

MEMORANDUM

TO: Village of El Portal Council
FR: Christia E. Alou, Village Manager
DATE: January 28, 2020
RE: January 2020 Village Manager's Report



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

Special Projects

NE 2nd Avenue Business Corridor

Cristo Rey Miami High School at The Sanctuary Property

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. They expressed a sincere commitment in maintaining the façade, interior renovations, and a maximum student population of 350-400 students once the school is fully occupied in three years. Cristo Rey would like to move into the property by Summer 2020, therefore it requests a fast track of public meetings, community town halls, and assistance with planning and zoning and building permitting. Cristo Rey Miami has a letter of intent to purchase with the Sadinsky group (Seth and Sam).

The Cristo Rey presentation was heard at the January 21, 2020 Planning and Zoning Committee meeting, where discussion about zoning took place. Interim Village Attorney Norman Powell is reviewing the next steps needed to ensure appropriate process for the Cristo Rey Miami High School project is compliant with the Village's code. Two community Town Halls meetings, one at the Village Hall and one possibly the Saturday date to take place at the Sanctuary site. Town Hall meetings are being planned for two dates out of February 4, February 7, February 8 and/or February 15.

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. I have received a proposal from a private entity that conducts parking studies for a fee, but we will hold off on pursuing such until we exhaust options with Miami Dade County. It's the desire of the Village to provide a parking plan for businesses along the NE 2nd Corridor to address the issues of limited swale parking.

Biscayne Boulevard Development

Kavista at El Portal/Annexed Area

The development agreement is finalized, and a three step developer's fees schedule is established to distribute \$1.1 million to the Village of El Portal. The use of these fees is being determined by the Administration and Village Council. In the meantime, I met with Arthur and Ken Barrington, their attorney Ben Fernandez and a transportation engineer, Karl Peterson, on January 22, 2020 to coordinate the required traffic study for the annexed area.

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. A meeting with Dept of Emergency Management Director, Jared Moscovitz informed us that our disaster management consultant, Disaster Programs & Operation (DP&O) is being audited and looked at by FDEM before any of the municipalities that employed DP&O can receive reimbursements. Miami Shores and Florida City are also in a holding pattern with our Village as we await the results of that review and hopefully reimbursements in 2020.

Village of El Portal Transportation Shuttle and Transit

Ongoing - I continue to work with the County's CITT and TPO regarding use of Village's surtax and CITT funds to utilize a pilot program for the Village's residents to access 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 has scheduled a series of meetings to negotiate the step-increases and promotions being demanded by the PBA and Mr. Coyle. The meeting dates are February 3, February 10 and February 24. Our Interim CFO will be in attendance for two of the meetings. I will inform the Council of the content of these meetings.

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

From Police Chief David Magnusson

The December 2019 Christmas Celebration Gathering was a huge hit with EPPD, staff and Council

- Arrest was made on person who vandalized/burglarized Village Hall
- In terms of scheduling, we worked through a tough end-of-month (December) with three full-time officers out. Our part-time officers stepped up greatly.
- EPPD switched carrier services over to 5G AT&T First Net which will allow us far greater communication ability during time of crisis and emergency.
- Worked on revamping proper terminology for our reserve/auxiliary: They are Part-Time NON-Compensatory.
- Prepared year-end stats
- Sgt. Borrell to attend First Line Supervision course in March 2020
- Ofc. Battaglia to attend Field Training Officer training in February 2020
- Full vehicle cost analysis being done as fleet is slowly breaking down; new alternatives being sought and was presented to the Administration and Finance Committee this month
- Speed measuring device arrived and is being assembled for use
- Have been working the NW 5/90-95 Street reckless drivers' case. Arrests have already been made. It is zero tolerance. This is our #1 priority at the moment.
- Officer Battaglia is now our EPPD Seniors Citizens Coordinator
- Working with Florida League of Cities on some safety grant possibilities
- Working with some vest grant possibilities as well
- Monitoring speeding related tickets
- Officer Owen working diligently on Property Room Clean up
- Sgt. Borrell worked radar on NE 2 Avenue for speeders

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: 2

Self-Initiated Cases: 25

Inspections: 4

Courtesy Notice: 26

Violations: 1

Properties brought into compliance: 14

Summary:

300 NE 89th- Paint Inspection

440 NW 89th- Property hand served with violation pertaining to Derelict Vehicle, Exterior Maintenance (broken window), Trash and Debris. NOCI issued

25 NW 86th- Alarm Permit/CCIN/Complied

312 NE 87th- Exterior Wall maintenance/CCIN/Complied

370 NE 87th- Exterior Paint/Expired Permits/CCIN/Complied

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

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

170 NE 86th- Overgrown Vegetation/Dead Trees/CCIN/Complied

137 NE 89th- Exterior Maintenance (discolored walls)/CCIN/Complied

420 NW 91st - Exterior Maintenance (Discolored Walls)/CCIN/Complied

144 NE 89th - Exterior Maintenance (Discolored Walls)/CCIN/Complied

370 NE 87th- Exterior Maintenance /CCIN

400 NE 89th- Paint Inspection

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

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

60 NE 89th- Illegally Parked Vehicle/Bulk Trash Violation/CCIN

100 NE 88th- Permit Violation/CCIN

378 NE 86th-Permit Violation/CCIN

101 NE 87th-Exterior Maintenance/NOCI

241 NE 88th- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN

353 NE 90th-Overgrown Grass/CCIN
127th NE 90th- Real Estate Sign/CCIN
401 NE 86th-Alarm Permit
383 NE 85th-Alarm Permit
8501 NE 3rd- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied
348 NE 85th-Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied
197-199 NE 89th- Exterior Maintenance/CCIN/Complied
160 NE 89th- Prohibited Acts-Sunday Work/CCIN/Complied
8780 NE 2nd-Placement of Garbage Cans/CCIN/Complied
60 NW 90th-Overgrown Vegetation/CCIN/Complied
380 NW 87th- Derelict Vehicle/CCIN/Complied

Building Department

I met with CAP Government lead inspector and Raul Rodriguez in December 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.

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. This will cost upwards of \$6,000. I asked Ms. Araburu for a written synopsis of the matter via email after speaking with her on the telephone on January 3, 2020 which she did not provide until January 28, 2020. She is very angry despite my efforts to assist, but I have to ensure that this matter was purely the Village's fault before we consider paying for this expensive undertaking. This is not budgeted and is out of my spending authority. I will keep the Administration and Finance Committee apprised.

From Building Clerk Miriam Herrera

5 Certificates of Re Occupancy Issued:

Lloyd Gelu 105 ME 86 Street

Luis Abad 97 NE 87 Street

Mary Perez 367 NE 86 Street

David Bauer 456 NE 88 Street

Building Permits:

28 Permits to date which include garage sales, special events, fumigation tenting, alarms and building.

Hall Rental – January 12th & January 25th

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 will be finalizing the negotiations with Pennoni Engineers but has not received any response from Pennoni to finish the design work of the lift/pump station. 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. Of those requirements, the Village is required to conduct a Phase 1 Environmental Audit. Village engineering consultant, Craig A. Smith conducted the audit, and it has been submitted.
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.

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." I will also be meeting with the Arbor Day Foundation's Community Canopy Program Manager in February to discuss additional tree opportunities for Spring 2020.

FPL Street Lighting Pilot Program –This pilot program conversion program has not started yet. 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.

Public Works and Maintenance Staffer Jose Villela resigned his post on January 3, 2020 and was replaced by Mr. Angel Hernandez on January 23, 2020. Please welcome Mr. Hernandez to the Village of El Portal.

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 the Village of El Portal and is working with me to have a Five-Year Anniversary celebration and unveiling for February 2020. Artist Nicole has not responded to our inquiries about the status of the structure yet, so we hope to have the unveiling on schedule.

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.

There will be renovation construction on the bridge over the C7 Canal at N. Miami Avenue starting at the end of January 2020. A community meeting was held at the Village Hall on December 18, 2019 to inform

those who attend of any changes to traffic flow. At issue was the relocation of the six mature palm trees on relocation will have to be removed and may be planted elsewhere. The County's arborist and staff came out to the Village of El Portal to look for relocation places. They were unable to replant the palms in El Portal and will be moving them out of the Village. The project will begin next week, and a flyer was released and disseminated to residents through our eBlast and placed on marquees. 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.

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. We still have a security gate and the broken window in Clerk Jacobi's office to complete. The window parts are in and will be scheduled for repair this coming week.

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). Jose Villela did not get quotes for the work needed to repair the broken window. Mr. Hernandez will be working on that now.

Please see passage on Little Library for update on parks.

Public Affairs

I attended the 500 Role Models MLK, Jr. Breakfast on Monday, January 20, 2020 with Vice Mayor Nickerson and Councilperson Roman and our guests. El Portal bought a table for this event, but we did have many empty seats at the table. More community partners must be included for next year to ensure the table is fully utilized.

The Village of El Portal and Councilperson Roman are coordinating a February 2020 event with a local restaurant in Miami Shores to get young professionals and students from Horace Mann Middle together for an evening of professional development and encouragement. The date is set for February 12, 2020 5-7pm at Amaranthine restaurant in downtown Miami Shores.

The New Welcome Wagon Initiative is still being coordinated with Vice Mayor Nickerson with a roll-out expected in early 2020.

The Village will begin assisting with the coordination of the March 2020 Arbor Day event. On that same day, the Village will sponsor a table for the Miami Shores Mayor's Gala on the same day.

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

The initial funding list of priority water projects was released this morning by the Florida House of Representatives. Both El Portal water projects were included. They are both in for \$100,000 each, which is basically a “marker” which will hopefully be increased as we move into the budget conference process.

No word yet on Horace Mann finding, and no release from the Senate yet.

Other Legal - The Village has received yet another civil claim from former EPPD officer, Melys Boisnote, claiming discrimination in his termination. The Florida League of Cities is representing the Village of El Portal in this response.

The Village was served in a civil matter involving a car accident in which former EPPD officer, Melys Boisnote, was involved in August 2017. The Florida League of Cities is representing the Village of El Portal in this matter.

Officer Sandy Owen and the Village were served in a lawsuit alleging fault for a golf cart rolling over the foot of an officer from a different jurisdiction who was working an off-duty assignment with Officer Owen. Officer Owen was riding on the back of the golf cart and had no involvement in the actual operation of the vehicle. Florida League of Cities is representing the Village in this matter as well.

Former EPPD Sergeant Ronnie Hufnagel - Arbitration is scheduled for February 5 and February 6, 2020 at the Village Hall. I will be engaged in that during those days.

January was a month of intensive interviewing and resume reviews due to the loss of two staff members.

The Office Administrator, Tony Cisneros resigned and gave me two weeks' notice, with his last day being January 10, 2020. Tony had to leave the Village because of a need for a full-time graduate school schedule needed to complete his MBA program which was started before he came to work for the Village. Tony will be missed. He is, however, assisting with the training of his replacement, Ms. Deborah Bittan, who started with the Village on Wednesday, January 22, 2020. Ms. Bittan resigned on Monday, January 27, 2020 citing low wages. Tony Cisneros has agreed to assist the administration on an hourly pay basis during the weekends and/or after work in some finance matters until a new Office Administrator is hired. I made the offer to Mr. Christian Abril who will undergo the requisite background check Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

The Public Works and Maintenance Staffer, Jose Villela, resigned on Monday January 13, 2020 with no notice and no allowance for an exit interview. He turned in his keys and shirts and jacket and departed without any explanation. Mr. Angel Hernandez passed the interview and security background checks process and came highly recommended by his references. His first day with the Village was January 23, 2020. He appears to have a great demeanor and follow through and expressed an interest in doing more and taking on more responsibilities.

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.