

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



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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Village of El Portal Council
FR: Christia E. Alou, Village Manager
DATE: November 30, 2023
RE: November 2023 Village Manager's Report

Please accept this memorandum as my November 2023 Village of El Portal Administrative Report to Council and the Community.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

NE 2nd Avenue Business Corridor

Village Plaza Development - Project is moving forward. The Village Plaza developers are finalizing its first cycle of plan review with the Building Department. The project is planning a private sewer line for the property with Miami Dade County and Miami Shores Village, that is planned to run from NE 88th Street to NE 1 Avenue to the closest Miami Shores Village lift station at NE 96 Street. The Village Administration and El Portal Police will work with the community and the Village Plaza Property team to communicate and accommodate local impacts for this project. According to the property managers, they are planning to develop two small restaurants, retail, and offices at the location.

Speed Limit Reduction/Roadway and Traffic Improvements – The Village submitted the Traffic Sign Analysis Report to Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works and is awaiting its approval. The County is requiring that the Village provide an engineering plan to remove and replace and place street and speed limit signage. An information campaign for residents and visitors is forthcoming to educate about the new lower speed limit. There have been three reported accidents at NE 87th Street and NE 2nd Avenue over the last two months. The traffic engineers reviewed a list of reported accidents along NE 2nd Avenue within the Village's boundaries, which was presented to them by the EPPD. The Village submitted our completed traffic study report and mobility study to Miami Dade County Transportation and Public Works to support the Village's request for reduced speed limit to 25mph on Village streets, for painted intersections at NE 2nd Avenue and N. Miami Avenue, and for a "road diet" to reduce NE 2nd Avenue from four lanes to two lanes to match the City of Miami and Miami Shores Village. The Village's Public Works Director, Mohan Thampi submitted a permit application for the speed limit reduction to Miami Dade County which has been approved, and the Interlocal Agreement for the reduction of the speed limit is being prepared. It is our hope that a road diet (reduction from four lanes to two lanes), parking, painted intersections and medians for NE 2nd Avenue will be approved and permitted by the County. This project is ongoing.

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Public Work Coordinator Solomon is collecting addresses/locations of potholes for a pothole inventory to be repaired in 2024. To report a **pothole**, please contact publicworks@villageofelportal.org with a physical address and photo.

FPL Street Lighting Conversion to lower wattage LED Lights

I am working with FPL's Office on LED Lighting Solutions for LED street light conversion. The Village has approximately 151 FPL owned/operated streetlights. Miami Dade County owns and operates the streetlights on N. Miami Avenue and N.E. 2nd Avenue, and not FPL. We were given two options for the lighting: we chose the lower wattage of 3000 Kelvin (warm yellow light). The conversion will be at NO cost to the Village, and the conversion will start approximately four to five months from now.

State Appropriation Funded School Safety Roundabout at Horace Mann Middle School

This project is ongoing. There has been a myriad of slow downs due to Miami Dade County permitting. We continue to address questions and design revisions, through our engineering consultant, as requested by DTPW.

Biscayne Boulevard/Annexed Area Development

The Kavista Rental Development at El Portal Annex

The Kavista Project continues developing according to plan, with occupancy expected by the end of January 2024.

The Launch at Little River Rental Development at El Portal Annex

The owners of the Kavista Project development are planning a second development along the canal coast of the El Portal Annex entitled The Launch at Little River. Finalized plans are being prepared for submission in the coming months. The property owners are requesting a designation of the property as a Green Reuse Area pursuant to the State of Florida's Brownfield Redevelopment Act, and a Public Meeting will be held on **December 14, 2023 at 5:30PM at the Village Hall Chambers** to discuss the environmental conditions at the property, the redevelopment plans and the designation process. It is open to the public.

Skate Bird Miami (Skate Park)

Skate Bird Miami is open for business and preparing a Sound/Noise Mitigation plan in response to several noise complaints about Skatebird Miami from surrounding City of Miami and a El Portal resident. The proprietor insists that he is making every effort to keep the performance noise confined to the property, not beyond 100 feet of the property as required by VOEP Code of Ordinances. EPPD and El Portal Code Enforcement continue to monitor and address issues related to the violation of the law and code. The Village has made inquiries into independent contractors who conduct community noise surveys to assess the need for greater noise regulations but will engage this service once there is more to measure by zones once the other Village development projects are more established. There is a cost to this that is not justifiable at this time, and we are attempting to work

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with the Skatebird Miami owner to address his noise complaints as he is the sole source of the noise complaints and will be installing noise mitigation equipment.

Former Trailer Park "Little Farm"

This property is now being purchased by a developer, and we expect to hear from new owners on plans for the property in the new year.

VOEP DEPARTMENTS HIGHLIGHTS

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

The Village of El Portal Police Department is to receive three new exterior impact doors, three impact windows, a generator, and a new air conditioning unit from a HUD/CDBG critical facilities grant (\$50,000) the Village received from the efforts of Ecostratas, the Village's grant consultant. Only one contractor responded to the RFP for Contractor Services, and their proposal amount came in at a very high amount. We are working with the contractor and HUD/CDBG to find a way to close the gap on the price of the grant and/or the price of the contractors' services. This project is ongoing.

The Village of El Portal submitted a State of Florida Legislative Appropriation for security renovations to the Village's El Portal Police Department and for Stormwater Improvements for the 2024 Legislative Session.

From Police Chief Alex Mendez/Major Thomas Harrison for November 2023

- *Purchased bullet proof vests for all full-time officers.*
- *(3) Officers attended Tactical breach and shield training at the Miami Dade Police Training Bureau*
- *Captain Benny Merino attended a press conference with the State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundle regarding a joint investigation with arrest for felony elderly exploitation amongst other charges.*
- *Santa Train was canceled this year due to FEC cutting the number of stops made and thanks to the hard-work and persistence of Chief Mendez and Detective Berthet we were able to reinstate the train coming to El Portal this year – **December 2, 2023 10AM.** All are welcome to attend.*

*EPPD will assist the El Portal Womens' Club on **December 20, 2023 at 6PM** with its annual Christmas Carol-Van Parade, and a parents' pre-arranged gift delivery from Santa on that evening.*

Code Enforcement

Special Master Hearing was held on November 14, 2023. The next one is scheduled for Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 10AM via Zoom.

From Code Enforcement Officer Fitzgerald Simmons for November 2023

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Total number of active cases – 255

Prepared cases and all follow up filings for 7 Special Master Notices to Appear this month. One continuance was granted. Preparing agenda and packages for December hearings.

Building Department

I recertified the Village's Building Official this month, as an annual requirement.

From CAP/Building Department Building Official Pedro Martinez for November 2023

Total Fees Collected - \$34,776.22

Total Permits Issued – 39

Total Construction Value - \$365,037

Planning and Zoning

Plus Urbia Design's Senior Planner Megan McLaughlin is working with Miami Dade County on a grant that was provided by the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources to address the Village of El Portal Historical Resources Survey. This was not an El Portal project or initiative, but a County Office of Historic Preservation project to study the Village, its subdivisions: Sherwood Forest, El Jardin, El Portal, River Estates, Tuttle Subdivision, Glendale Manor, as well as local businesses and institutions. Ms. McLaughlin will request an opportunity to present the project to the Village Council to inform the Village Council and residents about the historical resources survey project and its specifics and to request matching funds.

The Corradino Group continues with the zoning and zoning inspection work for the Village. It has also been addressing zoning shortfalls such as zoning permits, including a long-standing issue with the property owners at 9001 NE 1st Avenue. A Village Manager Administrative Adjustment was granted to the property owners to remedy its driveway and approach issues this month. The Corradino Group continues to work with the Village Plaza property development team, as well as with residents for their zoning needs and zoning inspections.

Public Works and Maintenance

Village of El Portal Parks Renovation

Village of El Portal Parks Renovation

The Village was also offered a lovely donation from an El Portal private property owner of four cultural statues, Stupas, that could be added to the Village of El Portal Nature Trail. These statues are quite large and impressive, and our space is limited in our small parks. I met with Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works, the true owner of the El Portal Nature Trail, and permission was granted to install the statues so long as their installation follows the Miami Dade

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County permitting and that the Village execute an Interlocal Agreement that VOEP will maintain the Stupa(s). Our Parks Renovation and Preservation Project Manager, Sr. Engineer Orlando Rubio and I reviewed the requirements of the space and found that one statue would be the maximum we can fit in the space without changing the landscaping design and keeping exercise equipment area that was identified for the park's renovation. We also made sure that the existing sewer pump station easement located on the public school property just north of the El Portal Nature Trail would not be obstructed in any way if the statue is installed.

Contractor's Delay - The family-sized, ADA compliant restroom is being installed in the El Portal Tot Lot, and its completion is expected, according to the contractor, December 22, 2023.

The Village of El Portal met several times to try to close the gap between the quoted price of the parks renovation and preservation selected a general contractor and has put the project on hold until more funding can be added through grants or other means. In the meantime, I requested a landscaping and plantings quote from the Village's Landscaping and Tree Services Contractor, Green Dreams Paradise, and presented it to the Public Works Committee Chair for consideration at Fall/Winter 2023 Public Works Committee Meeting. This project has been paused until more funds can be made available.

From Public Works Department Coordinator Subner Solomon for November 2023

*Coordinated recovery for the November 15, 2023, rain storm
Obtained three quotes for public works projects, that are now being accessed.
Graffiti removal from bus stop and signage
Coordination of repair and maintenance of Village Hall Complex and right of ways including parks
Reported need for maintenance at East Coast Railroad located along the Village Hall Complex and Sherwood Forest neighborhood.
Conducted Village Hall Complex decoration for holiday and assisted with event preparation of State of the Village event.*

Trees in VOEP

The Village Public Works Department provided flyers to all properties that will be receiving swale-planted trees in the coming weeks. Ecostratas, the Village's grants consultant secured the Village's 2023 Neat Street Tree Planting Matching Grant. The grant will be utilized to plant 65 native trees in the Village.

Village of El Portal Sustainability and Resiliency

There is no new information to report currently.

Septic to Sewer Project on West Side of Village

There is no new information to report currently.

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

No update since September 2023 has been provided from Miami Dade County on the renovation. Spring 2024 is the reported completion date, according to Miami Dade County Department of Transportation and Public Works Bridge Director, Alex Barrios.

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. The Administration will continue to support all public affairs efforts. At present the Village's website and social media, the digital 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. Mayor Nickerson and Members of the Village Council conduct outreach to residents regularly.

The El Portal Police Department coordinated the Village of El Portal as a stop for the Santa Train on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at 10AM. Children will receive gifts from Santa. EPPD is also coordinating with the El Portal Women's Club for a December 20, 2023 6pm Carol-Van Parade through the Village. Residents will cruise through the Village singing holiday carols, and EPPD/Santa will provide pre-arranged wrapped gifts to households that provided them with the addresses to EPPD for delivery. Please check the Village website for more information and to coordinate a delivery to your or a neighbor's home.

The El Portal Information Expo State of the Village was held on Saturday, November 4th. It was very well attended by the community and friends of the Village of El Portal. Kudos to Mayor Omarr Nickerson and Village Clerk Yenise Jacobi for executing a lovely event for the Village's anniversary State of the Village.

I met with local high school students, Shira Evans and Emilia Gogrichiani, to establish a routine collection of books to supply to the Little Library located at the West side of the Village Hall campus, next to the El Portal Tot Lot. Flyers were distributed to residents about the collection of books, to be stored at the Village Hall in a box provided by the students, and to encourage literacy and the love of reading for all residents and visitors. They will also fix up the current Little Library by touching up the paint, while keeping the integrity of its original artist's work.

Councilperson Darian Martin's new initiative, El Portal Junior Birders Program began July 2023. Please visit the Village website for more information.

Councilperson Darian Martin's new initiative, Miami Diaper Bank Collection, commenced in November 2023. I coordinated the application for the Village to receive the community donation collection box for diapers and baby essentials at the Village Hall. More information is provided on the Village website.

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Administration and Finance

From Chief Financial Officer Harry Taubenfeld for November 2023

Working with Village Manager to address administration and finance improvements and reporting.

From Office Administrator David Perez for November 2023

- *Updated the current Business Tax Receipt Certificate in BS&A*
- *Generated a new thank you letter that is to be included in with the Business Tax Receipt Certificate in BS&A*
- *Proceed payments received, generated Business Tax Receipt Certificate, Thank you Letter and mailed it to each client.*
- *Created a new updated, simpler timesheet for the police department to use.*
- *Generated P.T.O. Payback report for the Village Manager and proceed payment once council approved.*
- *Spoke with the Department of Unemployment and faxed them supporting documentations regarding Christian Abril unemployment claim.*
- *Coordinated to have the fax machine fixed.*
- *Regular day to day duties and other task assigned.*

There 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.

