

# STATE / LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

January 13 – January 17, 2014

## STATE LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

### Bills this Week / Analysis

Source: Jess McCarty (CAO)

#### Wage Theft

Attached is a draft bill that the Florida Retail Federation is pursuing for the 2014 session related to Wage Theft. The bill would preempt existing local wage theft programs, including Miami-Dade County's program, in 6 years effective January 1, 2020. In its place, it would authorize a county to institute a new wage theft program that would have to comply with the requirements of the bill. The bill would only allow a wage theft program where the county partners with a local legal services organization for the purpose of establishing a local process through which claims of wage theft would be addressed by the legal services organization. The legal services organization would administer the wage theft program and the county would fund it.

Rep. Neil Combee (R – Auburndale) has submitted the bill language to House Bill Drafting and will sponsor the bill in the House. The Retail Federation hasn't yet identified its Senate sponsor.

#### Impact Fees

Please see the comments below and attached on PCB EDTS 14-03 re: 3-year moratorium on impact fees/transportation concurrency/prop share from the Public Works and Waste Management Department and the Regulatory and Economic Resources Department, being provided to the Board pursuant to R-1011-13:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=132090&file=true&yearFolder=Y2013>.

Comments by PWWM:

What the Bill does to Concurrency and RIF:

1. The bill prohibits imposition of concurrency or impact fees for three years from July 1, 2014 (line 74, concurrency; line 115, road impact fee) to July 1, 2017 (lines 69, conc. & 108, RIF).
2. Expires on July 1, 2018 (lines 102, conc. & 149, RIF).
3. Allows for re-imposition by a majority vote of the local government's governing authority (line 69, conc.; line 109 & 121, RIF).
4. The moratorium applies specifically to "new business development" (lines 72, conc. & 113, RIF)
5. The moratorium does not apply to business developments larger than 6000 square feet (lines 77, conc. & 119, RIF)
6. Allows for retro-active collection of fees that would have been imposed during the moratorium if a certificate of occupancy is not obtained on or before July 1, 2018. (lines 80, conc. & 125, RIF).
7. Does not apply if the moratorium would result in a reduction of previously committed revenue. (lines 93, conc. & 139 RIF)
8. Exempts jurisdictions with a mobility fee based funding system in place prior to January 1, 2014.

Comments:

1. What ITE land use types constitute "new business development" would need to be defined. It is probably advantageous for this definition to be developed by local ordinance rather than by the state legislature.
2. The moratorium would need to be treated as another exemption for two reasons:
  - (one) the moratorium does not apply to all development.
  - (two) Exempted development would need to be tracked because of the possibility of retroactively collecting the fees for not meeting the July 1, 2018 deadline for certificate of occupancy.
3. The revenue lost during the moratorium cannot be made up by future mitigation fees because future fee-paying development will bring its own impacts and fees are limited to the mitigation of those impacts. By law, a new development cannot be charged for pre-existing deficiencies infrastructure. Development may only be charged for its own impacts.
4. The proposed moratoriums on concurrency and road impact fees are part of a larger bill that seems to be focused on promoting small business development in Florida. Traffic Congestion is detrimental to new business development. The 2012 Urban Mobility Report published by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute estimated that traffic congestion in the Miami Urban Area cost businesses \$739 million dollars in truck

congestion costs alone. Traffic congestion also affects customer access to businesses and reduces the geographic range of a business's customer base. For new businesses to thrive, transportation infrastructure must expand at the same pace as new traffic generating development.

5. If the bill passes, Miami-Dade County will need to identify some other funding source for the transportation capacity improvements made necessary by exempted development or face increasing congestion costs.
6. It is unfair to penalize counties that do not already have mobility fees in place without providing advance notice. It remains to be seen whether mobility fees will prove to be a more equitable and effective method for mitigating the impacts of development on transportation infrastructure.
7. Miami-Dade County has already addressed the economic downturn by providing discounts to road impact fees through January 1, 2016.
8. Road construction also provides jobs.

#### Recommendation:

Remove Section 1, (concurrency moratorium) and Section 2 (Road impact fee moratorium) from the bill, altogether. Placing a moratorium on funding of necessary transportation infrastructure expansions is at cross purposes with the goal of encouraging small business growth.

#### Water Projects

The House Agriculture & Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee held a workshop on water project funding this week, and also opened its website for submitting water projects for funding online, here's a link:

<http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/publications.aspx?Committeeld=2699&PublicationType=Committees&DocumentType=General%20Publications&SessionId=75>

Some comments about water project funding based on discussions during the Subcommittee and other conversations we've had around the Capitol:

1. The deadline for submitting water projects in the House is February 21 and water projects must be submitted via the online process (the Senate may have a different deadline and process);
2. Submitting a water project on the House's online system must be done all at once, you can't save partial entries and come back to it. Also, once a project is submitted, it's final, so we should probably work off draft forms initially;
3. I'd recommend that we submit a total of 3 or 4 water projects on behalf of Miami-Dade County;
4. It's critical that all of the water projects we submit meet all of the criteria and guidelines that are set in the House's online form as well as the attached Governor's request for

information (the first cut for funding water projects last year was a simple scoring system of whether all criteria was facially met);

5. We should be able to justify a statewide significance for each water project we submit, and it should fit one of these 6 statewide goals identified by the Governor:
  - Significantly improving water quality in an impaired springshed;
  - Significantly improving water quantity in a springshed that is currently below, or expected within 20 years to fall below, its established minimum flow or level;
  - Developing regionally significant alternative water supplies to meet current or future needs in an environmentally sustainable manner; particularly those between two or more water management districts;
  - Significantly reducing nutrient loading from domestic wastewater to a nutrient impaired water body;
  - Accomplishing a task identified in an adopted Basin Management Action Plan;
  - Assisting an Area of Critical State Concern in addressing water quality requirements;
6. The water projects we submit should be of varying amounts and types;
7. We should be realistic about the amount of funding we request for water projects, and perhaps remain below \$3 million for our highest request, and also have requests for smaller amounts, including one below \$1 million (see list of funded projects below from last session);
8. To be funded, a water project will need to have strong advocates in both the House and Senate, so we should identify water projects that particular members of our delegation will be invested in pursuing; this factor should be an important one in identifying which water projects to submit;
9. I would recommend against ranking our water projects locally and simply submit up to 4 (it may hurt our chances for funding if the project that has the best chance in Tallahassee is a project that we have not ranked as our top choice);
10. All the water projects we submit should be construction ready and have all permitting, design and engineering work done (we have been advised that this is an important factor to the Governor);
11. Neither the House or Senate has a specific allocation for water project funding as of yet (last year, the Legislature funded \$59 million in water projects and \$27 million was vetoed by the Governor, we had a \$1.1 million project funded by the Legislature that the Governor vetoed for not having a statewide significance, see list below);
12. Based on discussion by House Subcommittee members today, the criteria for funding water projects may still be in flux. There may be another workshop on water projects in early February. We should probably begin to work on identifying appropriate projects, but not submit anything until we are closer to the February 21 House deadline. This will also allow us to get a better sense of what the Senate.

Here's a list of the water projects funded and vetoed last session FYI:

[http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/56828\\_2013\\_2014\\_water\\_projects\\_signed\\_into\\_law\\_and\\_vetoed.pdf](http://static-lobbytools.s3.amazonaws.com/press/56828_2013_2014_water_projects_signed_into_law_and_vetoed.pdf)

## Ethics

SB 606 has been filed by Senator Jeff Clemens (D –Lake Worth) re: governmental/municipal ethics. Among other provisions, SB 606 would prohibit a county from imposing additional or more stringent ethics standards of conduct and disclosure requirements upon city elected officials and employees (line 207).

SB 606 also would authorize a county or city elected official or employee to request an advisory opinion from the county or city attorney, respectively, related to gifts and other ethics issues, and would then require the attorney to issue an opinion within 10 days after receiving the request, on which the elected official or employee may reasonably rely (line 139).

These provisions of SB 606 may be inconsistent with the current structure of the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust. SB 606 also would require elected municipal officials to participate in annual ethics training (SB 2 from the 2013 session imposed this requirement on county, but not city, elected officials).

Here's a link to the text of SB 606: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0606.pdf>. No House companion bill has been filed as of yet.

## Sports Tax Breaks

Senator David Simmons (R – Altamonte Springs) filed SB 618 re: Professional Sports Franchises/Major League Soccer. The bill would redefine "league" to include Major League Soccer, and add two additional slots reserved for soccer for annual sales tax incentives, increasing the total from 8 to 10. The two soccer franchises that qualify would be eligible to receive sales tax distribution payments of approximately \$2 million per year for 30 years.

Here's a link to the bill: <http://static.lobbytools.com/bills/2014/pdf/0618.pdf>. No House companion bill has been filed as of yet. While not specified in the bill, the two slots are generally considered to be for Orlando and Miami.

<a href="#">SB 0618</a>	<b>Relating to Professional Sports Franchises</b>	<a href="#">Simmons</a>	01/13/14
	Professional Sports Franchises; Redefining the term "league" to include Major League Soccer; providing that a previously certified applicant is not eligible for an additional certification under certain circumstances; requiring the Department of Economic Opportunity to reserve two facility certifications for new Major League Soccer franchises, etc. Effective Date: 7/1/2014		

## **Issues of Interest**

### **Transportation Package**

Source: LobbyTools

The Department of Transportation's legislative package, which includes increased state funding for airport projects, the diversion of Alligator Alley tolls and limitations on its lease-purchase agreements, cleared the Senate Transportation Committee on Thursday, but without the controversial red-light camera provisions included in the House version of the bill..

The Senate version would allow DOT to fully fund airport projects at "strategic" airports throughout the state. It also prohibits the department from entering into new lease-purchase agreements with expressway authorities, requires environmental mitigation funds to be included in the DOT's work plan, and allows Alligator Alley tolls to be used to fund a nearby fire station.

The business lobby is especially supportive of the boost to airport projects, hoping increased capacity will spur more trade activity in the air, akin to similar legislation in 2012 to boost trade through Florida's seaports.

DOT and the transportation lobby will be heavily pushing the omnibus package this year after a similar package failed last year when it got caught up in end-of-session wrangling between the House and Senate.

Aside from the red-light camera issue, Sen. Rene Garcia, R-Miami, said he was concerned about a provision preventing the South Florida Water Management District from issuing bonds to pay for Everglades restoration, although he voted for the bill.

### **Florida Hurricane Catastrophic Fund (FHCF)**

Source: LobbyTools

Sen. Tom Lee, R-Brandon, recently filed SB 610 as an attempt to bridge a political divide over the Florida Hurricane Catastrophe Fund, but reinsurance companies are already lining up against much of the bill.

The bill reduces the retention level, or deductible, for the FHCF, known as the Cat Fund, from \$7 billion to \$5.2 billion. It also reduces the maximum coverage of the Cat Fund to \$15 billion but allows the fund's board to increase the coverage to \$17 billion. Provisions to extend the fund's bonding capacity over three years and adjust eligible losses available for coverage are also included in the bill.

Lee said the legislation is a compromise measure between the views of Sens. Alan Hays, R-Umatilla, and Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Margate. Hays' SB 482 would reduce the Cat Fund's maximum coverage to \$14 billion over three years, whereas Ring's SB 228 would reduce the fund's retention level to \$5 billion and extend its bonding capabilities over multiple years.

But reinsurers and Cat Fund officials say the lowering of the retention level makes claims on the fund more likely and that its total coverage should be lowered.

## **Florida Ballot / Conservation / Marijuana**

Source: Florida Current

Florida's Water and Land Legacy, the campaign organization backing the conservation measure, announced it had 685,971 voter signatures validated by county supervisors of election across the state. The Division of Elections website verified that total and showed that the campaign had exceeded the required number of voter signatures in at least 15 congressional districts -- one more than needed to show statewide interest.

Meanwhile, United for Care, the medical-marijuana campaign committee bankrolled by more than \$3 million from Orlando trial lawyer John Morgan, said it has collected more than 1.1 million signatures statewide. With an expected invalid rate of about 25 percent, that should be enough to reach the required minimum of 683,189 certified signatures -- but time is running out.

The Division of Elections showed only 470,056 verified signatures, with a deadline of Feb. 1 looming for certification of more than 200,000 more names. Ben Pollara, campaign manager for the drive, said county elections supervisors are pressing hard to get names verified, so he remains confident of meeting the deadline.

However, the required minimums have been met in only five congressional districts, according to Secretary of State Ken Detzner's records. United for Care is close to the minimum in four other districts, needing only 5,000 or fewer signatures, but there are still gaps to be closed in at least five more districts if the marijuana measure is to make the ballot.

Also, the marijuana proposal is waiting for a ruling from the Florida Supreme Court. Attorney General Pam Bondi challenged the wording of the amendment, which she contends could mislead voters into thinking state law can override federal drug restrictions, and that the amendment might let doctors prescribe pot for conditions that are not grave illnesses.

The water and land conservation amendment would dedicate 20 years of funding for conservation, management and restoration of resources. It would set aside one-third of documentary stamp tax collections from real estate transactions for restoration of the Everglades, protecting wildlife habitat, funding the "Florida Forever" conservation program and other purposes.

Revenue from the proposal, if passed by 60 percent of the voters in November, is estimated at \$19 billion.

## **Sex Crimes**

Source: LobbyTools

The House Healthy Families Subcommittee unanimously approved on Tuesday, proposed committee bill HFS 14-01, requiring training and experience for members of the multidisciplinary team, which would decide whether convicted predators should continue to be confined after a prison sentence ends through a process known as a civil commitment.

The bill also lowers the criteria to decide a person's commitment to a vote of two members, rather than a majority.

On Thursday, a series of sex offenses bills passed out of the House Criminal Justice Subcommittee.

HB 73 would ban sex offenders on probation from viewing pornography or any form of sexually stimulating material. HB 445 eliminates the statute of limitations on crimes if the victim was younger than 16 when the crime was committed. People caught exposing themselves more than once would face a third-degree felony instead of a first degree misdemeanor under HB 161.

The committee also passed several proposed committee bills or PCBs. A press release from the House Majority Office details the purpose of each:

- PCB 14-03 requires the Department of Children and Families to notify crime victims when any person in the custody of the agency is released -- not just those who are in custody as sexually violent predators, as the Florida statute currently mandates. It would also require the Department of Corrections to compile recidivism statistics on violent offenders released from a commitment.
- Registration requirements would be strengthened for offenders and predators with PCB 14-04.
- PCB 14-05 ensures that the probationary period of an offender in DCF custody under the Jimmy Ryce Act does not begin until they are released from the agency.
- PCB 14-06 creates "a process by which persons sentenced to a term of imprisonment in a jail can be referred to DCF for civil commitment."
- Among other provisions, PCB 14-07, "... increases the minimum mandatory sentence for dangerous sexual felony offenders to 50 years ... ."

## **Speed Limits**

Source: LobbyTools

The Senate Transportation Committee approved SB 392 Thursday, a bill that would allow the Florida Department of Transportation to raise speed limits five miles per hour.

The bill doesn't mandate an increase, but only gives the transportation department the ability to raise limits on a case-by-case basis on a particular roadway. The bill was approved 6 to 1.

Current maximums are 75 miles per hour on limited-access highways, 65 on four-lane highways outside urban areas and 60 on other roads the department manages.

The bill also grants the transportation department the authority to set minimum speed limits.

The bill could be considered by the full Legislature this spring. If passed, it would take effect July 1.

## **Budget**

### **Gov. Scott wants to increase DCF budget**

Source: LobbyTools

As part of Gov. Rick Scott's 2014 budget proposal, he suggested on Tuesday, increasing funding to the Department of Children and Families by nearly \$32 million.

The agency is under fire after revelations that more than 40 children have died despite DCF being aware of their circumstances.

In a news release, he said, "This funding will directly support critical services for children by hiring more than 400 new child protective investigators. We are also investing \$8 million to support sheriffs who work in child protection services."

In addition, Scott is recommending that all nonrecurring funding for Substance Abuse and Mental Health programs be restored because "these programs play an integral role in preventing child abuse and supporting healthy families."

According to the 2013 Final Budget Report, the agency has \$2.82 billion in estimated expenditures for the current fiscal year, so Gov. Scott's plan would put the agency at \$2.85 billion in 2014-15.

## **Transportation**

Gov. Rick Scott will ask lawmakers to fund transportation projects at \$8.8 billion next fiscal year. He contends the spending will spur more trade and therefore more jobs in the state.

Lawmakers this year funded transportation projects at \$8.6 billion, although administrative costs put the Department of Transportation's budget at more than \$9 billion. The DOT's initial budget request to lawmakers for next year was \$8.2 billion.

About 30 percent of Scott's request, \$2.6 billion, would come from federal funds.

Scott's request would fully fund DOT's five-year work plan, including \$3.8 billion for major road projects on Interstates 75, 4 and 95, and the Florida Turnpike. Nearly \$139 million in seaport improvements and \$192 million for bridge infrastructure improvements are included as well.

The recommendation is the latest budget announcement from Scott as he continues to leak details of his formal budget request, due out by Jan. 31.

## **Visit Florida**

Gov. Rick Scott is pushing to appropriate \$100 million in state funding for Visit Florida in the 2014-15 budget.

Scott said the money is needed to bring more visitors to the state so they'll boost the economy. While Visit Florida is required to have at least half of its funding come from the private sector, private funding has surpassed the \$100 million mark in recent years.

In the current budget, Visit Florida is funded at \$63.5 million, though Scott had pushed for \$75 million.

## **Politics**

### **Governor's Race**

Source: Florida Current

Charlie Crist previewed his line of attack against Gov. Rick Scott. Speaking to reporters before a fundraiser on Jan. 16, 2014, he criticized Scott's ethics, education spending and environmental policy.

"My heart is broken for educators, for people who care about the environment, for the middle class and the economy, and the greater job opportunities we should be having in the Sunshine State," Crist said.

Inside the fundraiser, Crist was embraced by Rep. Alan Williams, D-Williams.

When asked whether there was a connection between his support for Crist and his letter on behalf of the Black Legislative Caucus canceling a Wednesday meeting with Scott, Williams said, "Not at all. Yesterday was about a frustration with policy and not getting any action. "Tonight is about showing support for an old friend."

### **Scott picks campaign manager**

Source: Associated Press / Florida Current

Gov. Rick Scott announced the appointment of Melissa Sellers as campaign manager Today. She is the governor's communications director.

Tim Saler, a deputy executive director for the Republican Party of Florida, will become deputy campaign manager.

Sen. John Thrasher, R-St. Augustine, will be Scott's re-election campaign chairman.

Miami health care executive Mike Fernandez and Darlene Jordan will work as finance chairs.

Matt Moon, the communications director for the state party, will become the main spokesman for the campaign.

### **Lopez-Cantera named lieutenant**

Source: Florida Current

Gov. Rick Scott named former Rep. Carlos Lopez-Cantera as the new lieutenant governor on Tuesday. He made the announcement via Facebook.

The position had been open since March 13, 2013, when former Lt. Gov. Jennifer Carroll resigned.

Lopez-Cantera may help Scott's re-election campaign as a Hispanic Republican from Miami, Florida's largest county. He is also an experienced lawmaker who can help the governor push his agenda in the upcoming legislative session.

While organizers of a water and land conservation amendment claimed victory in their campaign to get on Florida's 2014 ballot Thursday, backers of a medical-marijuana proposal expressed confidence in winning a tight race to validate enough voter signatures in the next two weeks.

### **2014 Legislative Session Dates**

January 24, 2014	Senate Bill Drafting Request Deadline
January 28, 2014	Senate Bill Drafting Approval Deadline
February 3, 2014	Interim Committee Week
February 10, 2014	Interim Committee Week
February 17, 2014	Interim Committee Week
March 4, 2014	Legislative Session Convenes Bill Filing Deadline – 12:00 pm
May 2, 2014	Legislative Session Scheduled to Conclude

## **Fly-In Dates**

*Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce (Road to Tallahassee)*

February 10- February 12, 2014

*Florida Association of Counties (2014 Legislative Day)*

March 27, 2014

*Florida League of Cities (Legislative Action Days)*

April 1 –April 2, 2014

*Miami Dade County Days*

April 2-April 3, 2014

## **LOCAL NEWS**

### **Miami-Dade County City Managers Association**

Today, the MDCCMA held its monthly meeting at the War Memorial in Coral Gables. The meeting was very well attended with representatives from the various municipalities throughout Miami-Dade. Also represented was the Miami-Dade League of Cities and Miami-Dade's OIA.

The focus of the meeting was the 2014 legislative session in Tallahassee. Lobbyist Fausto Gomez gave an overview of the process as well as the current political climate. The issues discussed included the following: Red Light Cameras; Budget/ Appropriations; Communication Services Tax; Local Business Tax; Sober Homes; Pension Reform; Parking Meter Revenue; Tolling; and Gaming.

The comprehensive presentation gave the cities a good indication of what issues are of consequence and therefore, should be closely monitored.

### **Miami-Dade College / Homestead**

Source: Miami Herald

More than a year ago, Homestead officials kicked out the operator of a small-business incubator that operated out of a city-owned building.

The move came after a county investigation found that the operator of the Carrie P. Meek Center, 301 Civic Court, had applied for, and received, nearly \$1 million in federal grants despite having its nonprofit status revoked. As a condition to receive the grants, the center had to be designated as a nonprofit. The Carrie P. Meek Center's operator also failed to carry the proper insurance, prompting the state to issue a stop work order.

Since then, the city's Community Redevelopment Agency has been responsible for the Carrie P. Meek Center. The Homestead CRA is funded by the city and county and uses the money to revitalize historic downtown Homestead and the city's Southwest district.

Now, Miami Dade College Homestead Campus wants to lease and operate the Carrie P. Meek Center. MDC has proposed to lease the building for 40 years at \$1 per year.

At its meeting Tuesday night, the City Council, sitting as the CRA board, gave Homestead staff approval to continue negotiations with MDC for the operation and programming of the center.

But some CRA board members are concerned about the kinds of programs MDC plans to implement and about how much say the CRA board would have in the matter.

Board member Jimmie Williams III, who is the council liaison for the center, said that what MDC has proposed so far differs from the center's current work.

For years, the center offered subsidized office space and helped new businesses set up shop in the community. It was mainly funded through federal and CRA grants.

While MDC has not revealed an official plan, Homestead Campus President Jeanne Jacobs told the CRA that the college plans to provide workshops, educational seminars, credit and noncredit programs "specifically geared toward the small-business community."

Williams and other board members said they want to have a say on what MDC proposes in terms of programs at the Meek Center before a final contract is approved.

Jacobs told the board that she agrees it is important for Homestead, MDC and the local business community to work together when coming up with programs for the center.

Tuesday night's CRA vote was not a final agreement between the city and MDC but merely gave the green light for Homestead staff and the college to further discuss the matter.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/01/17/3877124/miami-dade-college-may-take-over.html#storylink=cpy>

## **MIAMI BEACH**

Source: Miami Herald

Miami Beach has called off the proposed \$1 billion redevelopment of its convention center district, upending a years-long process that garnered international attention.

Commissioners unanimously agreed Wednesday to terminate negotiations with South Beach ACE, the master development team the city had chosen in July to design and build the 52-acre project.

Instead, the city will issue a new bid for just the renovation of the city-owned convention center, and also will scout possible locations for the development of a nearby hotel. Both projects will be pursued concurrently, but separately.

Previously, the hotel and convention center renovation were considered the same project, and ACE would have developed both.

Industry leaders say it is imperative that the city bring its convention center up to date and add a hotel if it is to stay competitive, keep hotel rooms full and shops and restaurants bustling. The city's budget relies, in part, on tourist taxes.

Commissioners emphasized they support improving the convention center. By starting over, Mayor Philip Levine said he hoped the city could get a renovation project completed more quickly.

As previously envisioned, the project required 60 percent voter approval of leases that had yet to be negotiated. The ACE plan needed voter approval because it required the team to lease city-owned land. Miami Beach rules have always required a referendum to lease any city land within the convention center district.

Under the new approach, the convention center renovations could move forward without a referendum.

The shift in approach is the result of a mostly new City Commission elected in November, and one commissioner's campaign against the project. Voters overwhelmingly rejected incumbents who had supported the larger, now-scraped redevelopment plan.

The new approach could leave the possibility of a new hotel on shaky ground. Without a hotel, said past Miami Beach Convention Center Advisory Board member Joshua Wallack, a convention center renovation "doesn't matter."

On Tuesday, the development team, which is also known as SBACE, sent commissioners a letter stating the city is "contractually obligated to proceed."

Also, a member of the American Institute of Architects wrote to commissioners to say that the group's 16,000-member convention, which picked Miami Beach in 2010, won't be coming back.

Said Bill Talbert, head of the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau: "The need for a headquarter hotel — that comes from the meeting planners. All of our competitors have an adjacent headquarter hotel."

Meanwhile, the city plans to have a new bid proposal ready in March for the convention center and in April for the hotel portion.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/01/15/v-print/3872946/miami-beach-kills-convention-center.html#storylink=cpy>

## **Hialeah**

Source: Miami Herald

The Hialeah City Council Tuesday night approved a resolution to remove the names of former Mayor Raúl Martínez, his wife Angela and former state Sen. Roberto Casas from three municipal properties.

The council unanimously passed the three resolutions, sponsored by current Mayor Carlos Hernandez.

The properties include City Hall, a low-income apartment complex and a small park.

Hernandez said workers on Thursday would remove the name from the five-story building at 501 Palm Ave. The structure was named for the former mayor in 2006.

Also to be removed is the name of the low-income apartment complex, Angela Gardens, which in 2005 was named after Martínez's wife.

The third property to be stripped of its current name is a two-acre park named in honor of former state Sen. Roberto Casas, who was instrumental in obtaining funding for various projects in South Florida, including the park in western Hialeah.

On Tuesday, Hernandez said the park probably would be renamed Veterans Park, a proposal that will go to the Hialeah Historic Preservation Board.

The move to change the names began in November, when the City Council approved an ordinance prohibiting future municipal infrastructure from being christened with the name of living elected officials or their relatives. However, the ordinance did not mention existing names of municipal buildings. The measures to address that issue were introduced by Hernandez.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/01/14/v-print/3871375/hialeah-council-votes-to-strip.html#storylink=cpy>

## **Miami Lakes**

Source: Miami Herald

The town of Miami Lakes will look into ways to set up its own ZIP code in the coming months, which could help lower car insurance costs.

The town was denied their request for a separate ZIP code by the United States Postal Service on Dec. 16. The USPS said the separate ZIP code would be too expensive and require too much additional staffing for the organization.

Vice Mayor Manny Cid is leading the search for alternative options, including contracting with a delivery service. Cid proposed splitting the revenue between the town and the USPS. The funds would be used to pay for the delivery service. No tax money would be used for the program, Cid said.

ZIP codes can affect car insurance rates, according to a report by CBS MoneyWatch last May. Average annual insurance costs vary by as much as \$250 within the four Miami Lakes ZIP codes, from \$2,102 to \$2,352, according to averages on carinsurance.com. Cid hopes that with its own ZIP code, these averages would be lowered.

Insurance companies factor by ZIP code the total number of car thefts, break-ins and fake injury claims into their calculations. The new ZIP code would distinguish Miami Lakes from adjacent neighborhoods, which insurance companies have determined to be higher-crime areas.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/01/16/3875311/miami-lakes-seeks-own-zip-code.html#storylink=cpy>

## **Doral**

Source: Miami Herald

A proposal that would change the Doral's mayor office into a yearly rotating position, under which every elected council member would automatically become mayor during the last year of his or her term, was presented on Thursday to the commission reviewing the city charter.

Christian Mazzola, one of the five commission members, said the proposal would establish that future mayors would serve in that public office with proven experience after being a council member for three years and one more year as vice mayor.

Mazzola's proposal also considers expanding the terms of the council members from four to five years without reelection. It also contemplates that council members be elected every year, not as it is currently done: three council member one year and the other two the following year. That arrangement would give every council member the opportunity to become mayor.

Pete Cabrera, a former Doral vice mayor, said that he understood the essence of Mazzola's proposal, but he was also concerned over the instability it could bring to the city.

Darío Moreno, a professor at Florida International University's School of International Policy, said the current model of government in Doral, a city of about 50,000 residents, is similar to most small cities in the United States.

The theory of that model of government, Moreno said, is that in small cities elected officials receive a low salary because they generally do not have professional experience in public administration. Thus, the power is delegated and resides in the city manager, he said.

City Clerk Bárbara Herrera said the commission reviewing the charter would have until April to continue the process, which takes place every five years.

She added that the commission's recommendations will then be presented to the City Council and, after approval, will be submitted to a vote by Doral residents.

Read more here: <http://www.miamiherald.com/2014/01/13/3868764/proposal-cause-for-rotating-mayors.html#storylink=cpy>

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

### **SAVE THE DATE:**

#### **MIAMI-DADE LEAGUE OF CITIES**

What: MDCLC 60<sup>th</sup> Annual Installation Gala

Where: Jungle Island 1111 Parrot Jungle Trail, Miami, FL.

When: Saturday, February 8, 2014