

VILLAGE HALL
500 NE 87TH ST
EL PORTAL, FL 33138
CHRISTIA E. ALOU, ESQ.
VILLAGE MANAGER



MAYOR OMARR C. NICKERSON
VICE MAYOR ANDERS URBOM
COUNCILPERSON LUIS PIRELA
COUNCILPERSON ANNA LIGHTFOOT-WARD
COUNCILPERSON DARIAN MARTIN

MEMORANDUM

TO: Village of El Portal Council
FR: Christia E. Alou, Village Manager
DATE: June 28, 2022
RE: June 2022 Village Manager's Report

Please accept this memorandum as my June 2022 Village of El Portal Administrative Report to Council and the Community.

Hurricane Season and Emergency Preparedness 2022

June 1, 2022, marked the start of hurricane season. The Village Administration updated our internal emergency protocols and have placed service orders for our annual stormdrain maintenance with Shenandoah Construction and our annual dangerous tree limb trimming with Orchidman Landscaping Artisans. Unfortunately, Orchidman has not been able to provide the tree trimming due to staff shortfalls. FPL and AT&T are also conducting line maintenance and tree trimming in the Village of El Portal. We implore the residents to prepare their homes and be proactive. The Village's Bulk Pick-Up Schedule – June 28, 29 and 30th.

The annual Miami Dade County Hurricane Preparedness Guides is being mailed to every resident of Miami Dade County, and extra copies are available at the Village Hall. We encourage residents to download the Miami Dade County App Ready MDC. It is free and it has critical information for emergency conditions.

A Citizens Crime Watch Hurricane Prep Meeting is being scheduled by EPPD and its recording will be on the Village Website to serve as a preparation guide for Village residents.

As a reminder, the Village of El Portal has a Mutual Aid Agreement with the Florida Department of Emergency Management to address post-hurricane safety clean-up. The MAA requires certain procedures for reporting and removal of hazards that may not be immediate. Prevention and preparation is the Village's best defense against weather emergencies.

Hurricane Irma Financial Recovery

There has been no change since the last update. See this: The Village renewed its note with Synovus Bank that paid for Hurricane Irma debris removal. There has been no change in the reimbursement with the Village owing \$679,750.56. The Village's Appeal of the partial de-

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obligation of reimbursement is still pending with FEMA. The Village's Legislative Consultants are preparing meetings for the Village Administration and FDEM to advocate for the appeal.

Corona Virus/COVID-19 Pandemic Municipal Response

American Rescue Program Act (ARPA) funds were distributed by the US Federal government through Florida Department of Emergency Services. The Village of El Portal is a non-entitlement unit (NEU) and has been allocated funds to be utilized in our pandemic response efforts that address front line employees dealing directly with the public, technology-based service delivery, parks, pandemic related water projects. The Village is utilizing these funds to enhance the El Portal Police Department with equipment and staff that has been long- needed, and the Village is undergoing a digitization project for all departments, starting with the Building Department and Code Enforcement. By implementing digital services, the Village will make services and operations in those departments more efficient and convenient for residents. The Village is also planning for an inner-office renovation to allow for more space for co-workers to safely distance from one another, emergency communications that includes a digital marquee at the Village Hall, and other tech advances that will greatly impact emergency services for the municipality. This project is ongoing.

Since March 2020, the Village Administration observed state and county executive orders to follow the CDC guidelines in practicing safe social distancing. The Village Hall is open to the public and we are asking visitors to wear masks, but this policy has become a lot more relaxed due to pandemic monitoring, we continue to observe social distancing and hand sanitization when visiting our offices. Staff continues to wear masks when interacting with others or utilizing small workspaces. All Village parks are open. The Emergency Management Team continues to observe the viral variants and the numbers that may affect our service.

Short-term Rental In the Village of El Portal

The Village of El Portal passed an ordinance regulating Short-Term Rentals within the municipality last month. This and next month, the Village Council is reviewing and determining the associated fee schedule necessary to make this effective legislation.

State Appropriation Funded School Safety Roundabout at Horace Mann Middle School

The Village received \$300,000 from the State of Florida in the 2021 Legislative Appropriations to fund the development of a traffic calming project at NW91 Street and NW 2nd Avenue. The project will be designed, and the construction management will be with Village engineering firm, Craig A. Smith and Associates. Mayor Nickerson and I presented the project at the December 2021 Miami Shores Village Council Meeting. Miami Shores is in full support of the project and has advised us to have our legal counsel prepare the requisite Memorandum of Understanding with it. The stakeholders are Florida Department of Transportation, Miami Shores Village, Miami Dade County, and the Miami Dade Public Schools. CAS and I are responding very quickly to production requests from Florida Department of Transportation Contract Coordinator and to establish and stick to timelines for completion of the project. Senior Engineer Orlando Rubio and I participated in an update meeting with FDOT, and we were told that we must keep the project

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moving and have our contract executed by July 2022 in order to keep the funds. We are presently awaiting legal documentation in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Miami Shores Village to be drafted, presented and executed in order to finalize our contract with FDOT. This project is ongoing.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Village of El Portal Parks Renovation

The Village of El Portal Parks Renovation is on track for 2022. Our landscape architect and project manager have been working closely with the county's archeologist, about allowable intrusions into the surfaces which in turn dictate the allowable construction and design elements for any improvements on those sites. Landscape Architect, Jim Santiago, presented the Village with the preliminary plans, and they were reviewed by various residents for input and comment. Those comments have been provided to Mr. Santiago. I am awaiting some revisions/explanations.

Village of El Portal Transportation Circulator Pilot Project Shuttle to Downtown Transit

The Village of El Portal has a lovely electrical shuttle vehicle, fully operating through FreeBee. An application may be downloaded to access the shuttle schedule and map. This information is also provided in a flyer and card that may be picked up at the Village Hall or on the Village website. The shuttle stops are at the Village Hall parking lot (next to the Little Library) and at the El Portal Nature Trail. A security camera was installed to maintain the equipment. The Village has requested the execution of an Interlocal Agreement for the circulator with Miami Dade County. Due to state funding being held until the Village submits the 2019 audit, the matching funds from FDOT were held for this project. The Village continues the project with CITT (Transit) funds, an allowable expenditure for these funds that are very limited for what they may be used.

NE 2nd Avenue Business Corridor

The Sanctuary Property – According to the property owners, there has been no changes at The Sanctuary. There are delays associated with supply chain issues and inflation, extending the project because of material availability.

Roadway and Traffic - Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works is working with the Village to install “painted” crosswalk(s) at NE 87 and NE 89 and NE 2 Avenue. Our Public Works Director is reviewing engineering considerations presently. This project was born from the meetings that the Village Mayor and I had with Miami Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava in November 2021 and several department directors and leaders to discuss areas of partnership with the County such as the Pedestrians First, the Resiliency and Sustainability

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Adaptation Action Area, and areas of collaboration with departments such as Economic Development, Transportation and Planning, Water and Sewer, and Community Action.

Signage, Sewer Conversion, Parking - The Village also applied for a transportation planning grant with the County's assistance, to prepare this project. This is the planning necessary to start the development of the Village's Business Corridor as planned in meetings with me, Mayor Nickerson, our urban planners at Plusurbia, and our Village Attorney to consider policy changes for businesses owners along the NE 2nd Avenue corridor that include septic to sewer conversion that is critical to the Village's economic development, as well as signage and short-term rentals and lodging. Traffic changes are also a consideration for NE 2nd Avenue. This project is ongoing.

Biscayne Boulevard/Annexed Area Development

The Kavista Rental Development at El Portal Annex

The Kavista Project will need to submit a right-of-way permit application with Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plans for construction activities requiring partial road closures. Also, they seek special permission for working earlier hours and to meet Village noise requirements. They may need to coordinate with City of Miami also as part of the NE 83rd Street is in the City's right-of-way. Building Official Martinez and I have been addressing permitting questions and timelines with the developers to start the project in July 2022.

Skate Bird Miami (Skate Park)

Skate Bird Miami is open for business with an extension of a temporary certificate of occupancy. The Certificate of Occupancy was applied for this month and is awaiting inspections.

Former Trailer Park "Little Farm"

No movement to sell or develop has been reported at this time.

DEPARTMENTS

Police and Public Safety/El Portal Police Department (EPPD)

EPPD Chief of Police Alex Mendez was appointed on June 14, 2022, to the Miami Dade College's Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee. This three-year Advisory Committee term will allow Chief Mendez to provide legal and paralegal students with academic development and provide instructors with content that enhances instructional performance and student outcomes. We are very proud of Chief Mendez' ability and energy in serving the legal community in this capacity.

The EMT (Emergency Management Team) is meeting regularly to prepare for Hurricane Season 2022.

From Police Chief Alex Mendez

- *Dell Tough Books delivery re-scheduled for July due to vendor delays.*

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- *EPPD will be pursuing a FY 2021-22 JAG Direct grant and is awaiting COPS grant award notification to add full time officer(s) and were awarded a Police Vest grant and we are working on accepting the funds.*
- *A Summer Safety Bike Parade and Farm Share is being prepared in partnership with Horace Mann Middle School and Farm Share for July 7, 2022 9AM-12PM at Horace Mann Middle School.*
- *A hurricane preparedness meeting to be recorded, is being planned with the Village of El Portal Citizens Crime Watch so that block captains are prepared in the event of emergency.*
- *Transitioned to automated case numbers directly from Miami Dade Police.*
- *Submitted purchase orders for ID Maker, Digital Road Signs*
- *Corporal Garcia is conducting Field Training with Officer Torrens, Officer Brito, both hired as Reserve Officers but have transitioned into Full-Time positions due to department openings this month.*
- *The final two "Police Fleet Graveyard" vehicles are being processed for removal with Enterprise Leasing. They were sent the vehicle titles, and towing is being scheduled. The vehicles will be decommissioned (name and seals removed) and then they will be auctioned off by Enterprise Leasing.*

Code Enforcement

From Code Enforcement Officer Carlos Herrera for June 2022

"Please see My Review, Site Visits, Assessment of The Village of El Portal From 04/25/2022 Thru 06/24/2022.

- 1) *The Village of El Portal Has on Record 1,714 Cases.*
 - 2) *Since I Have Started with the village of El Portal I Have Personally Inspected, Re-reviewed & Re-visited 434 Cases Of cases That Are Still Opened.*
 - 3) *The Code Enforcement Office Is Still Reviewing The remaining 1,280 That the Village of El Portal Has on Record.*
 - 4) *All Open Pending Cases, Verbal Warnings Etc., Including Code Violations That Have & Were Closed While the Violation Is Still Visible on the premises.*
 - 5) *Within the 1,280 cases on Record Their Open Cases Which the Code Enforcement office Visited the Properties for A Follow Up Inspection, Re-inspection And There Are Cases That Are Unfounded.*
 - 6) *The Code Enforcement Office Is Going to Close Approximately 400 Cases That Are Unfounded, Meaning There is No Proof of Any Violation(s) As Well As Closing Unfounded Verbal Warning Open Cases as Well As Closing Open Violations For Burglar Alarm(s) That The Property Owner said Burglar Alarm Permit(s) & The case Still remains Open*
 - 7) *All remaining Open Cases Will Be Re-Issued the Violation(s) on record By the New Code Enforcement Officer/Inspector & Proceed Forward to Achieve Total Compliance."*
- Code Officer Herrera*

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Building Department

From CAP/Building Department Building Official Pedro Martinez for June 2022

*There have been 31 issued permits for the month.
Total fee collection - \$16,255.80
Total Construction Value - \$0*

*From the Permit Desk, Building Permit Clerk Francisco Roman
Kavista Apartments have paid building permits totaling \$175,530 during the month. We have a balance of \$173,678.84 which will be collected shortly. The actual jobsite is in the Sitework stages and roughly speaking we estimate 24 months until completion.*

ATT has agreed to pay \$2,000 in a bond to guarantee restoration to the right of way due to the installation of 19 poles and 3 anchors. Each pole and or anchor should take 1-2 days to remove existing, install new, and restore the right of way.

Inspections are now handled online through the CAP Portal.

Planning and Zoning

Plusurbia's Juan Murrelat and Camila Zablah facilitated a meeting with me and Mayor Nickerson and Gridics, a code updating company this month. The meeting was informative and offered alternatives to our current system. continues to provide the items for review for signage, short-term rental, and other important planning and zoning matters before the Council.

Public Works and Maintenance

Many of the Village's Special Projects fall under the Public Works Department. In addition to those projects already described, the department conducted the following:

From Public Works Department, Director Mohan Thampi for June 2022

- 1. Install multicolor lighting at Main Entrance of City Hall for mental health awareness and the Fourth of July holiday.*
- 2. Coordinate and met with MDC Mosquito Control Department on spraying requirements.*
- 3. Draft Village Hall and Police Station Floor Plan for Police Station Hardening Grant.*
- 4. Review Hurricane Plan with Orchidman Landscaping and coordinate trimming of trees.*
- 5. Coordinate installation of new catch basin behind Horace Mann Middle School.*
- 6. Coordinate installation of new Village Hall Digital Sign by Adware.*
- 7. Coordinate conversion of Jail Cell by Leading Edge to office space.*
- 8. Coordinate Village Hall carpeting and flooring replacement.*
- 9. Drive and inspect daily to various areas of Village to check for litter, problems, or issues.*
- 10. Coordinate landscaping activities with Orchidman Landscaping Artisans.*
- 11. Continue to make inspection and inventory of streetlights which need repairs and bulb replacement.*

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12. *Continue checking stormwater drainage inlets, clear and clean them of surface debris as needed.*
13. *Prepare Miami-Dade County Phase I MS4 Cycle 4 Year 4 Annual Report and Reapplication for NPDES Stormwater Permit.*
14. *Coordinate right-of-way public works and building permits with Kavista Apartments' contractor for various phases of construction.*
15. *Review various Village right-of-way permit applications from TECO for gas connections and ATT for wooden pole replacement.*
16. *Obtaining quotes for painting of Village Hall.*
17. *Maintaining all parks. Reviewed and made recommendations for parks renovation planning.*

Village of El Portal Sustainability and Resiliency

Most public works activities affect the Village's sustainability and resiliency. The Village of El Portal Sustainability and Resiliency Taskforce Liaison, Mayor Nickerson, makes reports to Council.

On June 9, 2022, Mayor Nickerson and I met with Sustainability and Resiliency Chairperson Elizabeth Fata Carpenter this month to review a water quality review of the Village of El Portal that was conducted by the Miami Waterkeepers and the Everglades Law Center. The report was not up-to-date, and a more thorough review of all the NPDES, Stormwater and Sanitary Sewer work that El Portal is doing presently was not reported. A renewed report is forthcoming.

Miami Dade County's Renovation of C7 CANAL BRIDGE at N. Miami Avenue

Two months ago, the Assistant Director of Construction and Maintenance for Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works provided me an update this week about the N. Miami Avenue bridge work. "Starting the week of April 4, 2022, construction is anticipated to resume on the western portion of the bridge. Southbound lanes will remain closed along North Miami Avenue and northbound lanes will remain open with one lane of traffic in each direction. The traffic shift is anticipated to be in place through September 2022 when construction begins on the eastern side of the bridge. Please keep in mind the construction schedule may change due to unforeseen circumstances."

NPDES - The Village of El Portal Public Works Department and I submitted the 2022 Annual Report, the 4 Year Cycle 4 NPDES Plan and the 20-Year Needs Analysis by its June 2022 deadline. A public education campaign continues on the Village website, and flyers are posted at Village marquees and have been provided door-to-door by Mayor Nickerson.

Other Outstanding Public Works Projects:

1. Septic to Sewer Project on West Side of Village

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99 Homes of the Village's West Side – the Village met with and finalized all portions of the easement payment for the small parcel required for the lift station at Horace Mann Middle School. The first installment payment for \$18,000 was issued to Miami Dade County Public Schools, and the executed land conveyance is expected but being processed through the MDCPS. Once it is received a notice to proceed will be forthcoming for the Village's engineering firm in this project, Pennoni, to commence the final design work. Miami Dade County CDBG funds that were awarded to the Village of El Portal are being used on this project. Compliance meetings and document production are ongoing and up-to-date by the Village of El Portal and consultant, Ecostratas/Robert Ruano.

2. CDBG/HUD critical facilities hardening grant was awarded to the Village of El Portal. An environmental assessment was conducted twice and addressed by me and Building Official Pedro Martinez and Robert Ruano. I have painstakingly prepared all the requirements of the contract with HUD/DEO for these funds. Consultant Robert Ruano of Ecostratas Consulting, the Village of El Portal Public Works Department and the Chief Financial Officer and I have done the requisite reports, policy drafts, correspondence with the Miccosukee Tribe regarding the project and are now awaiting responses and approvals. We also prepared a draft RFP/Invitation to Bid (ITB) for the necessary work that this grant will provide: the contractor will do the replacement of external doors and the installation of a generator at the Police Station/Village Hall. The grant amount is \$50,000.
3. El Jardin Stormwater Improvement.
A phase of the El Jardin storm water improvement project was completed in January 2022. Just recently, the Village of El Portal was granted the Resilient Florida Grant for 2021 by Governor DeSantis. This grant is a matching grant that would provide the Village over \$900,000 from the State (FDEP) to do the next phase of the El Jardin project. I met with our senior engineer, Orlando Rubio and with our CFO in ascertaining how we can come up with the requisite \$822,000. I later met with FDEP project coordinators, who confirmed that the work we did on El Jardin Stormwater Improvement Phase 1, may be used as a portion of the match. The Phase 1 was \$550,000 with an additional \$24,000 in a change order. Receiving the Resilient Florida grant is a tremendous win for the Village of El Portal, but to be allowed to use the expenditures of Phase 1 as a contribution to the Village's match requirement is just as tremendous for us. CFO Taubenfeld and I will be reviewing ways to make up the difference needed to complete the grant agreement needed to further the project. Phase 2 will require the outfall easement that we desperately need in El Jardin. Mayor Nickerson, Orlando Rubio and I will be meeting with homeowners in the area in the first weeks of July 2022 to begin the process of securing the outfall easement.

Public Affairs

My and the Administration's participation in public affairs is to supplement and aid the Public Affairs Committee/El Portal's Women's Club where possible.

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Administration and Finance

From Chief Financial Officer Harry Taubenfeld for June 2022

- *Audit 2019 is complete and submitted! The process for Audit 2020 will commence on the first week of July 2022. All items have been submitted for the 2019 Audit to the Village's independent auditors, and a final report was provided from them to the Village the third week of June 2022.*
- *Working on various Finance matters for the Village, including assisting the Village Manager in revising the Financial Policies and Procedures for the Finance Department and putting more efficient processes in place for the department.*
- *Preparing budget documents for the Administration and Council, year-to-date.*

• ***From Office Administrator Christian Abril for June 2022***

- *Continuing to assist CFO Taubenfeld with ongoing audit.*
- *Processing cash receipts and payroll.*
- *Paying the Village's invoices.*
- *Learning how to process business tax receipt applications.*

More from the Village Manager

Over the course of the month, the Village Staff and I have worked to bring efficiencies and modernization to the Village through the installation of the new digital marquee sign in the front of the Village Hall. A second one is being contemplated for the West Side of the Village at the El Portal Nature Trail for a later date. We also installed a new phone service that will bring better response and call routing to improve customer service. I have hosted and participated in several meetings and trainings that benefit the Village.

May 31, 2022 – VOEP staff and I had our annual training on the internal and Village Emergency Preparedness plans. I attended the Miami Dade County Hurricane Preparedness Meeting on June 2, 2022. On June 7, 2022, I met with our Account Manager with Florida Municipal Insurance Trust about emergency. On June 15, I participated in the quarterly Whole Community Engagement meeting and on June 23, the quarterly Local Mitigation Strategies meeting.

On June 10, 2022, the Public Works Carlos Aguera and I attended the Miami Dade County Water Quality Workshop at the Port of Miami where we discussed vital needs of the Adaptation Action Area and will be doing follow up meetings with the Resiliency Office and the Water Quality Officer of Miami Dade County. A study is being conducted that will assess VOEP's role in the Biscayne Bay water quality problems. On June 22, Mayor Nickerson and I participated in the Miami Dade County Municipal Planning Coordination Meeting and the Resilient Florida Grant

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Program planning meeting. The Village will be applying for two more large grants by month's end (June 30, 2022).

June 11, 2022, Mayor Nickerson, Councilperson Pirela, Police Major Harrison, Police Corporal Garcia and Police Officer Torrens, VOEP Bond Counsel JoLinda Herring and I attended the Miami Dade County League of Cities Anniversary Celebration. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this event had been canceled for the past two years, making this year's event very well attended.

There also continue to be varied requests, directives, and projects I provide at the request of individual councilpersons and members of the El Portal community. For more information, please contact me directly.

Thank you.

Village Manager Christia E. Alou, Esq.