

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: November 15, 2022
RE: November 2022 Village Manager's Report

Please accept this memorandum as my November 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 conducted our preparation Village-wide. This month, the state of Florida was hit with Hurricane Ian and Hurricane Nicole in the last two months with the most damage occurring on the gulf coast of the state. Sandbags were prepared, delivered, and picked up by residents in need. The Village of El Portal suffered some flooding in along 86th Street at the C7 Little River Canal.

The annual Miami Dade County Hurricane Preparedness Guide was 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.

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 are the Village's best defense against weather emergencies.

Hurricane Irma Financial Recovery

Again, the Village received an appeal amount of **\$448,998.21 for debris and other appealed Hurricane Irma expenses as of Monday, September 26, 2022**. FEMA has sent the appeal grants to be obligated and those funds will be transferred to the Village of El Portal, whereupon we will immediately wire the funds to Synovus Bank to pay on the \$695,551.21 note. The Village expressed intention to appeal the remaining funds. We are still awaiting the obligated funds transfer.

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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 continue to use caution and staff continues to observe social distancing and hand sanitization when visiting our offices. 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 Vacation Rental In the Village of El Portal

The Village of El Portal passed an ordinance regulating Short-Term Vacation Rentals (STVR) within the municipality in May 2022. Councilperson Darian Martin hosted a STVR Community Workshop on Saturday, July 23, 2022, where I provided my license application/permit, renewal and inspection fees recommendation and the Local Business Tax Receipt fees to the body, giving the community members and the Village Council members who were present an opportunity to review and consider the recommendation and their own experiences and requests for the ordinance and its fees. The ordinance passed second reading at the October 2022 Council Meeting. The Administration is working with tech software GovPilot to enhance existing code enforcement tech capabilities and adding the short term vacation rental module to the software in order to digitize the permit application process.

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. Miami Shores is in full support of the project and is working with me and our contractor to execute the MOU, and to confirm utilization of the Miami Shores right-of-way. The stakeholders are Florida Department of Transportation, Miami Shores Village, Miami Dade County, and the Miami Dade Public Schools. 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, and incorporated community, Sustainability and Resiliency Taskforce Members input on the initial plans. The plans are finalized and were submitted to Miami Dade County Archaeologist Jeff Ransome for a final review. Members of the Public Works Committee were also given the final plans and were asked to provide their feedback. I will be meeting with him and the project team in the coming weeks to ensure all matters related to the archaeological zoning are addressed. Once that is completed, proposals will be requested. Information about the renovation will be distributed to the area residents. As a special project, Councilperson Luis Pirela, Chairperson of the Public Works Committee will be vetting muralists for a mural project at the entrance of the El Portal Tot Lot.

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. 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. In the meantime, the El Portal Electric Shuttle will have advertising to benefit the service starting this month.

NE 2nd Avenue Business Corridor

The Sanctuary Property – According to the property owners, the preliminary discussions with PlusUrbia and Miami Dade County regarding the new design for the property were had. The new design falls in line with zoning including the parking plan. A sewer line for the property is being developed with Miami Dade County, and full development drawings are being prepared. The intended plans will be shared on the Village's website for residents and visitors soon.

Roadway and Traffic - Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works provided the Village of El Portal a mobility study grant. The study will commence in January 2023. Once completed, the department is also 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

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Pedestrians First, the Resiliency and Sustainability 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 and received 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

Vacant Lots for Sale at El Jardin/NE 2nd Avenue and NE 86 Street

Two lots are presently for sale at this location. I have made inquiries as to the purchase of the properties so that the Village may utilize one for public use as a park and/or for a 7-foot easement to construct a stormwater improvement drain to outfall into the C7 Little River Canal. Both properties are priced outside of the Village's ability to purchase at this time and have expressed disinterest in providing the stormwater improvement easement to alleviate some of the flooding in El Jardin at this time.

The Kavista Rental Development at El Portal Annex

The Kavista Project was granted an extension of construction hours to 7AM from 8AM. Some City of Miami residents have complained about the Skatebird Miami and Kavista construction project noise. Under the Code and according to the Z5 zoning, music and noise are permitted within 100 feet of the property in its usual course of business. For the Village of El Portal, music, and noise outside of the business hours and construction hours are permitted only upon application and approval of Special Events Permit. Both Skatebird Miami and Kavista Project have applied for and been granted these permits. Kavista Project will also be submitting a right-of-way permit application with Maintenance of Traffic (MOT) plans for construction activities requiring partial road closures. 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.

Skate Bird Miami (Skate Park)

Skate Bird Miami is open for business with a temporary certificate of occupancy.

Former Trailer Park "Little Farm"

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

VOEP DEPARTMENTS HIGHLIGHTS

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

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

From Police Chief Alex Mendez for November 2022

Officer Cuevas completed Field Training and was released to work on his own this month.

Officer Drupal was sworn in as a Reserve Non-Compensatory Officer this month.

Much needed Law Enforcement Equipment was delivered this month – portable radios, and two large transportation message boards. Equipment is presently being prepared for department use.

Code Enforcement

From Code Enforcement Officer Fitzgerald Simmons November 2022

- *Open Liens- 7*
- *Satisfied Liens- 170 to date*
- *Active Cases (CCIN's, NOCI's, Verbal Warnings, Complaints)- 297*
- *Parking Citations Issued- 1*

November FYI(s)/Reminder(s)

- *GovPilot (Code Enforcement/STVR/LTR)*

Public map: <https://map.govpilot.com/map/FL/elportalvillagefl>

(Review and track the progress of all complaints and cases)

Public form: <https://www.govpilot.com/forms/main/dfb9fa03-049/Report-a-Concern/elportalvillagefl/FL/47122/0>

(File a formal complaint. Complainant contact info is required, per F.S.S. 162.06(b))

(A formal concern must be filed using the GovPilot links to initial a code investigation. Please use the links and refrain from contacting the Code Department via phone and email.)

- Notice regarding anonymous complaints -

Florida Statute 125.69 has been changed and now requires that a code inspector only proceed to investigate an anonymous complaint if the code inspector determines, based only on the information from the complaint, that the violation reported presents an imminent threat to the public health, safety, or welfare or imminent destruction of habitat or sensitive resources. If a code inspector does not have enough information or determines that the information provided does not indicate an imminent threat, then the anonymous complaint will not be investigated.

If you wish to remain anonymous, you understand that your complaint will not be investigated if the code inspector determines they do not have enough information or that the information provided does not indicate an imminent threat.

If you do not want to remain anonymous, an investigation can proceed regardless of whether there is an imminent threat, but you must provide both your name and address.

- *Reminder of Bulk Pick-Up Schedule and Placement of Garbage Cans/Trash – December 2022*

Tuesday, 12/27/2022

Wednesday, 12/28/2022

Thursday, 12/29/2022

- *Sec. 8-4. - Placement of garbage cans.*

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(a) No garbage cans or trash containers shall be kept or maintained upon or adjacent to any street, sidewalk, parkway, front yard, side yard or other place within the view of persons using the village streets or sidewalks, earlier than 4:00 p.m. of that day preceding the day when garbage and trash collection are customarily made from such premises.

(b) Such garbage cans and trash containers may and shall be placed within five feet of the street for the purpose of permitting the collection of garbage and trash therefrom, and such containers shall be permitted to remain in such place for a period of 12 hours following the collection.

(c) Garbage cans and trash containers shall not be kept upon neighboring property not in the ownership or tenancy of the person by whom the garbage or trash is accumulated, irrespective of whether or not such neighboring property be vacant or improved.

• Sec. 8-5. - Tree trimmings and yard trash.

(a) Tree, shrub and lawn cuttings and garden trash (solid waste) shall be deposited upon the parkway immediately in front of the premises of the person by whom such accumulation is made, or where such premises are located upon a used alley, at a point easily accessible to and readily noticeable from such alley, only on the day prior to the dates specified, by the village for the collection of trash from such premises.

(b) It shall be unlawful for any person to deposit such tree, shrub and lawn cuttings and garden trash upon any adjoining lot or premises, whether vacant or improved, occupied or unoccupied, or upon any other lot or premises, or street, alley, or park, or in any canal or waterway, lake, or pool within the village.

• Do I Need a Permit?

A permit is required to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy or occupant content of a building or structure. In addition to, erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert, or replace any electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing system of every building or structure or any appurtenances connected or attached to such buildings or structures.

• Prohibited Parking

- No Parking shall be permitted in the unpaved portion of the Front Yard of any private property, however Parking is permitted in any paved Driveway approach, so long as it does not obstruct the Sidewalk or Street.

- Parking is prohibited in swales and Village rights-of-way, except that a Parking space for one (1) vehicle will be permitted in the swale, provided that a Variance is applied for and obtained. However, Parking is permitted in any paved Driveway approach which is otherwise permitted under this section, so long as it does not obstruct the Sidewalk or Street.

- Parking or storage of commercial trucks, buses, vans, sign trailers; trailers or semi-trailers for freight, cargo; non-recreational watercraft; or the like shall not be permitted in any Z3, Z4 or Z5

Building Department

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

For this month, the Building Department processed 52 permits, and collected \$30,073.90 in fees. From 09/01/2022 to 11/15/2022 there have been 35 businesses with 80 licenses that have paid a total of \$5,031.34. For the same period, there are 32 businesses with 189 outstanding licenses that have not paid, totaling \$6,046.88 – See attached Outstanding Balance Report.

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Planning and Zoning

Some STVR operators/residents met with the administration and at the November Village Council meeting to advocate for low fees against the Village Manager's Recommendation. The Village Mayor asked that the administration review costs and provide the information to him. I did. Councilperson Martin, Chair of Planning and Zoning, also asked for a breakdown of the fees I am recommending, and that was provided to her as well. The issue may be before the Village Council at its December meeting.

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 November 2022

- 1. PW staff assisted in site preparations for "Very 1st Annual - "This Is Our Village - Informational Exposition" on October 29.*
- 2. Received from Miami-Dade TPO executed grant contract for NE 2nd Avenue Mobility (Traffic) Study grant award up to \$40,000. Coordinating Village Traffic Study with David Plummer & Associates.*
- 3. Attended annual CITT meeting with Village Manager at County History Museum.*
- 4. FDEP sent letter regarding Village's NPDES MS4 Year 4 permit renewal application requesting that Village provide additional information and provide documentation that Village has an Illicit Discharge Ordinance regarding discharge of contaminants and pollutants in the stormwater drainage system. Ordinance has been drafted for Council approval.*
- 5. Regarding Village's Biscayne Bay RAP Grant first application, MDWASD has been discussing with Village about taking over "Septic to Sewer Phase 1" project utilizing their County allocated grant monies for El Portal. A meeting with MDWASD's engineering department about transitioning the project is to be scheduled after Thanksgiving.*
- 6. Coordinating replacement of Police Shelter building replacement.*
- 7. Coordinating recycling unclaimed bicycles in Police Shed.*
- 8. Coordinate with Police Department and Saltex Corp. for design of access control.*
- 9. Continue coordinating training of Public Works and Code Enforcement staff on requirement for MS4 NPDES Stormwater Permit.*
- 10. Continue to provide engineering information to Ecostrata as requested by State grant manager for Police Station Hardening Grant requirements.*
- 11. Two road depressions looking like sinkholes at NE 89th St being repaired.*
- 12. Continue to coordinate installing new Village Hall carpeting and flooring replacements.*
- 13. Continue to coordinate new restroom facility for Tots Park. Have created layout and sent to Landscape Architect doing park renovations design. and requested quotes from contractors.*
- 14. Drive and Inspect daily to various areas of Village to check for litter, problems or issues.*
- 15. Continue to coordinate landscaping activities with Orchidman.*
- 16. Coordinated fallen tree removal at 495 NE 89th St. County requested after-the-fact tree removal permit application. This has been prepared and submitted.*
- 17. Continue to make inspection and inventory of streetlights which need repairs and bulb replacement.*

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18. *Continue checking stormwater drainage inlets, clear and clean them of surface debris blockages as needed.*
19. *Review various Village right-of-way permit applications and any submitted to Miami Dade Department of Transportation and Public Works (DTPW).*
20. *Coordinate completing the painting of Village Hall.*
21. *Parks project design package is 100% complete. Village has requested consultant to prepare RFP bid package to advertise. Had coordination meeting regarding the bid package.*
22. *Received quotes for City Hall janitorial services. Reviewing the quotes.*
23. *Coordinate Village staff training on using the new digital Village Hall sign.*

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.

The Village of El Portal was granted approximately \$900,000 for the Resilient 305 2021-22 grant to be utilized for stormwater improvements on Phase Two of the El Jardin community as was detailed in the Village's Local Mitigation Strategy. This is a matching grant, for which I met with FDEP leadership to determine if the El Jardin Stormwater Improvement Phase One work that was just completed earlier this year may be considered for the Village's match. The answer is yes, but we must add approximately \$250,000 to make up the residual amount of the match. This is good news for the Village and for our efforts in bringing water quality improvements to the residents.

The Village of El Portal was included in the Miami Dade County Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP), led by Miami Dade the RAP coordinates County water quality policies and initiatives, and prioritizes the County's most vital areas, with El Portal and our neighboring municipalities being identified as most needy due to the C7 Little River Canal's effect on Miami Biscayne Bay's water quality.

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

There is no update since last few months' submission on the N. Miami Avenue bridge reconstruction.

Other Outstanding Public Works Projects:

1. Septic to Sewer Project on West Side of Village

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 from MDCPS was received last month. Additionally, Miami Dade County Transportation and Public Works received a grant that they will use to take over the project in the coming months.

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We will be meeting with them to formalize the transition and roles and responsibilities of the project.

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 Ecostrata 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. Receiving the Resilient Florida grant is a tremendous win for the Village of El Portal, and a meeting between me and FDEP garnered the approval of the use of the El Jardin Stormwater Improvement Phase 1 project to serve as a portion of the match requirements of Phase 2. Phase 2 will require the outfall easement that we desperately need in El Jardin. Craig A. Smith and Associates Consultant Engineer Orlando Rubio and I are meeting with homeowners to begin the process of securing the outfall easement.

Public Affairs

Village Mayor Omarr Nickerson and Members of the Village Council hosted **“This Is Our Village” Information Expo community event** on Saturday, October 29, 2022, from 2-6pm at the Village Hall Campus and Tot Lot to with a day of activities such as Mayor Nickerson’s State of the Village Address, Village of El Portal First Responders Recognitions, Village of El Portal Veterans Recognitions, Citizens Crime Watch presentation, El Portal Businesses marketplace, and much more. Free El Portal Electric Shuttle Service was provided between the East and West Shuttle Stops for residents who opt not drive. Food trucks were onsite for guests dining pleasure. And a full day of entertainment and fun activities were provided for residents of all ages. It was a fantastic celebration of the Village of El Portal’s 85th Anniversary and to share information and friendship.

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. The Administration will continue to support all public affairs efforts. At present the Village’s website and social media, the digital

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marquee sign, Mayor Omarr Nickerson's door-to-door flyer distribution with vital information about what is happening in the Village, are being utilized as outreach.

Administration and Finance

From Chief Financial Officer Harry Taubefeld for November 2022

Continuing to work on 2020-21 Audit and its submission to the State. Following up with JLAC compliance. Beginning the 2021-22 Audit.

From Office Administrator David Perez for November 2022

Met via conference call with 3 separate vendors to obtain quotes for a new payroll processing company. The quotes are being reviewed by myself and the CFO to see which would be the best option therefore it can be presented to you and hopefully, make a decision next week. Changing from our current payroll company to a newer one will modernize how we process payroll making it the entire process more efficient and accurate.

Assisting with grants management and provided second draft of procurement policies with the corrections recommended by the government therefore getting us closer to obtaining the Critical Facilities Hardening grant (Police Station) documentation ready for execution and construction.

FRS pending errors from 2017 and forward have all been corrected

Building reports from the State of Florida from 2018 – 2023 first quarter have all been submitted and paid for. Currently, we are up to date with the State of Florida.

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

Thank you.

Village Manager Christia E. Alou, Esq.