

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

April 2 – April 6, 2012

MIAMI

On Tuesday, Miami City Commissioner Frank Carollo said Miami Marlins team owner Jeffrey Loria agreed to cover the costs to upgrade and operate the lots near Marlins stadium, which will provide parking to area residents that lost their on-street parking during ball games. The news comes days after Carollo expressed his disappointment at Marlins President David Samson, who turned down his request to help the city and its residents. Last week, Carollo asked the Marlins for \$20,000 to clean and level the city-owned lots and install lighting, and another \$20,000 for annual operating costs. According to the Herald, Samson told reporters on Friday that “Little Havana residents whose off-street parking had been eliminated to help the stadium’s traffic flow would get used to having to walk a few blocks to get home on game nights.

Carollo indicated that he’s been working with County Commissioner Bruno Barreiro to restore the street parking for residents on days when there aren’t games.

MIAMI BEACH

According to the Herald, Miami Beach City Manager Jorge Gonzalez is accusing the city’s ousted purchasing director Gus Lopez of leaking confidential information about the convention center redevelopment project, which is worth in excess of \$1 billion. The city is seeking qualified developers with ideas on how to rebuild the Miami Beach Convention Center and surrounding land. The purchasing department is tasked with getting the best deal for the public, but according to Gonzalez there is evidence that Lopez was favoring one of the competing firms. Lopez contradicts Gonzalez’s allegations, indicating it is Gonzalez who decided to extend the deadline in the selection process to assist a single developer. According to City Commissioner Jerry Libbin, the explanation Gonzalez gave him for Lopez’s sudden resignation was that Lopez provided information about the project to a third party before the information could be legally released. Additionally, Lopez is said to have improperly coordinated with interested parties. Currently, Lopez is under investigation by Miami Beach police and the Miami-Dade State Attorney’s Office. Should it be proven that either Lopez or Gonzalez gave an advantage to a developer, the process for selection will be complicated and delayed. Currently, qualification bids are due April 23.

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM (JHS)

At 61 years of age, Donn Szaro, chief strategy officer of Jackson Health System died unexpectedly last Friday. Mr. Szaro came out of retirement last summer to work at JHS. Prior to his retirement, he spent 35 years as a healthcare consultant for Ernst & Young.

In May, JHS Chief Executive Officer Carlos Migoya named Szaro Jackson's chief strategy officer, assigned to find new sources of revenue. Szaro served as the lead negotiator on the annual operating agreement with the University of Miami medical school, which has become a partner and competitor of Jackson's. Szaro was working on changing the relationship with UM, with Jackson leasing certain UM doctors, who work exclusively for Jackson. The negotiations continue.

Szaro was active in the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Miami Dade, The FSU College of Business and the FSU Seminole Boosters. He was also an advisor to the healthcare board of governors at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

NORTH MIAMI

North Miami Mayor Andre Pierre is surrounded by new controversy that has been dubbed "Socccergate". According to reports, since the start of 2010, Pierre and his associates have used the city-owned soccer stadium more than 100 times for free, in direct violation of a city statute. City records indicate that lost fees from the use of the stadium amount to approximately \$40,000. Pierre's arbitrary use of the soccer field goes against a city resolution (signed by Pierre) that states that no one is exempt from paying unless it's a charity, and they're allowed just one exemption a year. Reports confirm that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement is investigating the matter, but the State Attorney's Office has not yet indicated if an investigation is underway.

SWEETWATER

The Sweetwater Police Department is seeking to ban synthetic marijuana, which has been linked to serious side effects. The police department is urging the city commission to create an ordinance that bans the products in the city. Detectives showed the commission various types of synthetic marijuana seized from stores that were labeled as incense. Additionally, officials have been cautioned that synthetic cocaine, packaged as bath salts, maybe the next synthetic drug found on store shelves.

State and federal official have already banned chemical compounds found in synthetic marijuana but its manufacturers are skirting the law by developing new chemical combinations that have not been outlawed yet.

The city attorney will be making a recommendation on how to address the issue at the next commission meeting scheduled on May 7 at 8:00 PM in City Hall, 500 SW 109th Ave.

INCORPORATIONS

On Tuesday, the Miami-Dade Commission voted to end the ban on city incorporations. Currently five areas have bids to become cities; they include Sky Lake, Highland Lakes, Fontainebleau, an area east of Hialeah, Biscayne Gardens and Fisher Island. Commissioners must still decide whether the cities will pay fees to the county for incorporating, or if all of the county's unincorporated area should become cities.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting

When: Thursday, April 5, 2012

Where: Hialeah Park, located at 2200 East 4th Avenue, Hialeah, FL

On April 3 , 2012 the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners heard the first reading ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 8 ARTICLE III OF THE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CODE ADOPTING A LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENT PERTAINING TO THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES IN FLOOD HAZARD AREAS OF INCORPORATED AND UNINCORPORATED MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PROVIDING SEVERABILITY, INCLUSION IN THE CODE, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance may have a direct fiscal impact on your municipality. A public hearing to consider this ordinance is scheduled for the Infrastructure and Land Use Committee meeting on Wednesday, June 13 , 2012 at 2:00 PM in the County Commission Chambers located in the Stephen P. Clark Building, 111 NW 1st Street, 2nd Floor.

Please click on the link to review the ordinance at <http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=120501>

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

April 9 - April 13, 2012

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM

On Monday, Jackson Health System (JHS) announced that veteran hospital executive, Jeffery Crudele, will replace Chief Strategy Officer Donn Szaro, who passed away unexpectedly almost two weeks ago.

Crudele, of Milton, Georgia has been a chief financial officer in the HCA hospital chain, including a stint at the Cedars Medical Center. From 1997 to 2000, he was chief financial officer of the Memorial Healthcare System in South Broward.

JHS executives are looking forward to obtaining specific ideas and timelines for implementation of the plan that Szaro left behind.

MIAMI

On Thursday, in a 5-0 vote, City of Miami Commissioners gave preliminary approval for LED billboards at three city-owned buildings.

The buildings include the Miami Children's Museum, the James L. Knight Center, and the historic Gusman Theater. In order for the electronic billboards to become legal, the measure must go back to the city commission for final approval.

Thursday's proposal also included an amendment by Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones that would allow billboards in city parks. The amendment prompted many questions regarding applicability, which remain unanswered.

Reports have indicated that the city's billboard plan could bring at least \$430,000 a year in revenue for Miami.

According to the Herald, an offer of \$250,000 was made by Miami-Dade County to settle the debt of the Coconut Grove Playhouse but was rejected. The Aries development group claimed that it invested over \$ 2million into the playhouse project and considered the offer ridiculous. The County has requested supporting documentation and will revisit the matter. Playhouse board spokesman, Attorney Jorge Luis Lopez indicated that Aries failed to pay the agreed upon \$20,000, monthly rent for the property, and further stated that Aries, which continues operating the parking lot on the property, owes the playhouse more than \$900,000 in back rent.

To read more please click the link:

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/04/10/2741450/coconut-grove-playhouse-settlement.html> <<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/04/10/2741450/coconut-grove-playhouse-settlement.html>>

Announcement:

Auxilliary Bishop Agustin A. Roman, who was expelled from Cuba in 1961 with other Roman Catholic priests and became a leader of Miami's Cuban exile community, died on Wednesday, he was 83.

MIAMI BEACH

On Wednesday, Miami Beach Commissioners approved the concept building of a West Avenue bridge over the Collins Canal to provide a direct route from South Beach

to Sunset Harbour. In a 6-1 vote, commissioners decided to exercise an option for property held by the Miami Beach Housing Authority at West Avenue between 17th and the Collins Canal. That land provides the path for the bridge crossing. Supporters of the bridge indicated that the traffic would come with or without the bridge. Residents of Sunset Harbour said that with the restaurant and retail boom in their area, and the new parking garage, the bridge is a necessity.

Miami Beach Commissioner Jonah Wolfson has been urged to resign from his post months earlier than necessary in order to run for state house, by a prominent civic group.

According to Florida's resign-to-run-law, Wolfson must submit a resignation date by late May 25 in order to run for the vacant House District 106 seat. The effective date can be as late as the day he takes office, if elected. However, Miami Beach United passed a resolution urging Wolfson to resign in time for Miami Beach Commissioners to call a special election on the November 6 statewide ballot and allow voters to select his replacement until the city's 2013 general election.

By city charter, the city shall appoint a replacement until the city's next general election in 2013. But the city also has the option to set a special election. Miami Beach United further recommended that if commissioners appoint to fill Wolfson's seat, the new commissioner agree not to run for office.

To date, Wolfson has not stated whether or not he will follow through with the recommendation.

On Wednesday, federal agents arrested seven Miami Beach employees and one Miami-Dade police officer accused of extorting nightclubs that were accused of ordinance violations.

Those arrested included: Alberto, 41, along with fellow Beach code officers Willie Grant, 56, Orlando Gonzalez, 32, Ramon Vasallo, 31, and Vicente Santiesteban, 29.

The FBI charged them with conspiracy to commit extortion, accusing them of shaking down an unnamed club owner, demanding he pay "protection" to avoid city fines and inspections. Miami Beach firefighters Chai Footman, 36, and Henry Bryant, 45, were also arrested Wednesday and charged with the same in the alleged \$25,000 scheme.

Authorities also arrested Miami-Dade police officer Daniel Mack, 47, and accused him of helping Bryant transport more than a dozen kilograms of fake cocaine for undercover agents in exchange for \$25,000. The FBI charged Mack and Bryant with conspiring to possess and distribute more than 5 kilograms of cocaine.

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

According to the Herald, North Miami Councilman Frantz Pierre told police in August that a city employee was plotting to set him up by planting drugs and guns in his office. But according to an internal affairs police investigative report, the claims couldn't be proven. Pierre had claimed that the city's maintenance supervisor, Jean Pompee, told other employees about his ploy to have Pierre ousted from the council. According to Pierre, Pompee was retaliating over his recommendation to fire former city manager Kevin Baker.

North Miami Beach investigators found inconsistencies in Pierre's statements, according to an August report. Police deemed the threats to plant contraband to be inconclusive "due to insufficient and / or credible evidence."

In December, a North Miami Beach police officer and office manager were fired for trying to cast a Santeria spell over the city manager's office to stop him from cutting police jobs.

CORAL GABLES

Press Release:

CITY EXTENDS GRACE PERIOD UNTIL JULY 15TH FOR COMPLIANCE WITH TRUCK RESTRICTIONS

The City of Coral Gables has extended the grace period until July 15, 2012, for enforcement of the restrictions pertaining to trucks parked in residential and commercial areas. The City has granted this extension to provide more time for residents to come into compliance with the law. Enforcement would begin after expiration of the grace period if compliance has not been achieved. Fines are \$100 for the first violation, and up to \$500 for each subsequent violation

The City of Coral Gables has prevailed in the legal court case challenging the City's ordinances restricting the parking of trucks. The Third District Court of Appeals previously upheld the constitutionality of section 4-411 and 4-412 of the Coral Gables Zoning Code pertaining to trucks parked in residential and commercial areas. The Florida Supreme Court has decided not to review this decision. For more information, please contact Code Enforcement at 305-460-5226

Announcement:

Assistant City Attorney for the City of Coral Gables Lourdes Alfonsin-Ruiz passed away this past weekend. The funeral was held on Thursday at St. Augustine Catholic Church in Coral Gables.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elections:

This week State Representative Carlos Lopez-Cantera officially announced that he will challenge Miami-Dade Property Appraiser Pedro Garcia for his position in the November election.

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting

When: Thursday, May 3, 2012

Where: TBA

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

April 16 – April 20, 2012

JACKSON HEALTH SYSTEM

After Jackson Health System hired its new Chief Strategy Officer Jeffrey Crudele two weeks ago, some of the ideas regarding JHS's strategic financial plan were recently revealed. In his board presentation, Crudele indicated that Jackson's most pressing need was to get \$608 million in capital improvements to make the Jackson facilities more attractive to patients. The improvements sought range from re-tiling bathrooms to paint and window treatments. Additionally, he stated that the aging infrastructure such as air handlers is also in desperate need of repair. Crudele indicated that the improvements could help attract 250 community physicians to Jackson's staff. He projected that that the initiative could bring in an estimated 3,000 new patients annually after three years. Crudele further proposed employing 100 primary care physicians within the next 36 months, which he calculates could lead to 5,000 additional annual admissions.

While Crudele cautioned that the projections had not been fully evaluated, Board Chairman Marcos Laciuc indicated that he needs further clarity on how the plan would persuade community doctors to send their patients to Jackson. CEO Carlos Migoya asserted that further analysis is needed prior to hiring more doctors, since present physician employees, have lost the system \$10.6 million during the first 6 months of fiscal year 2012.

According to Migoya the plan is still in the preliminary stages and will require additional vetting prior to being set as a single strategic plan. Migoya indicated that a final plan would be ready by the summer.

An executive session has been set for May 1 by the Board of County Commissioners to discuss the details of the strategic plan.

MIAMI

The City of Miami and its four major unions are facing another difficult budget due to the city's deficit in the upcoming fiscal year. On Monday, City Manager Johnny Martinez released the following declaration of fiscal urgency: "Please be advised that I am declaring a financial urgency ... By separate letter, the city's collective bargaining

negotiating team will contact the representatives of these employee organizations and begin the 14-day period of negotiations.”

A state statute gives Miami Police officers, City of Miami Firefighters and civilian workers two weeks to negotiate new contracts. If an agreement is not reached, city commissioners will have the power to arbitrarily make whatever cuts are deemed necessary to balance the books.

Mayor Tomas Regaldo indicated that they are targeting \$11 million in pay that goes to paramedics and certain police officers who are paid extra in special circumstances. Regaldo stated: “Only special pay, without taking the salary into account, we have like \$11 million in fire and police, so if they give up some of that, they keep their salary intact for pension purposes.”

The city and unions have until August 29 to complete negotiations before the city commission will be able to take unilateral measures.

OPA-LOCKA

At this month’s commission meeting, commissioners decided to postpone searching for a new city clerk until September. On February 8, commissioners voted 3-2 to fire city clerk Deborah Irby. Since that time, assistant city clerk Joanna Flores has served as interim city clerk. Vice Mayor Dorothy Johnson had presented a resolution to begin a search for a new clerk but was met with opposition from commissioners, residents and former employees who thought Flores should be the clerk. Residents voiced concerns that Flores was being ignored because she was Hispanic. However, commissioners indicated that the search for a city clerk was based on qualifications and not ethnicity. The position requires a bachelor’s degree and / or five years municipal experience. Flores has been with the city clerk’s office since 1998 and became a certified municipal clerk in April, 2007.

Mayor Myra Taylor and Commissioner Rose Tydus both indicated that they were pleased with Flores and wanted to give her a chance.

Additionally, Commissioner Timothy Holmes presented a resolution to fire City Manager Bryan Finnie citing “lack of confidence”. Finnie contends that his team has been making many improvements but he needed to do a better job of communicating their progress. The resolution to fire Finnie failed 4-1.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for April 25 in the Opa-locka Municipal Complex, 780 Fisherman St.

DORAL

On Wednesday, the city council discussed long standing complaints from residents over noise caused by planes flying over their homes enroute to and from Miami International Airport. The council agreed to have City Manager Yvonne Soler-Mckinley contact the Federal Aviation Administration about the flight paths.

According to a news report, flights arriving on runway 12 and runways 8-left and 8-right fly over Doral. Runway 12 and Runway 8-left are closed by 11 P.M. daily to comply with noise abatement. Only 8-right is available for nighttime arrivals from the North.

Mayor Juan Carlos Bermudez indicated that he is hopeful that the city can work with the FAA and Miami International Airport to resolve the matter.

HIALEAH

On Thursday, Miami- Dade Commissioners Rebecca Sosa, Jose “Pepe” Diaz and Esteban Bovo held a sunshine meeting with Mayor Carlos Hernandez of the City of Hialeah to address issues, concerns and improvements to the city. Some of the issues discussed included funding for a new affordable housing project (to be funded with approximately \$5.5 million in GOB funds), annexation and the status of Hialeah Park and Race Course. Due to the complexity of some of the issues more research will be required prior to a resolution. A follow up meeting may be scheduled at a later date.

WEST MIAMI ELECTIONS

On Tuesday, April 10, the City of West Miami held its municipal elections and all of the incumbents retained their seats. Mayor Eduardo Muhina who ran unopposed was automatically reelected, Commissioner Lucian L. Suarez regained his seat with 32 % of the vote and Commissioner Candida “Candy” Blanca secured her seat with 31% of the votes. Garnering the most votes, Suarez will serve as vice mayor for two years and continue as commissioner for the following two years. Blanca will serve a four year commission term.

CHARTER REVIEW TASKFORCE

On March 8, 2012, the Board of County commissioners approved Resolution No. R-253-12 creating a Charter-Review Task Force. The Task Force has been charged with the following: review the Home Rule Charter of Miami Dade County; study the final report of the 2008 Charter Review Task Force; review amendments submitted to the voters since 2008; invite knowledgeable members of the community to appear; conduct

public hearings; host regional public meetings; and provide written recommendations to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners at their July 17, 2012 meeting.

On Thursday, the first charter review task force meeting was held at the Miami-Dade County Library. The 21 appointees (13 appointed by the BCC, 1 by the Mayor, 2 by the MDCLC and 1 by each of the cities of Hialeah, Miami and Miami Gardens) voted and named Florida State Senator Rene Garcia as the Chairman and former Pinecrest Mayor Evelyn Greer as Vice Chairwoman. The taskforce must complete and submit its report to the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners by July 17th in order for the amendments to be placed on the November 2012 ballot. The taskforce will commence a series of meetings, which will be scheduled for the week of May 7th and will be held in five areas throughout the county. The locations include, South Dade Government Center, FIU, Miami-Dade Wolfson Campus, Miami-Dade North and Hialeah.

The following list is comprised of the 21 appointees to the Charter Review Taskforce:

Terry Murphy (appointed by Barbara Jordan D-1), Representative John Patrick Julien (appointed by Jean Monestime D-2), Professor H.T. Smith (appointed by Audrey Edmonson D-3), Pamela Perry (appointed by Sally Heyman D-4), Jeff Bercow (appointed by Bruno Barreiro D-5), Yolanda Aguilar (appointed by Rebeca Sosa D-6), Representative Carlos Trujillo (appointed by Xavier Suarez D-7), Honorable Evelyn Langlieb Greer (appointed by Lynda Bell D-8), Dr. Walter T. Richardson (appointed by Dennis Moss D-9), Carlos A. Manrique (appointed by Javier Souto D-10), Don Slesnick (appointed by Chairman Joe A. Martinez D-11), Joe Arriola (appointed by Jose "Pepe" Diaz D-12), Senator Rene Garcia (appointed by Estaban Bovo D-13), Lawrence Percival (appointed by Mayor Carlos Gimenez), Armando J. Bucelo Jr., Esq (appointed by City of Miami), Hans Ottinot, Esq (appointed by Miami Gardens), Honorable Isis Garcia-Martinez (appointed by Hialeah), Mayor J.C. Bermudez (appointed by MDCLC) and Honorable Luis Gonzalez (appointed by MDCLC).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting

When: Thursday, May 3, 2012

Where: Palmetto Bay Center (Palm Room) 18001 Old Cutler Road

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

April 23 – April 27, 2012

MIAMI

On Thursday, City of Miami commissioners unanimously voted against an ordinance which would allow advertising on public rights of way, but asserted that the issue would be brought back with a more narrow definition. The original purpose of the item was to allow ads on bicycle kiosks and vehicle parking pay stations.

The ordinance caused controversy over interpretations that it would allow for advertising on any city-owned “fixtures” on public rights of way. The ordinance will be rewritten for clarification and brought back to the commission.

On Friday at 6:30 AM, the City of Miami launched its free downtown trolley with the expectation that residents will opt for the transportation service rather than cars. The retro style trolleys will run every 15 minutes and make three loops: one around Mary Brickell Village, another out to Brickell Key and a third past Margret Pace Park just north of the old Omni.

According to the DDA, since the trolley will also stop at or near Metromover and bus stations, it will give downtown Miami a heavily interconnected transit system which is unmatched by any other city in the state. The air-conditioned trolleys will run 6:30 A.M. until 11:00 P.M. every day except Sunday. Special runs will be added for Sunday Miami Heat playoff games.

The trolley system is funded by various sources, including the city’s \$2 million a year portion of the half-penny transit surtax funds, \$1.5 million from the state and \$4.1 million in federal stimulus money.

MIAMI BEACH

On Thursday, over 70 demonstrators stood at City Hall to protest what they claim is rampant corruption within the city’s government. The protestors called for City Mayor Matti Bower and Manger Jorge Gonzalez to step down in the wake of the arrests earlier this month of two Miami Beach firefighters and five code enforcement officers on corruption charges.

According to reports, Bower addressed the crowd and got into shouting matches with some of the protestors. One of the protestors, Steve Berke, who ran and lost against Bower last election, blamed the voters. He said that it's their fault for not showing up to vote, citing that 6,800 out of 44,000 registered voters went to the ballot box.

Commissioner Jonah Wolfson released a statement Thursday calling for Gonzalez's resignation, citing the corruption arrests. "Our city is in crisis due to poor management and corruption at many levels." "Enough has to be enough already, and Manager Gonzalez has to go."

Gonzalez has since indicated that he will not step down and cited Miami Beach's booming tourism and low property tax rate as a testament to his success. On Wednesday, Gonzalez sent a memo to Bower and commissioners detailing his plan to address the recent city employee misconduct incidents. The plan calls for working with the FBI's Public Corruption Task Force and other measures to fight corruption.

CORAL GABLES

In spite of the Florida Supreme Court upholding the city ban on pick-up trucks last year, on Tuesday, the city's Planning and Zoning board agreed to ease restrictions.

The proposed law includes the following details:

- Only the front of the truck can face the street. The truck would have to be backed into the property and no portion of the vehicle could block the swale, sidewalk or other right-of-way.
- The truck must have a covered bed made of standard material.
- The truck must not have any commercial markings, advertising or added appendages.
- The truck can't have more than two axles and four wheels.

State courts have upheld the city's ordinance four times since 1974. However another legal challenge was presented in 2003, which after going through separate courts and appeals, was defeated and the ordinance was upheld (the process concluded in 2007). Last fall the commission voted to have the Planning and Zoning Department board review the ordinance, resulting in a decision to loosen restrictions. The recommendation must now go before the City Commission and be heard in two separate readings.

HOMESTEAD

Local reports indicated that the Department of Children and Families, Homestead Police and Immigration and Customs Enforcement were at the Homestead baseball stadium

on Wednesday speaking with teenage Venezuelan ballplayers who were staying there. The baseball players are here on travel visas and were sleeping in the locker room, which is a violation of the fire code.

The players were brought by a Canadian sports organization, Gigantes Baseball Group, to set up the young players to be viewed by scouts. According to reports, management had contacted Homestead Police to report that having individuals residing in the stadium was against the contract with the establishment. The city-owned complex is leased by attorney John Ruiz of La Ley Sports, who said that he is renting the facility and has no involvement. Ruiz is facing thousands of dollars in debts to the city on the complex, and authorities say that the fire code violations could further complicate the case.

DCF has said that the agency had an open investigation on the case of seven minors and was checking on their condition. The players who spoke with DCF and ICE, were reported to have expressed their satisfaction with the conditions at the camp.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This week, the Honorable Professor Peter Anyang' Nyongo, Member of Parliament and Minister for Medical Services, Republic of Kenya, visited Miami-Dade County with the purpose of meeting with leaders of the community, which included Miami-Dade County Board of County Commission Chairwoman Audrey Edmonson and Deputy Mayors Jack Osterholt and Russell Benford, to discuss ways to foster bilateral trade relations between South Florida and Kenya as well as business opportunities available in the Health and Medical sectors in the Republic of Kenya.

Kenya has a population of 39 million, with a GDP of \$32 billion. Kenya is South Florida's 95th trade partner with total bilateral trade valued at \$17 million (2011). Kenya is the largest economy in east Africa and is a regional financial and transportation hub. After independence in 1963, Kenya promoted rapid economic growth through public investment, encouragement of small agricultural production, and incentives for private and foreign industrial investments. Kenya is a member of the East Africa Community (EAC) - Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda, with a combine population of 133 million. Kenya is also a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), a 19-member nation common market with a population of over 389 million and annual trade value of \$114 billion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Friday, the Florida Supreme Court affirmed that slot machines can be allowed anywhere in the state. The high court let stand a lower court ruling that not only ends a

battle over whether slots can be added to a Hialeah race track, but could rekindle a push to add slot machines in other parts of the state.

The court issued a one-page ruling saying it was dismissing the case. Five of the seven justices supported the order.

A three-judge panel of the 1ST District Court of Appeal last year upheld a 2009 law that allowed slots at a South Florida track although the track had been excluded from a 2004 state constitutional amendment permitting slots at other pari-mutuel facilities in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

SAVE THE DATE:

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting

When: Thursday, May 3, 2012

Where: Palmetto Bay Center (Palm Room) 18001 Old Cutler Road

Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Charter Review Taskforce

2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearings – May 2012

On March 8, 2012, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners approved Resolution No. R-253-12 creating a Charter Review Task Force. The Public Hearings specified below have been scheduled as a part of a number of meetings, public meetings, and regional public meetings conducted under that resolution.

Members of the 2012 Charter Review Task Force will be in attendance for these Public Hearings:

Monday, May 7, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM

2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing

Miami Art Museum

101 W. Flagler Street, Miami, Florida

Tuesday, May 8, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM

2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing

North Dade Regional Library

2455 N.W. 183rd Street, Miami, Florida

Wednesday, May 9, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM

2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing

West Kendall Regional Library

10201 Hammocks Boulevard, Miami, Florida

Thursday, May 10, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM

2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
South Dade Regional Library
10750 S.W. 211th Street, Miami, Florida

Friday, May 11, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM
2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
Wilde Community Center
1701 W. 53rd Terrace, Hialeah, Florida

LOCAL WEEKLY REPORT

April 30 – May 4, 2012

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY LEAGUE OF CITIES

On Thursday, the Miami-Dade County League of Cities held its monthly Board of Directors meeting. The meeting was hosted by the Village of Palmetto Bay and was held at the Palmetto Bay Village Center.

On behalf of the MDCLC, President Luis Gonzalez, City of Hialeah, Councilman and Past President Juan C. Bermudez, City of Doral, Mayor, gave special recognition to Miami-Dade County Commissioner Lynda Bell for her leadership in improving communications between the county and cities and facilitating the resolution of two key issues, including lifting the moratorium on incorporations and the disbursement of CITT surtax funds to the newly incorporated cities of Miami Gardens, Doral and Cutler Bay. The MDCLC expressed its gratitude and indicated that it will continue to foster an amicable and productive relationship with the County.

A special presentation was given by Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser Pedro Garcia, who spoke about some of the challenges and successes that the PA's office has had regarding the crackdown on homestead exemption fraud and new rules concerning the Value Adjustment Board. Garcia explained that the new law which requires a petitioner to pay all non-ad valorem assessments and at least 75% of ad valorem assessments by the due date has helped tremendously in collecting payments that otherwise would have been unduly prolonged.

HIALEAH

On Monday, the Florida Third District Court of Appeals sided with the unions, when it denied the City of Hialeah's appeal of a ruling that it committed an unfair labor practice while voting to impose a harsh contract on union employees.

In July 2010, the city council voted to impose a contract on the union that included a 30 percent pay cut. A hearing officer with Florida's Public Employee Relations Commission in December 2010 decided the city didn't follow the proper process to impose the contract because it didn't consider a last minute union objection.

According to city attorney William Grodnick, the issue will be postponed for at least 30 days while the city decides whether to appeal the decision to the Florida Supreme Court.

NORTH MIAMI BEACH

The City of North Miami has set its sights on privatizing its garbage services. However, during a workshop on Tuesday, council members decided to postpone a decision until they obtain feedback from residents and city employees. The city solicited proposals earlier this year from private firms to privatize its garbage service. Four companies replied and a panel ranked Waste Pro the highest.

According to reports, Waste Pro's contract would cost the city \$5.6 million annually. The city has an \$8.5 million budget for the sanitation department.

At Tuesdays, workshop questions arose regarding how the companies were ranked and the actual savings that the move would bring. The council agreed to review a study commissioned by AFSCME, the union representing sanitation workers.

BAL HARBOUR

In an effort to ensure that children aren't enticed by candy-flavored tobacco, the Village Council unanimously passed a resolution, last week, prohibiting the sale and marketing of all flavored tobacco products at retailers within the village.

Please click the link to view the resolution:

<http://www.balharbourgov.com/government/documents/agendasBHV20120416083355.pdf>

SURFSIDE

Elections:

On Tuesday, the Town of Surfside held its special municipal elections to fill an empty commission seat. The seat was left empty due to a shortage of qualified candidates in the March 20 general election.

The candidates running for office were Geoffrey "Gus" Garcia-Roberts and Michelle Kligman. Garcia-Roberts a senior staff writer for the Miami New Times lost the election with 21 percent of the votes. Michelle Kligman, a married, stay-at home mother, won the seat with 79 percent of the votes.

Kligman, 39, holds a doctorate degree from Nova Southeastern University in clinical psychology. Kligman also worked for the City of Miami as a senior assistant to the city manager for three different managers under two different administrations. She also served as a board member of Miami-Dade County's Building Better Communities Advisory Board and served as chair of Surfside's Green Advisory Board. Additionally, Kligman worked as a liaison to Miami's Community Relations Board, the Commission on the Status of Women and The Little Havana Advisory Board.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MIAMI SPRINGS

Miami Springs resident Ariana Fajardo was appointed by Governor Rick Scott to the 11th Judicial Circuit Court. Fajardo, 41, fills a seat made vacant in January by the death of Circuit Court Judge Julio Jimenez. She will commence her service on the bench in the Criminal Division beginning June 18. Her investiture will take place in July.

Fajardo earned a law degree at Nova Southeastern University's Shepard Board Law Center in 1996, and has worked as a prosecutor for the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office. She has experience in the areas of family law and insurance defense and is a member of many civic organizations, including the Federalist Society and the Cuban American Bar Association.

SAVE THE DATE:

Miami-Dade League of Cities

What: MDCLC Board of Director's meeting
When: Thursday, June 7, 2012
Where: TBD
Time: 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Charter Review Taskforce

2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearings – May 2012

On March 8, 2012, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners approved Resolution No. R-253-12 creating a Charter Review Task Force. The Public Hearings specified below have been scheduled as a part of a number of meetings, public meetings, and regional public meetings conducted under that resolution.

Members of the 2012 Charter Review Task Force will be in attendance for these Public Hearings:

Monday, May 7, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM
2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
Miami Art Museum
101 W. Flagler Street, Miami, Florida

Tuesday, May 8, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM
2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
North Dade Regional Library
2455 N.W. 183rd Street, Miami, Florida

Wednesday, May 9, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM
2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
West Kendall Regional Library
10201 Hammocks Boulevard, Miami, Florida

Thursday, May 10, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM
2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
South Dade Regional Library
10750 S.W. 211th Street, Miami, Florida

Friday, May 11, 2012, beginning at 5:30 PM
2012 Charter Review Task Force Public Hearing
Wilde Community Center
1701 W. 53rd Terrace, Hialeah, Florida