

MEMORANDUM

TO: Village of El Portal Council
FR: Christia E. Alou, Village Manager
DATE: February 25, 2020
RE: February 2020 Village Manager's Report



Please accept this memorandum as my February 2020 Village of El Portal Administrative Report to Council.

Special Projects

NE 2nd Avenue Business Corridor

Cristo Rey Miami High School at The Sanctuary Rader Church

On January 14, 2020, Mayor Cubillos, PlusUrbia's Juan and Camila and I met with Cristo Rey Miami High School Chairperson Rudy Cecchi and members of the board of directors to hear about their interest in bringing the national high school program to the Rader Church/Sanctuary property. Cristo Rey Miami presented the project at the February Planning and Zoning Committee meeting and was met with many concerns from the community. Mayor Cubillos asked that residents forward questions to me and that I **would forward to Cristo Rey Miami. I did do this for about four queries.** The Mayor, PlusUrbia and I met on Feb. 19, 2020 to discuss the project again and to plan a town hall meeting. The Town Hall will be Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at the Village Hall at 7pm. Cristo Rey Miami has been very responsive and is motivated to move into the property as soon as they can. Cristo Rey Miami conducted traffic studies for the area last week and will do one this week.

Parking Plans

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 2nd 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 88th 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 will be submitting plans to the Village of El Portal for the Kavista project this week. They would like to be on the March 10, 2020 Planning and Zoning Committee agenda, and then on to the March Council Meeting agenda. They are also tasked with holding a town hall meeting about the project.

Former Trailer Park Development

I will be reaching out to the Fullview Group to coordinate a meeting with them and the Kavista Project as they will be neighbors and developing the area east of the railroad tracks. PlusUrbia asked that they coordinate as a courtesy and for information sharing that will assist with the overall look of the two projects.

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. 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. 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.

Village of El Portal Transportation Shuttle and Transit

Ongoing – 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.

Departments

Police and Public Safety

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 meeting dates were February 3, February 10 and February 24. We postponed the February 24, 2020 meeting because I have not had an opportunity to review the budget and it changes if there was an opportunity for salary increases and I would like to discuss that with the members of the Council as well. Attorney Powell rescheduled the meeting for Monday, March 2, 2020. I will discuss this matter with each of the members before that meeting.

The EPPD is also having a difficult time with vehicle repairs for older and donated vehicles use. Lt. Mendez prepared a list of the current fleet and its assignments. (Please see attached) His vehicle has experienced the most amount of repair needs. He is assigned a donated vehicle from Doral. Interim CFO Wallace is still reviewing the Enterprise Leasing option. He recommends the program for the code enforcement and public works vehicles but is still reviewing the option for the EPPD as this will be more expensive and is unbudgeted.

Chief Magnusson continues to address the needs of the department and provided the below bullet points for the month of February 2020.

From Police Chief David Magnusson

- Monitoring Speeding Related Tickets
- Ran 87 Street Traffic Study and Tickets using new speed measuring device
- Officer Battaglia attended FTO training
- Sgt. Borrell to attend first line supervision class in March 2020
- Officer Owen continuing to work on Property Room Clean up
- Officer Battaglia is our Seniors Coordinator
- The reckless driver issues at NE 5-91-95 Street have slowed down following some well-timed arrests
- Worked on an economic crimes scam where victim is owner of The Cottages (I can elaborate further if needed)
- Chief invited to meet with school officials (District included) to discuss school security and shootings)
- Chief attended Miami-Dade New Director swearing in on Friday February 21st.

Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement vehicle is on its very LAST leg. EPPD met formally with Enterprise Rental regarding an opportunity to lease EPPD, Code Enforcement and Public Works vehicles from the company which allows for their maintenance of the vehicles and for the Village to switch out the vehicle for a newer one every few years. An estimate was provided to me yesterday of approximately \$22,000 for a Ford Fusion. To be paid \$327.00 monthly as a lease that will include all maintenance and a \$6,000 buy-back to be utilized at the end of the lease to secure another leased vehicle or to take the amount. Please see the plans I sent to members of the Administration and Finance Committee yesterday or contact me for those plans.

From Code Enforcement Officer Emir King

Citizen Complaints: 4, Self-Initiated Cases: 25; Paint Inspections: 4; Courtesy Notice: 26; Violations: 3

Properties brought into compliance: 14

Summary:

NE 83rd ST-Illegal Dumping/ Bulk Trash removed

8901 NE 4 Ave- Paint Inspection

8780 NE 2nd Ave- Bulk Trash Violation/CCIN/Complied

127th NE 88th-Permit Violation/CCIN/Complied

10 NW 88th- Hedge Height/NOCI/Complied

475 NW 88th St- Paint Inspection

8911 N. Miami Ave- Paint Inspection

179 NE 86th- Tree Removal/ Vegetation removal/CCIN

161 NW 89th- Paint Discoloration/Renovation in progress/CCIN

370 NE 87th- Exterior Maintenance /CCIN/Complied

180 NW 90th – Permit Violation/Exterior Maintenance/CCIN

8700 N. Miami- Exterior Maintenance/Illegally Parked Trailer/Permit Violations/CCIN

60 NE 89th- Bulk Trash Violation/CCIN

100 NE 88th- Abandoned Vehicles/CCIN/Complied

378 NE 86th-Permit Violation/CCIN

101 NE 87th-Exterior Maintenance/NOCI

241 NE 88th- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN

353 NE 90th-Overgrown Grass/CCIN/Complied

127th NE 90th- Real Estate Sign/CCIN/Complied

127th NE 90th- Permit Violations/CCIN/Complied

496 NE 88th- Overgrown Vegetation/CCIN

353 NE 90th- Permit Violation/CCIN

100 NE 90th -Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied

8855 NE 2nd Ave- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied

8825 NE 2nd Ave- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied

8901 NE 4th Ave- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied

385 NE 87th – Abandoned Vehicle/CCIN

376 NE 87th- Abandoned Vehicle/CCIN

156 NW 90th- Unsanitary Pool Conditions/NOCI
313 NE 87th -Bulk Trash/CCIN/Complied
411 NE 87th- Bulk Trash/CCIN/Complied
17 NE 88th- Overgrown Hedge & Weed/Fence in Disrepair/Dead Trees/CCIN
8721 N. Miami- Roof Discolored/Dirty/CCIN
251 NE 86th- Paint Inspection

Building Department

I 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 where I was asked by Councilperson Roman to ensure that there was no fee increase in the recent past as she remembered some kind of fee increase two or three years ago. I did confirm that the fee increase was for planning and zoning, not for building. I will bring this matter forward with the committee.

CAP Government has hired a new engineer, Miguel A. Diaz, who will take up where David Mendez left off with the Village for special assignments and oversight upon request. We utilized Mr. Mendez' services in the past when reviewing the out-of-scope work from Pennoni in 2019.

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. I will be approaching Ms. Aramburu about this matter today.

From Building Clerk Miriam Herrera

Certificates of Re Occupancy Issued: 2

Alejandra Sanchez
236 NE 85 Street

DOUBLE TT LLC
127 NE 90 ST

Building Permits: 55 Permits to date which include garage sales, special events, fumigation tenting, alarm and building

Building Inspections: 70 to date

Hall Rental – None

Waste Management Damaged Cart Replacements:

MARILYN BROOKS
176 NW 88 ST
TEL. 305-588-4635

2 Public records requests for blueprint copies being outsourced to DDR EPRO

Planning and Zoning

PlusUrbia's Juan Mullerat and Camila Zablah met with me, Mayor Cubillos and the Cristo Rey Miami High School this month, and have been meeting consistently since the meeting to identify the proper form of advancing the project that will allow Cristo Rey Miami to move its Miami high school into the Sanctuary property. I will also be reviewing this project's financial and administrative impact on the Village of El Portal with our Interim CFO, Chris Wallace.

Also, on NE 2 Avenue, a parking and traffic calming project is being considered with the Miami Dade County Public Works and Transportation Department. Juan Murrelat is communicating with the department, and I am awaiting more information from PlusUrbia.

PlusUrbia has drafted an architectural design guide that was requested by the Mayor and Council and is also in the final stages of the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan. We met on January 22, 2020 to discuss the status, and next steps. PlusUrbia is putting the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan in an executive summary for distribution to the Council and the Community in preparation for a community workshop as required to submit the Comprehensive Plan amendments to the State of Florida. The state's deadline for this is March 1, 2020, but we will be filing for any extension.

Public Works

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 finally moving:

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.

2. CDGB grant funding request was made of Miami Dade County for road construction related to the stormwater improvement project. We received \$157,000. Project Consultant Robert Ruano and I met with Miami Dade County Public Housing & Community Development Project Manager Shenika Smith, Lawanda Scott and Rafael Puente to go over the requirements from the Village before the funding contract may be executed. The Village is in good standing on this project.
3. Craig A. Smith and Associates – El Jardin. 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. A resolution establishing the Tree Board is on the February Council Meeting agenda for approval.

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.

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 proposal from our landscaper, Orchidman, regarding creating a space for the new Little Library at the opening of the Tot Lot.

I was informed by **MDC Dept of Public Works and Transportation** that they will not be able to enter an MOU for services with the Village of El Portal due to staffing deficiencies. This means that the Village will attempt to patch the potholes, address other public works and infrastructure problems on our own through our Public Works and Maintenance staffer. Mr. Hernandez has successfully filled one pothole along NE 2nd Avenue and NE 88th Street.

There is renovation construction on the bridge over the C7 Canal at N. Miami Avenue until January 2021. A community meeting was held at the Village Hall on December 18, 2019 to inform those who attend of any changes to traffic flow. This construction will affect traffic on N. Miami Avenue for twelve months (or more) until the construction is completed. At its completion the County has promised to work with the Village in identifying and planting and maintaining landscaping on the medians that will be appealing and welcoming to the Village. The county did require the Village to remove the electrical system on the medians. We did and it was completed last week (February 2,2020). This costed the Village approximately \$800.

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

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 in three weeks after the material for the gate is delivered.

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 February Black History Month Young Professionals event at Amaranthine was canceled by Councilperson Roman.

The Village assisted with the planning of the Annual Arbor Day celebration. It is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 2020.

Administration and Finance

Finance – 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 and working on the meeting with the PBA and Administration on salary increases for the police staff, as well as the financial impacts of the Sanctuary property being converted to Cristo Rey Miami High School. A Request for Proposal (RFP) is prepared and ready to issue for Financial Services but will be issued in 2020 as we make corrections within the department with Interim CFO Wallace.

Other RFPs - I have also prepared the RFP for Legal Services and provided it at the September 2019 and the January Administration and Finance Committee meetings for the Village Attorney's position. I was asked by the Administration and Finance Committee to allow for more time to review the RFP. The Florida League of Cities legal services does not include contract negotiations for legal services for the Village of El Portal. The Village will have to hire outside counsel for this negotiation. The attorney who is representing the Village in the Hufnagel labor dispute says that he would be willing to represent the Village when negotiating the Village Attorney's contract at his hourly fee - \$250/hour.

And a Request for Proposal for Solid Waste Removal Services is prepared and ready to submit. It is the hope that these two will be issued and determined in early 2020.

Legislative Update – Our Lobbyists are providing the Administration and the Council with weekly updates. We are about to start Week 7. Session ends at the end of Week 9. That means that the Budget Conference could start as early as the end of Week 7, but more likely, the start of Week 8. That is when our lobby team will push to have our three funding requests agreed to by the Senate, as well as a push to boost the actual dollar amounts as well.

January was a month of intensive interviewing and resume reviews due to the loss of two staff members. February was heavily focused on training of new hires, Christian Abril, Office Administrator, and Angel Hernandez, Public Works and Maintenance Staffer. So far so good.

I attended many meetings and over the month including meetings with residents to address their individual concerns, meetings with the PBA to discuss labor matters of our EPPD, CAP Government to discuss Public Works issues related to the Septic to Sewer conversion project and the increase in building fees I am proposing, potential Sanctuary property owner Cristo Rey Miami High regarding the project and the El Portal community, an Area Manager's Luncheon, Miami Dade County and City Manager's training and luncheon at the Miami Beach Convention Center – topic 2020 Census, and I will be attending a training on Planning and Zoning Trends and Innovations for the Miami Dade County and City Managers on February 28, 2020.

Councilmember/Resident Requests

I have met with a number of residents telephonically and in person over this month. 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.

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.

