat Streets Matching Tree Grant. This cycle will provide for 37 trees to be planted in various locations in the Horace Mann Middle School and west side of the Village of El Portal that will create a "Green Route to School, Phase 2." Robert Ruano has coordinated 2020 El Portal Tree Board and its reporting. On the Tree Board: Councilperson Roman, Mr. Adam Old, Mr. Hugh Gladwin, Ms. Amy Lubron, Mr. Blair Walker and Mr. Fernando. On Friday, April 24, 2020 Robert Ruano and Public Works and Maintenance Staffer planted five Florida Pine trees in Sherwood Forest Park in observance of Arbor Day 2020. The Arbor Day celebration was canceled due to the Corona Virus pandemic, but Chairperson Councilperson Roman did issue a short video of the planting.

There is no update for the street lighting due to corona virus pandemic. FPL Street Lighting Pilot Program –This pilot program conversion has not started yet in El Portal. Presently the Village has 151 FPL light posts. All lights are high pressure sodium, with no LED lights. FPL is proposing a lighting plan for the Village of El Portal that will reduce power consumption by replacing all the lights with LED lights. The Village is given the choice of three lights: 41-Watt 4000K, 45-Watt 3000K, and 76-Watt 6400K. According to FPL, most of the other municipalities in the County are utilizing the 76-Watt 6400k, which is a white light. FPL is available for a meeting to discuss with the Village its program, pricing and options. Also, according to FPL, all of the new LED lights are wildlife compatible. We have asked that the Sherwood Forest area receive the lowest wattage LED replacements. We do not know when the El Portal conversion will begin.

There is no update on the library park due to corona virus pandemic. **Little Library Reading Park/Cove at the Tot Lot.** I met with Orchidman's Jose Perez (owner) on January 13, 2020, to do a review of the five El Portal parks, and their need for renovation/refreshing. He will also work on the new Little Library landscaping to set it apart. Mr. Hernandez will be working with Artist Nicole to coordinate the new and bigger **Little Library** installation. Mayor Cubillos has pledged to donate the new structure to the Village of El Portal. We are awaiting a response from the artist as to when the structure will be ready for installation. We are also awaiting a formal proposal from our landscaper, Orchidman, regarding creating a space for the new Little Library at the opening of the Tot Lot and for improvements to all parks Village-wide.

Maintenance, Update and Beautification of Village of El Portal Properties (Parks) and Village Hall -

The Village of El Portal Administrative offices have been closed to the public since March 26, 2020. It has been bio-cleaned, and is cleaned every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by Clean and Clear Cleaning Service. I have ordered, and Mr. Hernandez has assembled and erected, plexiglass safety screens for the front desk. Staff has been working remotely, with occasional office work when needed.

I met with HUD-CDBG Director Dixon on April 14, 2020 to discuss the Village of El Portal's needs and to assess HUD grant opportunities. A HUD Critical Facilities Hardening grant opened on April 15, 2020, and Robert Ruano and I attended the plenary meeting for that. We will also track two other grant opportunities provided by HUD - General Planning and Long Term Recovery grant that opens on May 15, 2020 and a General Infrastructure grant that opens June 15, 2020. These are excellent opportunities for the Village in that we are in need of all three. With Robert Ruano's technical assistance, we will apply for these, but there are some limitations to all. One main limitation that could affect the Village is that these are reimbursable grants. We would have to pay for the hardening/renovation/repairs and then be reimbursed for through these federal funds. And the other is that the hardening of the Village Hall only applies to the Police Department, and we would have to pro-rate effort to exclude the administrative and council portions of the building. This is a project that I will continue to pursue and will update you. I have engaged Robert Ruano to assist me in this effort.

The Village ordered and installed new Welcome to El Portal, Bird Sanctuary and Home of the Month signage. Some of the signs are not installed yet but will come when the pandemic is over. To date, there are new signs at NE 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NW 90 Street, and at NE 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and NE87 Street.

Per resolution passed in summer 2019, the Village has allocated forfeiture funds to complete some Village Hall Building security improvements that included the security cameras. Clerk Jacobi's window was replaced last week (February 19, 2020). We still have a security gate to complete that will commence when the pandemic is over.

The front window of the Village Hall Chambers was smashed on Sunday, December 15, 2019. EPPD made an arrest, and I have filed a claim with the insurance company (Florida League of Cities). Mr. Hernandez is attempting to get the quotes needed for the insurance replacement. One window company has explained that the window setting is too old and won't support a significant pane of glass. We are awaiting other quotes.

### **Public Affairs**

The EMT hosted a Virtual Town Hall on Monday, April 27, 2020, and will host another one on Thursday, April 30, 2020 at 7PM.

The Annual Military 5K Event is still scheduled at this time.

### **Administration and Finance**

Finance – I have been working with Synovus Bank and Mayor Cubillos in reviewing options and opportunities for the Hurricane Irma Line-of-Credit renewal. We will renew by the deadline on June 30, 2020 and are working on logistics now. We have also continued our heavy push for receiving the FEMA obligated reimbursement from Hurricane Irma so that we may pay back the line-of-credit. We are a few

weeks away from Hurricane Season 2020 and are also exploring some options to have some reserve funds set aside in case of a need. I will keep the Council informed when there is something concrete.

I attended a training on COVID-19 public assistance through FEMA and the Florida Department of Emergency Management. The Village's to-date expenditures for the pandemic have remained low compared to other municipalities, so I expect that applying for reimbursements and/or public assistance for the pandemic will be done in-house.

Interim CFO Chris Wallace continues to address the lack in the finance department and will continue to work on the 2019 end of year budget report, as well as keeping us focused in this budget year. He is also preparing other reporting requirements for the upcoming Audit as well as the financial impacts of other open projects. Our Office Administrator, Christian Abril, has continued his work remotely as well, and

- Processing payroll and FRS pension payments from home.
- Entering invoices for payment and printing checks two days a week at Village Hall
- Administrative duties related to HR (employment verifications, personnel files, etc.)
- Vendor file maintenance (filing invoices)

Legislative Update – Our Lobbyists are assisting with FEMA reimbursement issues, and are working closely with Mayor Cubillos and me.

Human Resources - March and April heavily focused on health and safety of all staff and residents due to the Corona Virus/COVID-19 pandemic. A staffer tested positive for COVID-19, which prompted me to close the office on March 26, 2020, and send staff home to monitor and self-quarantine for two weeks. I checked every staff member almost daily. The same day that the staff member tested positive, Miami Dade Mayor Gimenez released an executive order for all non-essential workers to go home, Safer At Home order. I hired a temporary part-time (20 hours/weekly) worker from Labor Finders, Inc. to fulfill the essential work that was not being performed at that time. On April 20, 2020, Mr. Hernandez returned to Public Works and Maintenance duties, and the temporary worker was released from duty on April 17, 2020.

The Village of El Portal follows Miami Dade County in emergency management and will re-open to the public when the County issues its order. In the meantime, I will be opening the office for workers only, perhaps in a staggered work schedule initially, at the beginning of May. I have installed plexiglass screening for the front desk to assist with some distancing for the Building Department and Code Enforcement workers. And I have ordered hand sanitizer stands for the front door of the building for visitors. These are safety measures that will assist when we open to the public.

During their time of working from home, Village of El Portal Administrative and Police staff have been completing free on-line trainings provided by the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT), and I described in an email to Council last week.

On April 9, 2020, we held the final testimony for the Hufnagel arbitration, with former Interim Village Police Chief Jose Perez testifying for the Village of El Portal regarding his experience with the department and Ms. Hufnagel. The Closing Briefs for the arbitration are due to the arbitrator Tuesday, April 28, 2020. Attorney Gus Bravo will be submitting the Village's closing brief today.

### **Councilmember/Resident Requests**

I have met with a number of residents telephonically and exchanged a number of emails over the month of April. If you would like further information about the content and resolution, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. I do keep a file and documentation for this.

A resident requested assistance with an injured peacock. Chief Magnusson was good enough to find some veterinarians who take peacocks and supplied that contact information to the resident. Of note, the Pelican Harbor bird sanctuary DOES NOT take peacocks, and will not assist. Miami Dade County will only pick up dead animals through its animal control division. Though we are a bird sanctuary, we are so with no resources in the event of accident or illness to our peacocks.

There continue to be a myriad of directives and projects I administer at the request of individual councilpersons and members of the El Portal community. For more information, please contact me directly.