



AGENDA
CITY OF LAKE WORTH BEACH
SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING - INTERVIEWS OF CITY MANAGER
CANDIDATES
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBER
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2021 - 1:00 PM

ROLL CALL:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Commissioner Christopher McVoy

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. [Interview of the candidates for the City Manager position and selection of the City Manager](#)

ADJOURNMENT:

The City Commission has adopted Rules of Decorum for Citizen Participation (See Resolution No. 25-2021). The Rules of Decorum are posted within the City Hall Chambers, City Hall Conference Room, posted online at: <https://lakeworthbeachfl.gov/government/virtual-meetings/>, and available through the City Clerk's office. Compliance with the Rules of Decorum is expected and appreciated.

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the board, agency or commission with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, he or she will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he or she may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. (F.S. 286.0105)

EXECUTIVE BRIEF SPECIAL MEETING

AGENDA DATE: September 24, 2021

DEPARTMENT: Commission

TITLE:

Interview of the candidates for the City Manager position and selection of the City Manager

SUMMARY:

The City Commission will be holding public group interviews with the five final City Manager candidates with the intention of selecting a new City Manager.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

This is the final step in a process that included a national search by Colin Baenziger & Associates. After extensive background checks, the list of candidates was brought down to 20 finalists which were submitted by Mr. Baenziger to the City Commission. The City Commission then short-listed the candidates for City Manager down to five final candidates. A scheduled city tour, meet and greet reception and one-on-one candidate interviews have been arranged and will be conducted on September 23 and 24, 2021 prior to the public group interviews on the afternoon of September 24. Subsequent to the identification of the five (5) candidates, those who were not selected to move further in the interview process will be notified and their interest in the City of Lake Worth Beach as the place to apply their skills will be appreciatively acknowledged.

MOTION:

Move to offer the City Manager position to _____.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Fiscal Impact – N/A

Report on each candidate

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

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Thaddeus L. Cohen

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

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Thaddeus Cohen
2880 Citrus Lake Drive
Apartment Q201
Naples, Florida 34109
850-559-1348
thaddeus.cohen@earthlink.net

May 26, 2021

Attn: Recruiting Team

It is a pleasure to submit my resume to be considered as the next City Manager for Lake Worth Beach, Florida. I share the City's vision to strive to be the best community in America to live, work and play. I also support the mission to deliver high quality, best value, public services, programs, and facilities to your residents and visitors. In part the City Manager is tasked with carrying out the policy direction provided by the Mayor and City Commission. The position functions as the CEO, providing leadership and direction for the day-to-day operations and management of the employees of the Mayor and City Commission. I want to take a moment to match my history with three criteria I feel are important for the position of City Manager.

Leadership and Organizational Direction: I have been the Secretary of a State Agency, an Assistant City Manager, a CRA Executive Director and a Planning Director. Ensuring that the goals set by elected officials and the community are carried out, takes a team effort. I am a dynamic, energetic individual, someone with character and a passion for excellence.

Operational Effectiveness: For me, it is being positive, thinking creatively, and thinking outside of the box to help build consensus on a course of action to effectively deploy organizational resources to achieve operational objectives. I treat operational problems and issues as opportunities to learn and grow rather than stumbling blocks.

Performance Management and Workforce Development: I am respectful of others, delegate and encourage an environment where creativity can flourish. I believe in creating relationships to build an environment of trust, which I feel is important. In other words, mentoring and coaching to make a discernible difference in the advancement of our shared goals.

In conclusion, my broad experience has prepared me to be an ideal candidate. My resume reflects a diverse career in local and state government. My private sector experience includes major work for local and state governments. I look forward to having an opportunity to interview with you. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thaddeus Cohen

Thaddeus L. Cohen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An accomplished senior executive with hands on experience providing oversight to assigned departmental operations, providing direct supervision to departmental managers, to effectively implement goals and objectives. A leader with excellent team building skills to ensure interdepartmental goals are met and to motivate staff to carry out management decisions in the most efficient manner. An innovative and strategic thinker in the development and implementation of policies and procedures; a history of constructively engaging with communities that are diverse, a record of promoting increased cooperation with businesses, community stakeholders, area local governments, State and Federal officials; a proven consensus builder; a seasoned public servant who finds the complexities of municipal government rewarding and challenging and approaches these challenges with confidence and a positive attitude.

PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS

Policy Formulation and Implementation • Organizational Transformation • Strategic Planning • Citizen Involvement Initiatives • Budget Development / Administration • Economic Community Development Strategies • Service Delivery Methods and Procedures • Program / Construction Management • Contract Monitoring • Negotiation Strategies • Public Speaking Expertise

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Collier County, Florida

Growth Management, Department Head 2017 – May 2021

The Growth Management Department consists of nine divisions (Airports to Zoning) with a total budget of approximately \$306M with 600 employees serving a community of 360,000 permanent residents and 60,000 seasonal residents. See attachment for highlights from each Division.

Responsible for strategic plans, goals and objectives for the Department. Ensures the Department's strategic plans support the broad County mission, goals and objectives. Provides direction and oversight to division directors regarding individual division work plans; ensures the divisions work together to maximize Department performance and the use of resources. Serves as a member of the Executive Management team, making large scale strategic decisions. Highlights of my tenure include:

- At the 30- day mark on the job with Collier County effectively managed the Department's response to Hurricane Irma. Major arterials cleared in less than 3 days; managed the water debris mission; coordinated building assessments; personally, managed the phone bank information center.
- Post Hurricane Irma instituted revisions to vendor selections to support Traffic Operation's Signal section with contracts that are FEMA compliant. Reoriented storm water debris mission in coordination with Big Cypress Basin.
- Managed the establishment of a Storm Water Maintenance Section to move the organization from a reactive to a proactive posture in the maintenance program. Established a five- year KPI metric to measure progress toward an industry standard for Storm Water asset management. Established a fix it instead of patch it philosophy; presented to the Productivity Committee the new strategy which supported increase staffing in the storm water section to meet the community needs. Obtained 60 million in debt funding to support critical infrastructure improvements over the next three years.
- Managed and participated in the completion of three of the major planning initiatives for the County. Golden Gate Subarea Masterplans; Immokalee Master Plan and the Rural Land Stewardship Overlay

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(RLSA). These restudies are the most extensive rewriting of the areas planning strategies in nearly ten years. Each sets the criteria for further development for the next decade.

- Spearheaded the establishment of the Golden Gate TIF District. Worked to create a vision to increase the economic activity along Golden Gate Parkway through financial and land-use incentives. Created a visual framework for future development.
- Established a working protocol for red tide and blue- green algae information dissemination to the community between Pollution Control, Health Department and Tourism. The Protocol formalized the framework for testing responsibilities and result timelines while providing the technical, clinical and onsite information in a consistent manner for each of the subject matter agencies.
- Currently implementing a Departmentwide budgeting tool to increase awareness for each Division of expenditures and revenues on a daily basis tied to the Agency's SAP system. Its effectiveness is being considered by other Departments as a potential Agencywide tool.
- Continuing to improve our communication strategy through our redesigned website which is customer centric. GMD has taken the lead with a public portal which provides citizens a convenient method to access project information which can be sorted by type, neighborhood or district. GMD has led the Agency in keeping our stakeholders informed by way of our digital newsletter that provides highlights of significant issues regarding our Department.

City of Key West, Florida

Planning Director and CRA 20015 – 2017

A full-service, municipal government with a \$166M annual budget and 489 employees supporting a community of 25,000 permanent residents with 25,000 seasonal and tourist visitors. The City's enterprise units include building department, parking division, and cruise ship port.

Responsible for the Planning Department to management, elected officials, and outside agencies; created, presented and explained departmental programs, policies and activities; resolved sensitive, significant, and controversial land use issues; managed the development of long range plans for the City; identified complex policy issues and worked interdepartmentally to create, present and implement comprehensive solutions; assessed, operational and internal reporting relationships; created new systems for effective service delivery. Responsible for the development and administration of the department's budget; directed the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; directed approval of expenditures as necessary. Responsible for the day- to- day management, administration, supervision and strategic direction for the work activities for Planning and Zoning; Community Redevelopment Agency; Urban Forestry; Historic Preservation, Sustainability; Arts in Public Places; and Truman Waterfront Advisory and their respective boards and committee functions. Highlights of my work include:

- Established the City's first simultaneous permitting review process. An inter-departmental process which ensures major and minor development plans approved by the planning board and city commission and project without those approvals are in compliance with city codes and requirements prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Developed and passed a parking fee increase projected to add over 3 Million in revenue. The increase is 87 percent paid for by tourist. A local resident exemption for four hours of free parking in selected downtown parking locations was a key selling point in its approval by the city commission. The increase will fund a newly created Transportation Alternative Fund, provide dedicated source of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and additional dollars to the General Fund.

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- Established the Transportation Alternative Fund (TAP) with the parking revenue increase, 1.14 Million in the first year; created a four bus, 15 minute, service downtown transit loop “DUVAL LOOP” working with an additional 425K in technical assistance from FDOT / South Florida Commuter Services in conjunction with Key West Transit. Created the Car Free Key West Campaign to encourage safer biking, walking in the community. <http://keysweekly.com/42/car-free-key-west-plans-first-view/> The fund will also support a newly established Bike Share program and later in 2017 a Car Share program. Managed the RFQ for a 275K Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan which is ongoing. These efforts are to connect more closely transportation and land use to reduce the cost of housing.
- Established with the parking fee increase, approximately 800 Thousand annually, a dedicated source of revenue for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Possibly being the only city in Florida with a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing.
- Managed and participated in the complete rewrite of the Land Development Regulations which was divided into four themes Affordable Housing; Transportation; Sustainability and Disaster Mitigation. Managed citizen participation and workshops. A significant portion of the work redefines the criteria for affordable housing making housing more attainable for city residents by changing the AMI constraints; increasing density in selected areas; reduction in parking requirements and recommending the creation of an Affordable Housing Incentive Zone.
- Represented the City as a non-voting member on Monroe County’s Affordable Housing Taskforce. Several recommendations with regards to access affordable units; height increase; incentives were accepted by the body and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners.
- Led and managed with a consultant team the Bahama Village CRA Visioning / Capital Work Plan. The first meaningful update of the CRA plan since 2010. Through workshops established the priorities for projects and funding for community improvements in the short term 1-3 years / medium 1-5 years and long term 5- 10 years and beyond. Established funding criteria for future projects as being Critical, Strategic or Important with appropriate definitions and metrics for success.

City of Pensacola, Florida

Assistant City Manager and Community Redevelopment Agency Director 2008 – 2011

A full-service, municipal government with a \$217M annual budget and 860 employees supporting a community of 52,000 residents. The City’s enterprise units include the airport, seaport and gas company.

Duties and Responsibilities as Assistant City Manager:

Responsible for implementing Council policy and Manager directives; Senior budget member developed the city’s operational and capital budgets; accountable for the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; oversaw the approval of expenditures of assigned departments; and the preparations and implementation of budgetary adjustments as necessary. Provided oversight and approval of expenditures of assigned departments; Departments within scope of responsibility included Parks and Recreation, Housing Department, Planning and Zoning, Building Inspection Services, Neighborhood Enhancement Teams, Saenger Theater, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Port of Pensacola. Identified and resolved long range issues with management, staff, elected officials, p/z, and environmental boards and historical preservation commissions, and outside agencies; negotiated sensitive issues with public and private sector entities ranging from economic development to growth strategies. Directed, and evaluated the day- to- day efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and procedures. Assessed and monitored workload, administrative and support systems and internal reporting relationships; identified opportunities for improvement and directed implementation. Developed and represented legislative issues to state and federal delegations. Media representation for the City included television and radio appearances, print and webcast interviews, and preparation of press releases.

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- Management team participant in developing the City's 30-month budget. Developed Citywide departmental priorities that maintained critical City services while reducing staff positions by 12 percent in conjunction with the City's bargaining units between 2008 and 2011.
- Introduced computerized processes to streamline council meetings and reduce cost; placed the city budget on-line with updates for citizens. Transformed web presence of the Parks and Recreation Department and Community Redevelopment Agency with a modern and engaging range of user-friendly tools which attracted and increased resident participation on the site.
- Developed and led downtown traffic signalization management program which reduced traffic congestion and idling and improved air quality. Oversaw with FDOT State Highway 98 pavement rehabilitation program which improved traffic flow and pedestrian access in the downtown core.
- Led citywide citizen engagement effort during the State-mandated update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The plan was recognized by the Florida Department of Community Affairs for its innovative strategies in transportation and land use.
- Principal author of the Community Redevelopment Agency's *Community Redevelopment Plan 2010* to create a vision for downtown. The *Plan* achieved the first update since 1985, establishing the downtown strategic framework for the next fifteen years.
- Implemented the traffic management "retail strategy" that increased downtown vehicular traffic by 80 percent and pedestrian traffic by 25 percent in the City's retail core.
- Led the Community Redevelopment Agency and City's participation in financing and development of the 16-acre downtown technology park with EDA, Escambia County, and Pensacola Chamber of Commerce. Established strategic storm water drainage program to convert an underutilized 5-acre park to a retention pond / park in support of the 16-acre technology park funded by storm water fees and MSTU agreements.
- Optimized operations at the City of Pensacola Municipal Golf Course by restructuring and reinvestment efforts resulting in a 35 percent reduction in operational cost as part of an investment strategy to redesign and modernizes greens and fairways and renovate and rebrand the clubhouse concessionaire operations.
- Established the City's New Year's event, the *Pelican Drop*™, gaining regional and national media coverage. The event is now attended by over 100,000 participants, leading to 100 percent occupancy in downtown hotels and increased retail sales.
- Established an annexation framework to create an 864 acre "Midtown" commercial / industrial inland port facility leveraging clean-up of a 60-acre super fund site in partnership EPA and the State of Florida.
- Author of the City of Pensacola's *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Long Term Recovery Plan*. The *Plan* established strategies that align with the Economic Recovery portion of the Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' *America's Gulf Coast Report*. The Secretary's announcement of the *America Gulf Coast Report* in Pensacola and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson's decision to host the first Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force meeting in Pensacola were direct results of the *Plan*.
- Principal team negotiator in the development of the \$52M Community Maritime Park, a 40-acre development that includes a minor-league baseball stadium, 7000-seat amphitheater venue, and 500,000 square feet of private mixed-use development. Financing for the project included a City land donation, Build America Bonds, Tax Increment Funds, and New Market Tax Credits.
- Redefined the strategic direction for the Port of Pensacola, and attracted the first major tenant to the Port in five years, Offshore Inland Oil and Marine Services Inc. Incentives included a relocation package provided

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by the Community Redevelopment Agency with wharfage and dockage relief contributed by the Port. Overall effort produced 50 jobs and \$6.2M in economic activity in the first six months of operation.

- Established an “Enlivening Public Spaces and Branding Strategy” that created a specialty center branded as the “Entertainment District,” credited with the resurgence of the downtown retail core. The Entertainment District increased food and beverage establishments by fifty percent with a twelve percent increase in the labor force over two-and-a-half years.

Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida
Secretary, 2004 – 2007

The State of Florida’s 432million, 450 employee land planning, emergency management, housing and community development agency.

Responsible for the Department’s policies and operations organized into three service areas: The Division of Community Planning develops and administers Florida’s growth management programs; The Division of Housing and Community Development administers State and Federal programs designed to provide community and economic development assistance; and The Division of Emergency Management leads the State’s emergency response team and provides response, planning, and mitigation for manmade and natural disaster.

Reported to the Governor:

- The Division of Emergency Management delivered \$3B in State match for FEMA hurricane disaster dollars in 2004-2005 with minimal State and Federal audit comments. Developed and implemented design of a computerized process to track individual FEMA PWs during the disaster event providing instantaneous status reports to local governments.
- Developed policies and administered \$1.2B in HUD disaster supplemental dollars to hurricane-affected communities in 2004-2005. In coordination with FEMA, the Division of Community Planning prepared the most comprehensive citizen-based, long-term recovery plans to address the catastrophic damages caused by these storms. Asked by HUD to provide training to Mississippi and Alabama on techniques used to provide constituent services.
- Passed SB 360 (2005) “pay as you grow” legislation and associated 1.2 Billion appropriation to ensure that roads, schools, sewer, and water were available to meet the needs of the communities in one of the fastest growing states in the nation.
- Created the Coastal High Hazard Study Commission through an Executive Order from the Governor. The Commission, a blue-ribbon committee, evaluated the State’s regulatory framework related to coastal development polices in the Department of Environmental Protection, the Office of Insurance, the Building Code Commission, the Division of Emergency Management, and other stakeholders.
- Successfully developed and passed legislation with the Florida Building Commission to bring Florida panhandle counties under a unified Building Code, resulting in lower home owner insurance costs under the insurance industry’s community rating system.
- Funded university research on establishing higher residential construction standards to reduce evacuation requirements. The findings have been adopted by the International Building Code Commission.
- Led the State’s first ever development and implementation of fiscal impact analysis modeling and visual planning tools to assist regions in forecasting their community visions and related capital budgets.

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- Launched the State's coordinated effort of SB 444 (2005), tethering the State's Water Management District's regional water plans to Regional Planning Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plans and ensuring a stronger connection between land development and the use of the State's water resources.
- Spearheaded and funded regional planning efforts like the Sustainable Emerald Coast, Sustainable Treasure Coast, Issues 2005 Southwest Florida, and Orlando's "How Shall We Grow?" visioning efforts. Such initiatives positioned these communities to successfully obtain \$11M in Federal funding from the Sustainable Communities program in 2010.
- Negotiated the 40 million bond offering for wastewater improvements in the Florida Keys between Monroe County, the municipalities, the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and the State of Florida.
www.myflorida.com/myflorida/cabinet/agenda05/0823/trans_082305.pdf
- Authored and developed with the late Representative Mike Davis Florida's first Workforce Housing Program (2005) which created housing initiatives for essential service personnel i.e. fire fighters, police officers, nurses, teacher etc.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

MBR Construction, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Project Program Manager, 2013 – 2015

A construction company that delivers infra-structure facilities and related services to municipal governments in the areas of parks; community centers; marinas; administrative buildings; airports; streetscapes; and recreational facilities.

Managed and oversaw delivery of infrastructure projects to governmental clients; Represented the company to government agencies, industry representatives and trade organizations. Coordinated major projects including governmental development approvals for projects such as Boca Raton Airport Authority Administration Building and the Reconstruction of Taxiway A / E at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport which required local, State and Federal FAA approvals. Established and monitored protocols for compliance with M/DBE requirements. Responsible for the development and mentoring of staff. Monitored construction budgets, developed project scopes for subcontractors; contract modifications and requests for change orders; directed resolution of design and construction issues between team members.

Thaddeus Cohen Architect, PA, Delray Beach, Florida
President, 1984 – 2004

President of an award-winning architectural / planning firm providing solution for municipal governments in the areas of housing, economic development, urban design, community planning, transportation, criminal justice, and recreational facilities.

Spearheaded business development throughout Florida. Expanded client base from municipal government to state agencies. Developed new services and funding capabilities for the market sector serviced by the firm. Accountable for, recruitment, development and mentoring of project teams. Developed capital budgets for project sponsor needs and developed project scopes that efficiently meet those needs; monitor project budgets, contract modifications and requests for change orders; directed resolution of design and construction issues between team members; establish and maintain positive relationships with clients and contractors. Special emphasis was placed on maximizing the taxpayer's dollars.

Housing and Community Planning

- Northwest Neighborhood Housing and Redevelopment Plan; West Palm Beach, Florida

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- Sistrunk Housing and Redevelopment Plan, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Bahama Village Housing and Redevelopment Plan, Key West Florida
- Wilton Manors Redevelopment Plan, Wilton Manors, Florida
- Establishment of Community Redevelopment Agencies in Key West and Delray Beach, Florida

Community Centers and Parks

- Hadley Park Community Center and Olympic Pool, Miami Florida, Franklin Park Community Center, Fort Lauderdale Fl, Highland Park Community Center, Pompano Beach Fl, Dyer Park, West Palm Beach, Fl. Orville Bathhouse, Orville Ohio

Transportation

- Developed the architectural design criteria and guidelines for the double tracking and station expansion of the South Florida Tri-County Commuter Rail system. Implemented those system wide designs for the Sheridan Street Station, Hollywood Fl; Opa Locka Station Miami Fl.; Coconut Creek Station

Criminal Justice

- Designed the award-winning Harry and Harriette T. Moore Museum in Mims, Florida dedicated to Harry T. Moore, the NAACP organizer killed on the Christmas Day 1951 bombing of their home. Provided construction administration services for several criminal justice facilities including the 76,000 sf North Broward County, Florida Courthouse, 750-bed Male Correctional Facility in Moore Haven, Florida, and the 1350-bed Male Correctional Facility in South Bay, Florida.

Water and Wastewater

- Responsible for architectural design and construction administration for several Florida municipal water treatment facilities including Miramar WTP; West Palm Beach WTP no 2; Belle Glade WTP renovation.

SELECTED CIVIC ACTIVITIES

United Way of Collier County / Florida Keys, Board Member
Leadership Collier, Class 2019
Florida Community Trust, Chair
Florida's Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, Member
Florida's Sustainable Treasure Coast, Co-Chair
Florida's Growth Management Study Commission, Member Governor's Appointee
Florida's Fiscal Impact Analysis Model Study Group, Member, Governor's Appointee
Florida's Sustainable Emerald Coast, Member
Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Board Member
Florida's Coastal High Hazard Study Commission Co-Chair
FDEP Land Acquisition and Restoration Council, Member
Florida Hurricane Housing Work Group, Member
Florida's Broward Alliance, Board Member
Urban Land Institute – Florida Committee for Regional Cooperation
Metro Broward, Florida, Board Member
Council for Black Economic Broward County Florida, Chair
Florida American Institute of Architects Florida, Palm Beach Chapter, President
Florida American Institute of Architects, Board Member
Delray Beach Housing Authority, Board Member
Partners in Excellence (Education) Broward County Florida, Board Member
Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Commission, Chair
Affordable Housing Task Force, Monroe County, Florida, Member
1000 Friends of Florida, Board Member
Saint Andrews School Boca Raton, Florida, Board Member

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

Candidate Introduction

Thaddeus Cohen

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent Ohio

EXPERIENCE

Department Head/Assistant County Manager Growth Management Department Collier County, Florida	2017-2021
Planning Director/ Executive Director CRA, Key West, Florida	2015-2017
Project Manager, MBR Construction, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	2013-2015
Management Consultant, Tallahassee, Florida	2011-2013
Assistant City Manager/ CRA Director, Pensacola, Florida	2008-2011
Management Consultant, Tallahassee, Florida	2007-2008
Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida	2004-2007

BACKGROUND

Collier County is located at the southern end of Florida’s Gulf Coast region. The county has a total area of 2,305 square miles which makes it Florida’s largest county by land area and fourth largest by total area. Framed by 34 miles of sandy beaches, the county accounts for 1/3 of southwest Florida’s region land mass. Interestingly, the entire southern portion of the county lies within the Big Cypress National Preserve. The county encompasses municipalities of Naples, Marco Island and Everglades City. The population is approximately 368,161 permanent residents and another 60,000 seasonal residents.

Collier County has targeted economic sectors which include corporate headquarters; clean tech; manufacturing; life sciences; defense & homeland security; aviation & aerospace; information technology; financial & professional services. The three major industries currently are tourism, development (258 permits per month) and agriculture which are significant economic drivers for the county’s 15,341 business establishments and 151,556 jobs.

Collier County’s general fund is 537 million dollars out of a net 1.5 billion budget supporting 1,973 employees. The Growth Management Department for which I was responsible has an operating budget of 112 million dollars supporting 600 employees in nine divisions and a capital budget of 186 million for construction of roads, bridges, beach renourishment, storm water and landscape improvements.

The three most significant issues facing the County are:

Local option infrastructure sales tax: The sales tax is expected to collect 420 million over, its seven- year life. With five years remaining tracking, managing and reporting on

Thaddeus Cohen

all aspects related to collecting spending tax proceeds for the enumerated projects within the enabling ordinances.

Funding Growth: Future growth is expected to accelerate in eastern Collier County. The Water/Sewer District expansion has begun and is funded by long term bonds in the amount of 76.2 million. Planning phases two and three will necessitate additional funding in excess of 100 million. Need to continue to work with transportation engineering CIP and the MPO's 2045 LRTP for timing of the road network.

Employee retention/succession planning: Close to one third of the work force is eligible for retirement in less than five years. The county will need to focus on providing a market-based compensation program that is competitive with other local governments and private sector employers in the region. In particular, entry level positions will need support in continuous training, professional development and enhanced career mobility.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I moved to Florida (Delray Beach) in the late seventy's and have watched the growth of South Florida for decades before taking the position of DCA Secretary in 2004 in Tallahassee. For much of that time the history and charm of Lake Worth Beach was under the radar. I am excited to see that Lake Worth Beach is being "re-discovered again". The collective decisions made today will have a far-reaching effect into the future. I welcome being part of and to continue the momentum garnered in being a best-in-class community.

My experience and interest have been in developing and implementing strategies that have helped communities grow and prosper. I have worked with neighborhood organizations, homeowner associations and business leaders to develop plans of action to deploy resources to assist communities realize their dreams from Pensacola to Key West. Similarly, Lake Worth Beach is poised for tremendous growth in the coming decades.

A significant element of Lake Worth Beach's future success will be the vigorous discussions held with engaged citizens and elected officials. My collaborative approach to managing, I believe, works wells in these dynamic environments. When working with all the appropriate stakeholders it is possible to get to the desired outcome that benefits the community.

Within the organization I feel it is important to support key staff when they exercise their judgment. The strength of an organizations lies in the ability of its personnel. I have found when we work from a common plan of action and the right individuals are given room to perform you can maximize the organization's efforts. If asked my colleagues would agree.

The elected officials I have served would characterize my communications as thoughtful; my actions as attentive; and recommendations as trustworthy. Staff would say I am respectful,

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supportive, and fair. I sponsor thinking creatively and treat problems and issues as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than stumbling blocks.

A strength has been to bring groups of varying points of view to a consensus on a course of action that provides the greatest benefit to the community at large. Listening skills have been a trait that has held me in good stead. Collier County is one of two communities to implement the Rural Land Stewardship program covering some 195,000 acres of undeveloped land. The plan had been in limbo since 2005. It was important to distill the issues to its core and provide a series of recommendations to the seven significant landowners, citizens and environmental organizations, to find a path forward to update the Comprehensive Plan for submission to the state. The result will provide 45,000 acres of developable land and the protection of 150,000 acres.

Personnel issues can be complicated. The decisions often have ramifications not only for the employee but also their family. Some feel I may go too far to remedy a circumstance to find a fit within the organization. As a result, I have tried to strengthen employee development services in organizations where I have worked. I have worked with managers to cultivate employees and manage on the front-end their career paths to place team members in a position to succeed.

Measuring performance is a team effort and starts with aligning the organizations actions with the City's strategic plan. Empowering team members to have a stake in the outcomes of the organization provides for thoughtful and decisive decision making. This construct also leads to potential problems being identified by staff, evaluated and strategies implemented to avoid them. Recognition from constituents of improved performance provide confidence the organization is heading in the desired direction. In Collier County the storm water maintenance team developed metrics; Key Performance Indicator- KPI i.e., (control structures inspected; lane miles cleaned; inlets cleaned and inspected etc.) in conjunction with the asset management program to monitor year over year performance and against industry standards. Presentations before the County's Productivity Committee garnered a budget increase from 4 million to 8 million. The team was able to add a crew and be proactive in the community to address storm water improvements rather than reactive.

Collier County had been negotiating with a property owner for some five years on a four-thousand-acre new town Rural Land West. In the spring of 2018, the proposal was pulled. The landowner instead moved forward with three villages approximately 950 acres each rather than a town and its resultant employment base. The move to say the least was controversial. I reached out to the landowner to propose a strategy to overcome the issues of affordable housing, transportation i.e., the road network and other infrastructure development using tools to change the Comprehensive Plan's Rural Land Stewardship Program; codifying the MPO's LRTP for future roads and working with Utilities to provided appropriate water and sewer. Over an 18-month period working with the landowner and several environmental organizations we were able to reach an agreement for a framework to transition the proposed Villages of Rivergrass, Longwater, and Belmar to the Town Big Cypress an approx., 3,500-acre community with

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appropriate land reserved for economic development and 2.5percent of the gross acreage reserved for affordable housing. At completion, the Town of Big Cypress will have a population equivalent to the city of Naples. The agreement set a framework for future towns and villages as growth continues in eastern Collier County.

Ambitious plans do not always come to fruition during your tenure. I was disappointed that I was not able to establish a ferry service between the City of Pensacola, Pensacola Beach and Fort Pickens. The moving pieces of the local governments, the National Park Service takes patience and more time than I could imagine. The service was eventually established. When I look back, I can be grateful that the idea stood the test of time. It took an awfully long time. Working with the federal government can be a marathon and a measure of one's endurance.

Termination of an employee is often the result of a process. In the organizations in which I have served there are administrative policies that escribe to each team members the expectations of job performance and behavior. I have been a Hearing Officer who has taken testimony to render a decision. The decisions have fallen within the guidelines of the organization.

BEACH – Bold / Exciting / Ambitious / Compassionate / Home

I see Lake Worth Beach as a dynamic community of neighborhoods not as a challenge but endless opportunities. The town core is redeveloping, how is that balanced with maintaining community character; how will a post COVID environment change the delivery of services; what strain was placed on the social fabric and how can a customer/ citizen centric service delivery model enhance our resiliency. My sense, these may be some of the pressing issues faced by the community.

BEACH – Beautiful / Enthusiastic / Artsy / Confident / Home

Clearly, Lake Worth Beach has created a framework for its future. My first six months would entail: Meet regularly with the Mayor and Council members to understand their goals and objectives and their insights into the organization's performance; do a deep dive into the soon to be adopted budget to see where the focus has been placed and how it relates to the delivery of exceptional service; meet with community and business leaders, advocacy groups, adjoining local governments to understand our partnerships as a force multiplier to realize the community' goals. Meet with staff to assess how our performance aligns with the Commission's goals and objectives and the City's strategic plan. Reach out to the PBCSO and PBCFR to build a relationship in the public safety arena. Meet with the City Attorney to be briefed on any pending legal issues that affect the City's operations. Regular meetings with CAO and planning staff to be updated on development issues; meet with the CRA to be familiar with the redevelopment plan and the various projects that are ongoing and pending. It will still be hurricane season, review the emergency management plans with staff to have a clear understanding of the team's role, responsibilities and corresponding FEMA approved disaster contracts.

Thaddeus Cohen

During my career I have held press conferences when asked by the elected official; tv and radio interviews; been a keynote speaker at various growth management and disaster preparedness conferences. I have written op-eds to promote a particular issue to promote citizen engagement. I am not aware of any negative information that would arise to the detriment of your client.

Social media has been a slow adoption in the organizations in which I have served. I feel it is a powerful tool to keep residents informed about the working of their local government. The Lake Worth Beach Website is customer friendly; the utility department is able to broadcast power outages through their platform. It appears there is foundation to find various ways to tell Lake Worth Beach's story.

I am not aware of any activist that will contact the City of Lake Worth Beach with negative comments.

In my spare time I read, and travel.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

Thoughtful
Visionary
Straightforward
Empathetic
Knowledgeable
Honest

REASON FOR LEAVING CURRENT POSITION

The County Manager for whom I was hired and worked for retired. The new County Manager re-organized by Department into two separate groups, eliminated my position, divided my duties between two individuals. I was not offered an opportunity to remain with the organization.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation with Collier County was \$156,000 excluding benefits.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
THADDEUS L. COHEN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Collier County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Collier County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
THADDEUS L. COHEN**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
THADDEUS L. COHEN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: _____

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. FACEBOOK
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: THADDEUS L. COHEN
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
Thaddeus Cohen**

Leo Ochs – Former County Manager, Collier County, FL 239-919-6843

Mr. Ochs hired Mr. Cohen in 2017 to run the Collier County Growth Management Department, which was one of the County's biggest operations. Mr. Ochs hired Mr. Cohen in a competitive process among other highly qualified individuals, and Mr. Cohen rose to the top of the hiring list. Mr. Ochs was the former Collier County Manager until he retired in 2021.

Mr. Cohen strongly advocated for his team. He stood up for his position while having excellent collaboration with colleagues, internal counterparts, industry leaders, and outside community leaders. He had good interpersonal and public speaking skills, which he used to calmly diffuse potentially hostile situations.

Mr. Ochs and Mr. Cohen shared outstanding interactions. Although they may have had professional disagreements, Mr. Cohen was a pleasure to work with. Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Ochs well informed via primarily verbal and electronic communication, although Mr. Cohen also used phone calls, in-person meetings, and occasional memos. Mr. Ochs continuously knew what Mr. Cohen and his team were doing.

Mr. Cohen absolutely had good experience dealing with the public, whether one-on-one or in groups. He may have been more effective with individuals due to not having to compete with others in a conversation, but he was equally comfortable in differently sized public settings. One of his greatest strengths was how capably he interviewed, most likely due to prior experience with state, county, and local government. He brought a wealth of experience to Collier County.

By the nature of his job, Mr. Cohen was frequently out in the public. His major responsibilities in Growth Management included issuing permits for developing the community and involvement with transportation projects. He managed a number of public meetings with planning and zoning commissions. Additionally, he dealt with members of the public and organizational leaders. He also had experience with elected officials from state, county, and municipal government levels.

Mr. Cohen was quite customer service oriented. He showcased this characteristic when facing challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought. He searched for new methods to effectively and quickly serve the public while protecting his team from the virus. He moved to electronic formats to protect people during the pandemic crisis.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made good decisions as he applied a specific analysis approach. He also brought in other opinions. Once he listened to those perspectives, he took responsibility for the final decision. He hired well and was responsible for hiring the staff in his division, which included approximately 350 people. He met his deadlines appropriately. For tasks in which he had direct control, he accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. Sometimes planning initiatives were delayed. However, such delays were due the Board deciding to tweak an idea or asking for more work on the plan, which had been submitted to the Board on time.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Furthermore, Mr. Cohen had good financial skills, though he relied heavily on his financial operations team. While being involved with the budget process, he collaborated well and relied on the expertise of his staff.

As a good problem solver, Mr. Cohen was fair and weighed all sides. He consistently tried to make decisions in the best overall interests of the county and the community. Indeed, he was quite successful with this approach. For example, Mr. Cohen dealt with a fairly controversial situation. Collier County was conducting a study to re-plan its eastern area, which had a rural land stewardship. This somewhat contentious study became more contentious when it resurfaced after initially being shut down during the pandemic. Many conflicting interests arose between environmentalists, conservation groups, and redevelopment communities. Mr. Cohen came up with a long-range sustainable habitat while maintaining good redevelopment land. He also brought the general business community, field leaders, and interested community leaders to find as good a consensus as possible to present to the Board. The Board accepted the proposal, thus demonstrating Mr. Cohen's abilities in bringing people together to find common ground and make a satisfactory plan.

Mr. Ochs is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Cohen had been involved with some professionally controversial issues, such as the eastern land study. He also dealt with a few difficult personnel issues, though he handled these situations adequately. In addition, Mr. Cohen worked on a couple initiatives to bring a stormwater utility to the Board, which was not ready for this initial plan and chose to not implement the initiatives. However, Mr. Cohen's team handled the matter well. When Mr. Cohen worked with his team and the Finance Department to find a different way to find funding for the stormwater initiatives, they were able to leverage that funding into a large bond. Now, the County has one of the best stormwater maintenance programs in Florida.

Mr. Ochs would absolutely rehire Mr. Cohen if possible. Though a couple of individuals might disagree with Mr. Ochs's opinions, such differences may be due to possibly disliking Mr. Cohen on a personal level. Regardless, Mr. Cohen will do well in any environment. He is highly professional. As a leader, he is a strong communicator with excellent interpersonal skills. With these attributes, he is a strong candidate who will make a good municipal manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Personable,
- Task-oriented,
- Determined,
- Team-oriented,
- Advocates for his team,
- Smart, and
- Innovative.

**Reference Notes
Thaddeus Cohen**

Strengths: Articulate, speaking skills, writing skills, interpersonal skills, public speaking abilities, handling potentially hostile situations, interviewing experiences.

Weaknesses: The only possible criticism regarding Mr. Cohen might be that he did not manage his staff closely enough. However, Mr. Ochs never personally noticed any issues with Mr. Cohen's hands-off management style. Mr. Cohen strongly believed in delegating responsibilities while retaining authority and holding ultimate responsibility. He hired good people and delegated. He supported his staff and redirected them as necessary to ensure the organization approached a matter well.

Verdenia Baker – County Administrator, Palm Beach County, FL 561-355-6726

Ms. Baker has known Mr. Cohen since approximately 2000. He used to live in Palm Beach County and was an architect who had done some work for the County when Ms. Baker was Deputy County Administrator. Later, Mr. Cohen was hired as Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Eventually, he went to work with a Florida county when the elected leaders who had appointed him as Secretary ended their terms.

When Mr. Cohen designed buildings for Palm Beach County, the County was well pleased. He was responsive to their needs. After he began working with the DCA, Ms. Baker worked more closely with Mr. Cohen on a personal basis because she was over planning and zoning. Mr. Cohen was reasonable and worked with the County on issues to accomplish many of the County's goals.

Mr. Cohen kept Ms. Baker well informed via writing or phone calls to give her a heads up. As far as Ms. Baker knew, he had good experience dealing with the public. His one-on-one skills were great, and he performed similarly in the public view.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made thorough decisions and refrained from being rash. He was thoughtful and was customer service oriented with the County. He accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. Sometimes he made difficult decisions, but Ms. Baker was unfamiliar with any situation in which he indicated he was unable to handle stress. Additionally, he had good financial skills, which was critical in his job as an architect.

Mr. Cohen was a combination of an innovative change agent who maintained the organization at a high performance level. Certainly, he was creative as he designed creative facilities for the County. As necessary, he was definitely a change agent. For example, as DCA Secretary, he helped the organization as it changed many of its procedures and streamlined various processes.

Mr. Cohen had fairly good problem solving skills and listened to both sides of an issue. He was quite detailed and thorough. In fact, many faced difficulty arguing with the solutions he found because he tried to be fair. He had multiple instances of leading teams in solving problems, such as being the architect of his own firm and when leading the entire Florida DCA as Secretary.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Ms. Baker is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background that might concern a future employer. Due to his position with the DCA, he frequently encountered division. However, Ms. Baker cannot remember any controversial issues or major headlines involving Mr. Cohen. She would hire him if given an opportunity. He was dependable and reliable. As a conscientious hard worker, he observed issues from multiple angles and made sustainable recommendations. He possessed compassion, an important characteristic for any Municipal Manager. Mr. Cohen will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Meticulous,
- Dedicated,
- All around good person,
- Compassionate,
- Conscientious, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: Responsiveness, detail-orientation, a reasonable person who helped others achieve the overall vision they wanted to accomplish.

Weaknesses: Some people might consider Mr. Cohen to sometimes be too detailed. However, this quality was also one of his strengths. Depending on the position he filled, such detail-orientation might be a problem. However, in his roles working with Palm Beach County, Mr. Cohen did well finding missing details that could have caused delays.

Steve Sanderson – President and CEO, United Way of Collier and the Keys, FL 239-261-7112

Mr. Sanderson has worked with Mr. Cohen since approximately 2018. Mr. Cohen serves on the United Way Board and shares a collegial relationship with Mr. Sanderson. As such, Mr. Sanderson does not have supervisory experience over Mr. Cohen. However, the Board has encouraged and welcomed Mr. Cohen. They are quite happy to have him on the Board.

Mr. Cohen is punctual, prompt, and thoughtful. He speaks up when essential and refrains from speaking unnecessarily. He has kept Mr. Sanderson well informed of his area of responsibility. During the few projects they have worked on together, Mr. Cohen regularly provides updates and calls on feedback. He follows through and is someone Mr. Sanderson trusts to accomplish tasks.

As a thorough customer service oriented individual, Mr. Cohen has continuously interfaced with customers in several roles, such as in his position with Collier County government. Although Mr. Sanderson is somewhat unfamiliar with Mr. Cohen's financial skills, Mr. Cohen has experience

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

reviewing part of the United Way's financial documentation and information. Additionally, based on Mr. Cohen's government roles in overseeing several budgets, Mr. Sanderson assumes Mr. Cohen does well with finances.

Though Mr. Cohen is a change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level, he is primarily innovative. Rather than sticking with traditional models, he looks for new and better methods. He seeks for improvement and increased efficiency. For example, he helped advocate for some of the social changes the United Way wanted to create in the community. He met with different community leaders to help them better understand the work the United Way did and acted as a liaison between both parties. Indeed, he tried to be a connector across these different groups.

Mr. Sanderson has only seen Mr. Cohen with the public and rallying others, as opposed to seeing Mr. Cohen in his office. However, Mr. Cohen is unafraid to ask questions. He shares comments to help conversations and is proactive in bringing up topics to improve work tasks. Additionally, Mr. Cohen has good problem solving skills. He wants to solve actual problems instead of simply addressing a symptom. Rather than fixing issues on the surface to receive praise, he seeks substantive solutions that actually work for the long-term. Although his work with the United Way is quite stressful at time, Mr. Cohen is calm and rational. He can be passionate, but he does not exhibit negative reactions to stress. He is unafraid to accomplish goals.

Mr. Sanderson is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. Mr. Sanderson is unaware of any United Way positions fitting Mr. Cohen's qualifications, considering how Mr. Cohen's background is somewhat different from what the nonprofit organization specifically does. In fact, Mr. Cohen is overqualified for what the organization does. However, Mr. Sanderson would hire Mr. Cohen if the United Way had an appropriate role open. Most people on the Board would generally mirror Mr. Sanderson's comments regarding Mr. Cohen. United Way Board members have been pleased with his performance. He has been quite transparent, which they appreciate and value.

Mr. Cohen is a great guy for the right fit. His direct team members respect and support him. Mr. Sanderson has honestly had good experiences with Mr. Cohen. Indeed, Mr. Cohen is unafraid to tackle tough issues some people might find to be difficult to handle. He manages well and will make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Thoughtful,
- Thorough,
- A thinker,
- Punctual,
- Prompt, and
- Innovative.

**Reference Notes
Thaddeus Cohen**

Strengths: Thoroughness, thinking abilities, thoughtfulness.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Anita Jenkins – Planning and Zoning Director, Collier County, FL 239-825-9322
239-478-3701**

Ms. Jenkins worked with Mr. Cohen approximately between 2017 and 2021. As Collier County Planning and Zoning Director, she reported directly to Mr. Cohen, who was the Growth Management Department Head at the time. He later left when a new County Manager reorganized all of the departments.

Mr. Cohen was inspiring because of his mentorship. Prior to Mr. Cohen's employment with the County, engineers generally led the Department. Unfortunately, these engineers generally had little vision and gave the planning team little attention. However, Ms. Jenkins' entire team was thrilled to have Mr. Cohen because he connected with the planning team. For example, he was a great mentor in the public sector, an area in which Ms. Jenkins was less experienced. He also understood the team's perspective and helped them formulate a vision of the next 10 years for the County, which the team greatly appreciated. He was politically savvy. Additionally, Mr. Cohen was a great listener and manager. Rather than micromanaging, he led and supported his team. He pulled people aside to discuss how they might improve themselves, such as with project management skills. Ms. Jenkins appreciated the attention he gave the planning team.

Every time Ms. Jenkins approached Mr. Cohen with a problem, he addressed the issue promptly. He was available and open to the planning team. He also worked directly with planning managers. Indeed, Mr. Cohen constantly tried to improve personal connections with every person in his department, which was difficult with almost 1,200 staff. However, Mr. Cohen recognized the challenges between constantly solving problems and finding time to walk around to talk with Growth Management employees.

Mr. Cohen kept Ms. Jenkins well informed of his area of government through biweekly department meetings. During monthly meetings with individual directors, he determined each director's needs, matters he needed to be aware of, and any political issues he needed to know. He was quite informative and transparent. Ms. Jenkins found his willingness to actually share information to be refreshing because previous Growth Management Department heads were generally less willing. When sharing information, Mr. Cohen also stated how he was sharing that same information with his other directors. He sought to change some processes to have greater detail and increased accessibility in providing everyone with the same information.

Mr. Cohen was quite active in the community, such as being on the Board of the United Way and in many other engagements. Though the COVID-19 pandemic made meetings more difficult, he was instrumental in supporting the planning team during hybrid meetings. During the pandemic, if Mr. Cohen or the team were unable to go somewhere, they held remote meetings with county

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

commissioners, board examiners, and other groups. For example, the team was part of a large study, which shut down at the start of the pandemic. The study's consultant required hybrid meetings, and Mr. Cohen ensured the County had access. He supported the Department through this transition to hybrid meetings and made sure the County had access to the technology it had purchased. In fact, public participation improved because people had fewer obstacles to overcome in attending meetings, such as having to take off work or drive to the meeting. This remote access transition was a tremendous benefit for the County and allowed a greater extension of public connection.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made great decisions because he worked with his team and analyzed data before making decisions. He refrained from micromanaging. When making decisions involving Ms. Jenkins, he made sure to call her before making a final decision. Furthermore, Mr. Cohen was a collaborative leader who preferred a multidisciplinary team approach. If Ms. Jenkins discussed a problem, they listened as a team. Each individual had an opportunity to share input, and they all debated the solution before coming to consensus.

Mr. Cohen had good financial skills and was quite transparent. He wanted his directors to understand their budget and move forward. He mentored Ms. Jenkins in public sector finances and budgets to ensure she satisfactorily understood the process.

Mr. Cohen did well when hiring directors. He was customer service oriented. He also was an innovative change agent. As a visionary, he foresaw where the County was moving and what the Department might do to sustain the County, such as with affordable housing. Additionally, Mr. Cohen possessed great skills and experience in redevelopment. He recognized which areas needed attention in redevelopment and how the planning team might promote policy for green-field areas, instead of solely looking into residential development. He also looked at economic development. As opposed to simply maintaining the status quo, Mr. Cohen continuously challenged his team to think about how an issue might affect the County and help its growth. He identified what barriers the Department faced and how to change code to break those barriers.

When faced with stress, Mr. Cohen was calm and collected. If the planning team did not present at a meeting, Ms. Jenkins asked her staff to watch the hearing to observe how Mr. Cohen responded at board meetings. When a topic became contentious, he jumped in to provide further explanation to board members. Moreover, Mr. Cohen recognized when others needed a little extra coaching, such as with nervous younger planners. He took the time to help coach these individuals on the side. Mr. Cohen was a calming force during stressful situations.

Due the nature of his position, Mr. Cohen was involved with controversial matters regarding land-use planning. With Florida being a private property state, property rights were an especially argumentative topic. However, Mr. Cohen consistently followed the code and comprehensive plan. He followed the Board of County Commissioners as far as the state laws, policies, and code said. He recognized the planning staff as the official interpreters of that code, and he presented their recommendations. He encouraged staff to provide professional recommendations and move

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

on after commissioners made their final decisions. Throughout several exceptionally controversial issues, Mr. Cohen capably led commissioners and staff.

Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Cohen frequently used sports analogies to describe their relationship, such as him being her blocker to move obstacles out of the way so they might move projects to the end zone. Mr. Cohen was responsive and supportive. No responsibility was beneath him. He was inspiring and funny.

Ms. Jenkins is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. If possible, she would hire him. In fact, she would greatly consider working for him again if he were to call her. He is a great leader and a great team builder. He will absolutely make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Mentor,
- Informative,
- Politically savvy,
- Transparency,
- Visionary, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: Mentorship abilities, sharing information, promptly addressing problems, availability.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Chris Johnson – Growth Management Department Financial Operations and Support Manager, City of Key West, FL 239-252-5812 239-572-1393

Mr. Johnson began working with Mr. Cohen in 2018 when Mr. Johnson became the Collier County Manager of Financial Operations and Support for the Growth Management Department. Mr. Cohen later left the County in 2021 due to a management change. Because Mr. Cohen's position as Growth Management Department Head was close to the County Manager, the reorganization affected his position.

Mr. Cohen empowered his staff. Instead of micromanaging, he allowed employees to come up with ideas and plans to solve solutions. He fostered creativity in his team. Mr. Cohen was a good speaker and was well tempered. He capably and articulately conveyed messages. Because he empowered his staff and relayed their mission, he allowed his staff to achieve a common goal. He adeptly used others' strengths to address the needs of the organization.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Mr. Johnson had friendly, professional, and cordial interactions with Mr. Cohen. Communication between the two men was good over the phone and through emails. Mr. Cohen also physically stopped by the office to brainstorm and to let people know about a project's direction. When staff members had an issue, Mr. Cohen listened and helped his employees formulate a plan. Even though a team might not agree with the plan completely, these efforts were collaborative. Mr. Cohen strongly supported the importance of making team decisions. As a department head, he made the final decisions and did well on issues with which Mr. Johnson was involved.

Typically, Mr. Johnson worked with Mr. Cohen on internal issues and had little experience seeing Mr. Cohen out with the public. However, based on how well Mr. Cohen treated his staff, he most likely had good interactions with the public. He did well with groups or one-on-one.

Most of Mr. Cohen's work with Mr. Johnson was customer-oriented, especially regarding development services dealing with the public. Mr. Cohen was customer service oriented, as seen with his internal customers. For example, he had worked with Mr. Johnson on implementing a software program. Mr. Cohen even went out of his way to work with other departments to demonstrate how they might also utilize the program. Although he did not need to do so, he wanted others to see how this program might benefit different departments.

Depending on the situation, Mr. Cohen was a change agent who capably maintained the organization at a high performance level. If the organization functioned well, he upheld the status quo. However, if he discovered an opportunity to increase efficiency, he at least explored that option. Mr. Cohen was a leader who rallied his employees around the organization's vision.

As a problem solver, Mr. Cohen used his people appropriately. He recognized how he was not an expert in everything and instead trusted his team, who collectively were experts. During various projects of building roads, doing water samples at the beach, and handling airports, he relied on his staff's specialties to address issues and solve problems. For example, he saw an opportunity to improve the Department's financial aspects when he first arrived at the County. The Department managed its budgets solely with paper, and Mr. Cohen looked at which software to integrate with the Department's current System Applications and Products software program. He wanted to find a method of allowing others to see dashboard updates in real time. In another area, Mr. Cohen wanted to increase efficiency with asset management. Prior to Mr. Cohen's arrival, the asset management team had daily maintenance work assignments. However, Mr. Cohen helped the team integrate a schedule to help staff provide more proactive maintenance on the system, rather than delivering mostly reactive maintenance.

Mr. Johnson is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. Mr. Johnson would hire Mr. Cohen if given an opportunity. Mr. Cohen was a pleasure to work with because he trusted his staff and valued their opinions. Indeed, he clearly displayed how much he valued their opinions and trusted their work because he refrained from micromanagement. These attributes are great for someone in his leadership position. Mr. Cohen will make a good Municipal Manager.

Reference Notes
Thaddeus Cohen

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Friendly,
- Strong leader,
- Motivated,
- Knowledgeable,
- Willing to learn something new,
- Leadership skills,
- Punctual, and
- Ability to trust and work with a team.

Strengths: Attention to detail, punctuality, prioritization, a team player, management skills, leadership skills.

Weaknesses: Initially upon coming to Collier County, Mr. Cohen was new to the financial system. The County had a specific accounting structure, which forced new county employees to initially face a steep learning curve. However, Mr. Cohen overcame this weakness. Being astute, he learned quickly and was sharp as he went over which funds were restricted.

**Michael Dalby – President, Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, FL 239-403-2901
614-371-6265**

Mr. Dalby worked with Mr. Cohen between 2017 and 2021 when Mr. Cohen was the Collier County Growth Management Department Head. As president of the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Dalby lobbied for businesses and the community. He typically interacted with Mr. Cohen on policy issues and was otherwise unfamiliar with Mr. Cohen's daily operations. Additionally, Mr. Cohen participated in the Chamber's leadership program, which involved 10 full-day sessions where individuals learned more about the community and how to help the community be more engaged in decision-making. Mr. Cohen left his position after county leadership changes.

Mr. Dalby and Mr. Cohen shared professional interactions. Mr. Cohen thought innovatively. He diplomatically grappled with difficult challenges regarding planning, development, and growth as he creatively found solutions. Most people held negative opinions about community growth because such growth usually involved crowding people within an area or using practices that harmed the environment. However, Mr. Cohen demonstrated how these results were not inherently true. He showed how growth might positively impact a community and address problems if dealt with properly.

When working together, Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Dalby well informed of his area of responsibility via phone calls, personal meetings, and email. Because of the proximity of the Chamber and Mr.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Cohen's experience with the leadership program, Mr. Cohen comfortably communicated directly with the Chamber. He provided updates, sought feedback, and asked if the Chamber supported certain initiatives.

Mr. Cohen appeared to have good experience working with the public, both with individuals and in groups. Mr. Dalby infrequently saw Mr. Cohen out in the community amongst its many meetings and gatherings. However, Mr. Cohen was certainly present whenever the community needed him for growth management. For example, he dealt with an issue on a storm water maintenance fee. Mr. Cohen both developed an approach to the issue and dealt with the public during this especially contentious issue. He constantly worked with the Chamber and the public to help everyone understand the concepts behind the issue. He presented the facts. Eventually, his plan was overwhelmingly voted down, and the advisory board Mr. Dalby sat on was asked to look at the issue. However, the board came up with essentially the same conclusion as Mr. Cohen and his team. Though decision makers chose to not support Mr. Cohen's plan, Mr. Cohen accepted their decision and moved forward.

Mr. Cohen was customer service oriented. He tried to be innovative, although such innovation was difficult in his position where he deferred to the larger decision-making body. He presented ideas to that body, but policy makers were sometimes unreceptive. Mr. Cohen was calm under stress. He had a sense of humor under pressure, usually seeing the irony of a situation and being able to laugh at the challenges he faced.

Mr. Dalby is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Dalby would hire Mr. Cohen if possible because Mr. Cohen is a bright, insightful person whose knowledge and experience can improve Mr. Dalby's organization. Mr. Cohen has a strong presence due to his height and great voice. Because he is well spoken and communicates clearly, he conveys how he is a leader in his organization. He seeks the best interests of the community. He will make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Smart,
- Calm,
- Clear communicator,
- Strong presence, and
- Serves the best interests of the community.

Strengths: Good communication skills, calm in the face of challenges, knowledgeable in his field.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Reference Notes
Thaddeus Cohen**

Eddie Todd – Architect, Pensacola, FL 850-434-0325

Mr. Todd first met Mr. Cohen approximately in 2006 when Mr. Cohen was serving as Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Director for the City of Pensacola. Although they worked professionally together until 2011, they have since kept in touch.

Mr. Cohen is a good person who is a true pleasure to work with. He is professional and quite courteous with everyone. Possessing good ideas, he does well with presentations and organization.

Overall, Mr. Cohen had a fantastic work performance. With his creativity, he analyzed problems and produces satisfactory solutions. During city projects, he took multiple facets into consideration, such as dealing with the needs of each particular project, financial aspects, and community impacts.

When working together, Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Todd well informed. For example, Mr. Cohen tested and balanced numerous projects he developed for the City as CRA Director. He invited Mr. Todd and other professionals to come by and do preliminary work. If these professionals recommended adjustments, Mr. Cohen took their suggestions with great consideration. Mr. Todd and Mr. Cohen also worked closely on a water development for the City. During this project, Mr. Todd was chairman of the board for that development team. Mr. Cohen's CRA team was responsible for the 30-acre property and financial aspects of the project.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made excellent decisions because he analyzed several perspectives of whatever situation or problem occurring. He worked well alongside his staff, who enjoyed working and being on his team. Mr. Todd worked with Mr. Cohen's staff, who praised Mr. Cohen without complaints. Mr. Cohen's staff were sharp and astute.

Mr. Cohen was most definitely customer service oriented. He recognized the needs of the community, the neighborhood, and any agencies with which he was involved. He was particularly conscientious of these groups' needs.

As a leader, Mr. Cohen rallied whatever resources he needed, whether people, supplies, or equipment. He handled stressful situations quite well. Whereas some employees let stressful coworker interactions or home circumstances negatively impact their professional life, Mr. Cohen effectively handled each situation he encountered. For example, he dealt with the public during the water development project. This project involved much controversy due to split public support. However, Mr. Cohen dealt well with the public on this 30-acre development as he handled each situation properly and in order. Even several years after the project's completion, the development is still a success, and people love the development.

Mr. Todd is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Cohen left the City due to incoming administration board leadership. Typically when a new governor or mayor came into office, many staff changes occur as new

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

leadership bring in personnel. Mr. Cohen's departure was a loss for the City because the prior administration had performed well. He set many projects into motion before leaving, which the incoming administration picked up and followed through. Although the projects were successful, Mr. Cohen must be credited with putting everything into place.

If possible, Mr. Todd would hire Mr. Cohen. They accomplished quite a bit together during the water development project. The project was quite successful, pleased the public overall, and won the City many awards. Mr. Cohen truly is a good professional. He will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Seasoned professional,
- Competent,
- Personable,
- Excellent team player,
- Excellent leader, and
- Good person.

Strengths: Creativity.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Enid Torregrosa - Historic Preservation, Senior Planner, City of Key West, FL 305-809-3973

Ms. Torregrosa worked with Mr. Cohen from 2015 to 2017. He did a fantastic job as Planning Director. In fact, in the several years Ms. Torregrosa has worked for the City of Key West, she has reported to five different Planning Directors. Mr. Cohen has been by far the best.

While Mr. Cohen was strict with his staff, he was also flexible. He willingly listened to them and their ideas. He allowed those who were capable of performing their tasks with little supervision to do so, but he required progress reports frequently. When he first came to the City, he came off as shy and quiet. It took a little time for people to get to know him. Once they did, they found that he was outgoing and a great person to talk to. He hired at least two individuals for the department, both of which have done a terrific job for the organization.

Working in historic preservation, Ms. Torregrosa has had a difficult time connecting with other planners and even directors. However, Mr. Cohen's background in architecture meant that he understood the topic and was able to communicate with her intelligently about specific projects. His leadership was refreshing because she knew that her boss understood what she was doing and could offer positive insight.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Mr. Cohen was very much involved in what happened in his department. He was a manager but more so a leader. He did not just give direction and then hide in his office to complete his own tasks. Rather, he walked around and was involved.

Through Mr. Cohen's past position with the State Department of Community Affairs, he accumulated a great deal of experience working with other agencies. The need to work with outside agencies did not arise during his time with Key West. He did work well with land developers and even provided workshops for them to get to know their goals and explain the City's goals.

Key West is an extremely laid back community. Employees come to work in sandals and business casual. On Mr. Cohen's first day he showed up in a full suit and continued to dress more professionally than the majority of the staff. He had a difficult time assimilating to the culture. Additionally, he struggled with the culture of friends asking friends for favors. If a developer wanted something to happen, he/she went to their friend on the planning commission or council to help push it forward. These actions resulted in some illegal work being done. Although Mr. Cohen was unable to completely stop the favors game, he did put an end to everything that was not in accordance with the policies and procedures of the organization.

Mr. Cohen has the ability and skill level to oversee a large and complex department. He knows every function that is associated with growth management and planning. He will make a phenomenal Municipal Manager, and Ms. Torregrosa recommends him for a position like that. He is well qualified, and Ms. Torregrosa's experience with him was just amazing. He might start shy, but once he starts he does a great job.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Initially shy,
- High integrity,
- Accessible,
- Become outgoing,
- Laid back, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Vision, promoted professionalism, listens to staff and available to staff.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Maren DeWeese – Former Councilmember, City of Pensacola, FL 850-316-7671

Ms. DeWeese worked with Mr. Cohen from 2009 to 2011. Mr. Cohen is a brilliant man. He visualized how all aspects of the City worked together and how they affected each other. Mr.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Cohen first became acquainted with the City of Pensacola when he was the State Secretary of Community Affairs and collaborated on hurricane disaster relief efforts. When the City hired him, he was already familiar with many of the issues and jumped right in. He is a fantastic public speaker. Capturing an audience's attention came easy to him.

Pensacola is a historic city, so zoning and land use issues are complex and difficult to grasp. Because Mr. Cohen understood this mindset, he set up an open house every Wednesday night for developers or homeowners who wanted to start a project. They sat down with all of the appropriate department heads and laid out their plans to receive input on what they needed in order to proceed. They left with the knowledge of whether their idea was plausible and what changes they needed make.

Mr. Cohen was instrumental in turning the downtown around. He developed a plan, convinced the Council to approve it, and moved forward. The City now has outdoor family movies on the weekend, a restaurant district, and great retail shops. The downtown has been transformed and enlivened due to his efforts. Additionally, Mr. Cohen was helpful in completing the largest Community Redevelopment Agency project in the City's history. He worked closely with the City Manager and Council to construct the Maritime Park, which consisted of a minor league baseball stadium, private mixed-use development, and an amphitheater. The total price for this project was over \$50 million. Mr. Cohen's background in architecture was especially useful, and he thought of superior ways to design the complex that had not been identified before. His leadership in this project was an accomplishment for Pensacola and for all the residents in the region.

Mr. Cohen shared his vision for the future and rallied employees to achieve that vision. He explains his vision in a way that it became real to those listening. Because of his architectural background, one might almost have photographic conversations with him. Pensacola was transformed through his wisdom and leadership.

While he was in Pensacola, the City went to an emergency finance mode because the Finance Department had miscalculated parts of the budget by millions of dollars. Mr. Cohen was irreplaceable as he helped put in place a 30-month budget to alleviate these damaging effects. His knowledge in finance was surprisingly good. He knew all the functions of the process, and along with the City Manager, guided the Council through the process.

The only reason Mr. Cohen is no longer with the city is because of restructuring. If she could, Ms. DeWeese would hire him back. Mr. Cohen will make an incredibly good Municipal Manager and will be perfect for the job.

**Reference Notes
Thaddeus Cohen**

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Firm,
- Listens to ideas,
- Community oriented,
- Confident, and
- Can be intimidating.

Strengths: Multifaceted, problem solver, consensus builder and sees the big picture.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Sherry Morris – Planning Services Administrator, City of Pensacola, FL 850-436-5655
850-435-1670**

Ms. Morris worked with Mr. Cohen from 2008 to 2011. He did an excellent job in the City of Pensacola as he brought bold initiatives and spearheaded the downtown revitalization.

Mr. Cohen believed in following the rules. He was open about everything he does, so he was unable to be dragged into any controversy. He was team oriented and did not pay strict attention to the hierarchy of the departments. For example, if he knew that Ms. Morris had a problem that someone in the Parks Department might address, no matter what their title was, he invited them to be a part of the discussion. Previous to Mr. Cohen's leadership, the departments were closed off from one another. However, he opened the departments up to one another as he encouraged people to talk and become involved with each other's projects.

Public speaking was a definite strength of Mr. Cohen's. He capably took an audience with differing opinions, put together a good argument for his side, and in the end found a compromise that fits everyone's needs. He kept Ms. Morris and others well informed because he was in constant contact with them without micromanagement. One of the most amazing things Mr. Cohen did for Pensacola was help them realize that even though they are not a big city, they still were capable of doing things that big cities did. For instance, he created the City's signature New Year's Eve Pelican Drop event, which has continued to grow in popularity every year.

When Mr. Cohen started, the City was in the midst of a land development code amendment process that had become very heated. Mr. Cohen was instrumental in interjecting rational conversation and mediating between the City and developers. Without his help, the debate might possibly still be raging today. Furthermore, he helped the City overcome its fear of changing traffic patterns. The downtown was made up of one-way streets that were confusing for tourists and difficult for pedestrians to navigate. Merchants were afraid for how deliveries might be made, among other concerns. Mr. Cohen explained all the benefits for changes and convinced the Council to take a chance. The streets are now two-way with improved pedestrian crossings,

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

and businesses have seen a difference in their visibility to passersby. He knew this project would improve the City, and he did an incredible job of bringing people together to making this project work.

Mr. Cohen is on par with any top-level administrator. He is skilled in letting elected officials see his point of view and expressing his opinion. Even if they end up disagreeing with him, they respect him for his courage to stand up for what he thinks is the best strategy. Mr. Cohen will make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Energetic,
- Passionate,
- Open,
- Friendly,
- Direct,
- Honest,
- Calm, and
- Knowledge of wide range of subjects.

Strengths: Sees the big picture, thinks outside the box for fresh new ideas, and takes what people think they cannot do and makes it happen.

Weaknesses: Moves quickly and does not always size up the political barriers.

Completed by: Danielle Dayton and Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Marco Eagle
March 22, 2021

Collier County files \$1.2M lawsuit over delayed completion of Marco Island airport terminal

Author: Omar Rodríguez Ortiz

Collier County has sued a contractor over the delayed completion of the Marco Island Executive Airport terminal building that opened earlier this month. The lawsuit filed March 17 in Collier Circuit Court against West Construction and its insurance company Philadelphia Indemnity demands \$1.2 million plus other costs and fees. "Despite being responsible for planning, organization, supervision, management, control and coordination of work performed on the project, West continually failed to satisfy these responsibilities in breach of the agreement," the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit alleges other contract violations like failing to protect internet and sanitary utilities during construction, failing to maintain permits necessary for the work, and "attempting to manipulate the schedule and the project's critical path to obtain additional time to achieve substantial completion and, in turn, limit exposure to liquidated damages." The lawsuit alleges that West Construction and Philadelphia Indemnity have failed to pay liquidated damages allegedly owed to the county. "Collier County does not comment on pending litigation," wrote county community liaison Connie Deane in an email Monday. West Construction and Philadelphia Indemnity did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday about the lawsuit.

Collier, contractor keep tight lid

The Florida-based contractor West Construction received a notice to proceed with the construction of the terminal on April 30, 2018, and was required to achieve substantial completion in 320 calendar days, according to the lawsuit. Substantial completion is the date when construction is sufficiently complete so the county can utilize the building for its intended use. The lawsuit states West Construction achieved substantial completion on Jan. 22 of this year.

Thaddeus Cohen, who oversees the airport as growth management department head with Collier County, said prior to the lawsuit being filed that the county had difficulties in finishing the project on time, but he declined to go into detail about the reasons for the delay. "Clearly this has taken longer than what the contract documents have for completion," **Cohen** said March 2. The contract with West Construction states the county will suffer a financial loss if the contractor fails to complete the project on time, and that the county is entitled to assess \$3,645 in liquidated damages for each calendar day until substantial completion is achieved.

Cohen also declined to go into detail about the contractor's performance and said his focus was to finish the project. "I'm not in a position to discuss either our position as to the contractor's performance. That will be adjudicated on a later date," **Cohen** said. **Cohen** said the county

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

provided communications to West Construction "to have the contractor understand the importance of being able to move this project forward."

Matthew West, vice president of West Construction, declined an interview request last week. "We are currently in discussions with the county and at this time have no other comment," West wrote in an email March 19. **Cohen** said the county will do a self-assessment, which will include the evaluation of the performance of county employees, to prevent long delays in other county projects. He said he is hopeful that the company in charge of improving the airport's apron, Quality Enterprises USA, will finish in April before a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "We are focusing on trying to meet a completion date so that we can have a ribbon cutting in mid April. The issues as to how we got to where we are, it will be something that we will point to in the future," **Cohen** said.

Marco Island airport expands

The new \$9.5 million terminal opened its doors to the public on March 8 after almost two years of delays. The two-story, 16,000-square-foot terminal was built to make the airport compliant with Federal Aviation Administration safety regulations, said Andrew Bennett, interim executive airport manager with Collier County. "The primary objective of the project is pertaining to safety to allow more room for aircraft to maneuver in and out, while also addressing capacity needs to accommodate a greater number of aircraft during the peak season months," Bennett said.

A second phase costing an additional \$3.7 million is underway to improve the airport's apron where aircraft are parked. The old 4,500-square-foot terminal built in the 1970s was demolished earlier this month to make room for the new apron space. Bennett said the terminal includes features such as pilot and passenger lounges, flight planning stations, rental car concessions, airport administrative offices and office space for flight schools and other companies. The first phase also included construction of new parking spaces, landscaping, lighting and stormwater retention features.

The lobby of the new terminal at the Marco Island Executive Airport, photographed on Monday, March 1, 2021. County Commissioner Rick LoCastro, who represents Marco and surrounding communities, said the upgrades increase the airport's capability and safety. "I'm not happy with the late delivery of the final product, but I'm glad once we pulled the team together and provided tighter oversight we were able to ensure the job was finished," LoCastro said last Friday.

Tenants settle in at new terminal

Alan Davis, president of Career Flight Training and Aircraft Rental, said his flight school students now have a bigger and quieter space to study. "It was always so noisy in the old office because the airplanes would park right outside our office. You had to put ear protection on and off sometimes," Davis said. Davis also said the improvements will make the airport safer. "It makes it a safer environment because the building is further away from the runway," Davis said.

Jim Fogarty, owner of the flight school Fogarty Flying, said the construction of the terminal took longer than expected but that he likes the final product. He said he now has double the space

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

office he had in the old terminal. "It took a long time but as you can see it is a beautiful terminal," Fogarty said. Fogarty said the expansion will increase his school's business and improve aircraft traffic flow at the airport. Davis said he has never had so many flight students outside summer, when high school students are out of school. He attributes the business to the airport expansion and COVID-19. He said many adults are taking flight classes to buy and fly their own planes instead of flying in commercial flights. "It seems like things are picking up," Davis said.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News
February 21, 2021

Development - Collier planning board delays vote on concept for new town
Author: Laura Layden

The Collier County Planning Commission has put off hearing about a new town proposed east of Golden Gate Estates. The commission voted Thursday to kick an information-only presentation planned by the county's head of growth management down the road after the concept stirred up controversy. The unanimous vote came after about an hour of debate by planning commissioners on how to handle the presentation, in part due to "last-minute" information they received from the League of Women Voters of Collier County and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which both vehemently oppose the town proposal by Collier Enterprises. The town would link the developer's three new rural villages.

The opponents have raised concerns about everything from how the town would impact traffic to how much money it would cost taxpayers. Commission chairman Edwin Fryer led off the discussions, saying he wanted the advisory board to have a formal hearing and vote on the town agreement, not just to merely hear a presentation on what county planners and the developer ironed out behind closed doors. Collier county commissioners are scheduled to vote on what's been dubbed a framework agreement for the town in April.

Fryer argued the planning commission and the public should weigh in on the "deal points" in the agreement – and that the agreement between the county and the developer is "quintessentially a planning matter" for the advisory board to formally take up. He said he felt as though the planning commission had been circumvented in the negotiation process. "It is our responsibility to hear this," he said. "Today is premature."

Other commissioners had their own ideas about how the issue should be handled. **Thaddeus Cohen**, who oversees the county's growth management department, explained that there isn't a requirement for the planning commission to vote on the town agreement, and that it can go directly to county commissioners without its input, as part of the normal approval process. With the presentation, **Cohen** said he was just trying to keep the commission informed about the negotiations.

The agreement that has been negotiated will benefit all of the county's residents, he said. He also noted that after a formal application and plan for the town is submitted to the county for review, it would go to the planning commission for a public airing and recommendation before a final decision by county commissioners.

Naples land use attorney Rich Yovanovich, who represents Collier Enterprises, objected to the planning commission's discussions about some of the points in and objections to the town agreement, arguing that it was not officially on the table for a public hearing. He urged the

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commission to move forward with its hearings as planned for two of the three villages that would be melded together with the town.

The county has already green-lighted one of those villages, known as Rivergrass. The commission agreed to follow the order of its agenda – and not to discuss the town agreement any further before separately hearing and voting on the remaining petitions by Collier Enterprises. Yovanovich criticized the Conservancy and League of Women Voters for submitting their point-by-point letters of objection at the last minute, when they knew they were required to share the information with staff seven days in advance of the planning commission's meeting. He said it wasn't given to him, leaving him in the dark and forcing him to make a public records request to get it.

In a statement, Rob Moher, the conservancy's president and CEO, said its comments and concerns about the developer's town concept and two other villages – Longwater and Bellmar – were "timely submitted." "Moreover, the conservancy's analysis shows that Longwater and Bellmar will cost taxpayers millions of dollars and will severely exacerbate traffic congestion in Collier County," he said.

In their letters to planning commissioners, both the league and the conservancy accused Collier Enterprises of using the prospect of a town to gain favor on the two villages. "Don't be swayed," they urged. While planning commissioners intended to take up Longwater at Thursday's meeting, they ended up not hearing it, moving it to their next meeting after Yovanovich said he'd rather they do that than proceed because of the late hour.

The debate about the town proposal – and the subsequent hearing on an unrelated village proposal – took hours. Knowing that the Longwater presentation, discussions and debate would take hours longer, Yovanovich suggested that it be taken up March 4. The developer's other petition, for Bellmar, is also scheduled to be heard on that date – and now possibly the town agreement.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News
December 7, 2020

Rivergrass lawsuit filing, internal county memo raise conflict of interest questions
Author: Patrick Riley

A lawsuit against Collier County over a controversial 1,000-acre village proposed east of Golden Gate Estates has taken another turn following allegations of conflict of interest involving a county official. The Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which sued the county in March after county commissioners approved plans for Rivergrass Village, on Monday filed a motion to exclude testimony from the county's planning and zoning director in the case because her son receives a college scholarship with ties to landowner Collier Enterprises, which is looking to develop the property, according to the motion. "This is an obvious conflict of interest," lawyers for the Conservancy wrote in the motion.

A June memo from County Attorney Jeff Klatzkow addresses the same questions about the scholarship but found only the appearance of a conflict of interest that Klatzkow advised represents a "very fine line." The environmental group's lawsuit contends that the planned village, which would sit in the county's 185,000-acre Rural Lands Stewardship Area, does not follow the county's growth management plan. The RLSA provides for a voluntary program that allows developers to build towns and villages in areas with lower conservation value in exchange for preserving more environmentally sensitive land.

Collier County commissioners to consider final approval of changes to rural growth plan
In its motion to exclude testimony from Anita Jenkins, the county's current planning and zoning director, the Conservancy references Klatzkow's memo from June 12 titled "Ethics inquiry." The three-page memo details the following: Jenkins, then a community planning manager, contacted the county attorney's office via email on June 3, seeking guidance "on a potential conflict of interest." "My son receives a substantial college scholarship each semester from the Collier Family Office, Inc., established by Miles Collier," Jenkins wrote. "Mr. Collier is also affiliated with Collier Enterprises."

Jenkins wrote that our "ethics direct us to avoid projects where we have an associated financial interest with the applicant, therefore I am not directly involved in commenting on individual Collier Enterprises projects." She added that she occasionally sees emails on their projects where she's copied "as part of the supervisory chain of command." Jenkins wrote that Collier Enterprises is "a property owner involved in larger planning efforts that affect multiple property owners," such as the RLSA. She wrote that her review of the county's planning ethics policies finds working on projects that affect multiple property owners equally would not constitute a conflict. "Please advise," Jenkins wrote.

According to the memo, Jenkins' adult son is a student at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg with an academic scholarship. "The scholarship does not include the additional costs of room and board, so Ms. Jenkins' son applied to Mr. Collier for an additional scholarship which he was

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

awarded," the memo states. It is not clear from the memo the value of the scholarship, how Jenkins' son qualified or how many are given out each year. Efforts to reach Jenkins were unsuccessful as of late Monday afternoon. A Collier Enterprises spokeswoman said in an emailed statement to the Daily News Monday that there is "no connection whatsoever between the scholarship initiated two years ago by the Collier Family Office and the businesses of Collier Enterprises."

"We understand that Mr. Miles C. Collier has made a number of educational gifts to deserving students over the years," the statement from Collier Enterprises continues. "These are private initiatives of Mr. Collier and are unrelated to Collier Enterprises. We also understand that Ms. Jenkins proactively and transparently sought advice from the county attorney regarding Mr. Collier's contribution to Eckerd College, as her adult son was an ultimate beneficiary. We understand that she received an opinion that there was no conflict of interest and no breach of the ethical code."

The county attorney's memo notes that the inquiry "raises potential issues with respect to both the State Ethics Code and the Collier County Ethics Ordinance." However, as far as the state ethics code is concerned, the executive director of the Florida Commission on Ethics advised that there is no state ethics issue, the memo states. State law regarding unauthorized compensation "specifically applies to an employee of a local government, like Ms. Jenkins, however the restriction does not include her adult child," according to the memo. "In addition, there is no indication that the scholarship was provided to Ms. Jenkins' son in an attempt to influence a vote or other action by Ms. Jenkins," the memo states, noting that Jenkins has never met Collier.

"The Executive Director of the Florida Commission on Ethics advised that given these circumstances, there is no legal conflict, though arguably there might be the appearance of a conflict," Klatzkow and his assistant county attorney wrote. "Ms. Jenkins is aware to not provide any special consideration to Collier Enterprises as a result of her adult son's scholarship." Jenkins should continue to work with others when possible so that the recommendation is a department one rather than the recommendation of one person, the memo states.

The county's own ethics ordinance is more stringent than the state's code. The county attorney's office found that as long as Jenkins continues to work as a community planning manager, "there is no violation" of the county's ethics ordinance, "although one could argue that there may be the appearance of impropriety." But the memo further notes that during conversations between Klatzkow and **Thaddeus Cohen**, who heads the county's growth management department, "we were notified that Ms. Jenkins is being considered for a promotion to Interim Director of Planning." That could change things, the memo notes, because Jenkins would then be considered a public official.

And per the county's ethics ordinance, a public official shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of monetary value from someone who the public official knows is seeking zoning, permitting or inspection approval from the county department or board with which the official is affiliated. Although Jenkins herself is not accepting anything of value from Collier,

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Klatzkow wrote that he "views this as a very fine line," especially considering the "broad prohibitions" intended by the county's ordinance. He urged Jenkins and **Cohen**, even though there is no legal conflict of interest, to review the matter with County Manager Leo Ochs "in an abundance of caution" before Jenkins accepts the position of interim director of planning and zoning.

By June 20, Jenkins was made interim planning and zoning division director and by Nov. 14 she was made the permanent director. Voicemails left for Ochs were not immediately returned Monday. Klatzkow declined to comment Monday beyond what his memo says. "The opinion stands for what it stands for and we'll leave it at that," he said. In addition to asking for Jenkins' testimony in the court case to be excluded, the Conservancy's motion requests a "brief 60-day reopening of fact discovery limited to allowing the Conservancy to conduct any other discovery necessary to understand whether there are additional financial payments made from Miles Collier to County officials (or their families), or other conflicts of interest related to Rivergrass Village."

The motion also requests to allow the county to name a "new corporate designee" to cover the topics previously covered by Jenkins. "The citizens of Collier County deserve to have confidence that County employees are making objective, disinterested judgments about proposed development in this County, free from conflicts of interest and free from appearances of impropriety," Conservancy President and CEO Rob Moher said in an emailed statement, echoing the motion. "Unfortunately, in the case of Rivergrass Village, this is not the case, and thus, the Conservancy had no choice but to file today's motion."

The memo at the heart of the motion has also drawn concern from at least one county commissioner. Commissioner Penny Taylor said in a phone interview late last week that she intends to discuss the matter at Tuesday's commission meeting. "The appearance of a conflict is terrible," she said. "And we can't let this stay." The planning and zoning director touches everything and makes final decisions oftentimes on zoning issues that may not be as clear as they should be, Taylor said. She said she didn't know how a planning and zoning director could recuse herself from major projects. Taylor said Jenkins' promotion should not have happened. "I think that the county manager has to reconsider his decision in the light of our own Collier County ethics ordinance," she said.

Taylor said one can't separate Miles Collier from Collier Enterprises. "You can't," she said. Collier Enterprises, in an amendment to its original statement to respond to Taylor's comment, said that Collier's private initiatives were "made without the company's prior knowledge." "Mr. Collier has not been involved with the day-to-day management of Collier Enterprises for a very long time, having retired as its CEO in 1993 and then from its board of directors in 2011," the revised statement continued. The county's ethics ordinance was written in the wake of the Stadium Naples scandal that rocked the commission two decades ago and is a "strong" ordinance, Taylor said. "But it's there so the public has confidence" in how we run our business, she said.

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Naples Daily News

October 22, 2019

Commissioners approve growth plan changes for eastern Collier County

Author: Karl Schneider

Collier County Commissioners approved proposed changes Tuesday to a plan that outlines growth and development in the eastern part of the county. “From here, the benchmark only improves,” said **Thaddeus Cohen**, head of the county’s growth and management department. The amendments were moved forward with a land development plan and a water policy. All three will ultimately be sent to the state for approval before coming back to the commissioners for a final vote.

The Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Program, or RLSA, is an incentive-based way to develop lands in eastern Collier County while protecting wildlife corridors and habitat and maintaining natural flow ways for water. The RLSA was created after the state issued a final order in 1999 that found the county was not doing enough to protect the environment. Commissioners adopted the RLSA in 2002 in response to the state’s order and planned a five-year review. When the five years were up, and amendments were suggested, disagreements arose over funding and the RLSA restudy was shelved until now. It’s become a controversial point for some conservation groups in the area. The changes commissioners approved Tuesday didn’t sit well with representatives of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. The RLSA program offers developers a credit system. Credits for preserved land are then able to be used to develop other land within the RLSA’s boundary. Nicole Johnson, the Conservancy’s director of environmental policy, asked the commissioners not to pass the amendments and called the credit system the real issue. “The credits were rarely talked about,” Johnson said. “It’s such a complex crediting system and the math is critical.”

Part of the problem, groups opposed to the amendments say, is old data used to determine where primary panther habitat was located. Land is rated differently depending on the location of endangered species or water flow ways. The credit system is based on this rating and old data may not fairly represent where wildlife is located. **Cohen** said the approval of the amendments is a step in the right direction. “We’re trying to move forward,” **Cohen** said. “We can only encourage and do those kinds of things if we move forward.” A representative of a consortium of landowners in the RLSA had urged the commissioners to move forward with the amendments. Neale Montgomery said she represented the Eastern Collier Property Owners and said the county cannot take away landowner rights. “Adopt this five-year review and reevaluate that and come back with any changes,” she said. Brad Cornell, a policy advocate with Audubon of Western Everglades, was a member of the five-year review committee. “If we cannot figure out how to protect land and make large private landowners part of the conversation, we will fail to protect species in wide-ranging habitats,” Cornell said. “We will fail to solve water quality and quantity problems.” Commissioner Andy Solis called the RLSA incredibly successful. “(The RLSA) preserved 55,000 acres at zero cost to the tax payer,” he said. “This is a successful program by any stretch of the imagination.”

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News
November 14, 2018

Tax fatigue? Collier to continue studying stormwater fee

Author: Patrick Riley

Despite concerns from one commissioner about tax fatigue, commissioners on Tuesday gave county staff the green light to continue revising a potential stormwater fee and come back with additional alternatives. Commissioners voted 4-1 to allow staff to tinker with a stormwater fee that made waves among residents earlier this year. Commissioner Burt Saunders cast the lone dissenting vote. After residents flooded commissioners with complaints about the proposed fee during a September budget hearing, commissioners decided to put it off for a year.

Tuesday's move preserves the county's ability to meet deadlines for legal advertising should commissioners ultimately decide to want to move forward with a revised fee, said **Thaddeus Cohen**, who heads the county's growth management department. Moving ahead with the advertising does not obligate the commission to proceed with the fee. "We now have that opportunity to go back out and talk to the community about what we think we can be able to do," he said.

Collier County owns and operates an extensive stormwater management system that is designed to control flooding, protect personal property, manage water quality and keep up with regulations. The county had proposed the fee to provide what supporters said would be an equitable and dedicated funding source to maintain the aging stormwater system. Commissioner Bill McDaniel, a longtime opponent of the fee, suggested Tuesday that county staff work with the county's Productivity Committee to come up with alternatives to fund Collier's stormwater needs and come back before the board. "I don't want to foreclose an idea that might be out there that we haven't yet explored," he said.

But some commissioners questioned what, if any, alternatives could be found. "We're asking the Productivity Committee to do something that I'm not so sure is possible," Saunders said. Saunders said he was in favor of ditching the fee altogether, saying it was too complex, and pointing to voters' approval Nov. 6 of a 1 percent sales tax increase he said could free up money for the county by covering other unmet needs. "I think our citizens are starting to get a little fatigued with tax increases," he said. "And this is just another tax increase."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News
June 30, 2018

Commentary: Why not use road impact fees, gas taxes instead of extra sales tax?
Author: **Thaddeus Cohen**

Question: With a local-option sales tax proposed for the November ballot, the Naples Daily News editorial board asked Collier County staff which road and intersection projects would be pursued and why road impact fees and gas taxes won't cover the cost of these. Below is the answer provided by **Thaddeus Cohen**, department head for Collier County Growth Management.

Answer: The road and intersection projects on the list for the 1-cent sales tax are a mix of operational and capacity improvements. These improvements are those that enhance the flow of traffic along a roadway or at an intersection leading to reduced traffic congestion and a more efficient road network.

These improvements would allow the transportation network to handle more vehicles. Adding lanes to existing roadways and new roadways would help alleviate the demand on existing roadways. The road and intersection projects that would be constructed include:

Vanderbilt Beach Road extension (Collier Boulevard to 16th Street Northeast)
Pine Ridge and Livingston roads intersection
Randall Boulevard and Immokalee Road intersection
Airport-Pulling Road widening (Vanderbilt Beach Road to Immokalee Road)
Triangle Boulevard

Impact fees may only be used to fund capacity improvements necessitated by growth; for example, added lanes, new roads, etc. Several projects on the list are not eligible to receive funding from impact fees. Backlogged projects, operational improvements or stand-alone bike lanes or sidewalk projects cannot utilize impact fees. In 2007, impact fees collected for roads were approximately \$70 million. Following the recession, these impact fees have averaged just under \$12 million annually, a reduction of approximately 75 percent, resulting in project deferrals and an increased backlog of projects.

Current impact fee collections aren't keeping pace with the need and don't cover the cost of these roadway projects, which have an approximate total shortfall of \$114 million. It would take 9.5 years to cover this shortfall with impact fee collections, assuming no new projects. Gas taxes are a flat per-gallon cost that haven't been indexed for inflation and don't fluctuate with prices. For years, car manufacturers have been mandated to develop more fuel-efficient vehicles. These vehicles produce the same wear and tear on the roadways as less fuel-efficient vehicles, but with the fuel-efficiency generate less revenue from gas taxes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

In Collier County, more than half of the gas tax is utilized to pay off debt from the major transportation network construction from the 2000s. The remaining revenue doesn't cover the cost of ongoing operations and maintenance, nor the backlog of projects that were deferred during the Great Recession. The revenue generated from the 1-cent sales tax would allow the county to construct the needed infrastructure sooner. It takes approximately seven years to have roadway improvements open to the public. In the current environment, roadway demand exists before the funding can be collected and the needed infrastructure can be built. The sales tax would allow the advancement of projects that are needed now or the immediate future, rather than waiting to accumulate funds or issue debt.

Cohen is the department head for Collier County Growth Management. Throughout the summer, the Daily News editorial board is posing questions to government and civic leaders about the sales tax referendums on the ballot in November in Collier and Lee counties.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News

July 4, 2017

Collier County hires former Bush appointee to lead growth management

Author: Greg Stanley

Collier County Manager Leo Ochs has hired **Thaddeus Cohen**, former secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, to fill one of the county's top jobs. **Cohen** will lead the Growth Management Department, which runs much of the daily operations of the county, including construction, road maintenance, engineering, zoning and urban planning. **Cohen** will be paid a base salary of \$145,000 a year to oversee the department's \$119 million budget and almost 500 employees. He will be responsible for implementing the county's growth plans. Many of those plans are being revised for the first time in more than a decade as the population continues to surge, especially in the east.

Cohen led the Department of Community Affairs from 2004 to 2007 under Gov. Jeb Bush. The department was tasked with managing growth and development in the state, and reviewed county and city comprehensive plans before it was shut down under Gov. Rick Scott. **Cohen** is an architect and ran his own firm for 20 years before joining the state. After leaving community affairs, **Cohen** worked as the assistant city manager of Pensacola. In 2015, he was hired as the planning director of Key West. He served there until March, when he was asked to resign by the Key West city manager, according to local news reports.

Cohen was found through a national headhunting firm, Ochs said. His appointment was approved unanimously in June by county commissioners. "His extensive local and state government experience make him an ideal candidate," Ochs told commissioners. **Cohen** said he is ready to start. "Great things are happening in Collier County," he said. "I'm excited and I look forward to being a part of the process."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)

March 8, 2017

Lopez: Revisit planning director firing

Author: Scott Unger

Key West City Commissioner Clayton Lopez made a public plea to city staff to revisit the recent termination of Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen** at Tuesday's meeting. After a proposed add-on to the agenda addressing the firing didn't obtain the required unanimous vote to have the issue heard (commissioners Billy Wardlow and Jimmy Weekley voted against), Lopez took his portion of the commissioners comments to address a situation that he said could've been handled better.

Since arriving two years ago, **Cohen** worked with various commissioners on projects including affordable housing and the trust fund associated with it, the bike and pedestrian master plan and the downtown circular bus, Lopez said. Lopez acknowledged issues within the planning department but took issue with the characterization that **Cohen** was "aloof." "If you know him, he just doesn't have much to say until you ask him about planning," Lopez said. "He's taken the hits and responsibilities that a leader of a department should take."

"It's never too late to reconsider, we can get through this. I ask that we please look at reconciliation or reconsideration." Under Key West city charter, City Manager Jim Scholl is given the responsibility of staff management decisions but the opinions of commission members can be shared with the manager.

The resolution sponsored by Lopez included 22 letters from community members supporting **Cohen**. "The firing of Planning Director **Cohen** must be a mistake," wrote Beverly Mingo. "No one releases a professional of his character in such a short period of time." The board also unanimously approved the second reading of an ordinance banning the practice of sexual orientation "conversion therapy" in Key West. Although there are no known practitioners of conversion therapy in Key West, the ordinance was brought forth to establish standard practices of protecting the city's youth, said sponsor Jimmy Weekley.

The ordinance will apply to licensed professionals covered under the Florida statute and violations will be classified as a civil penalty, according to City Attorney George Wallace. Issues over placement of solar panels at City Hall were also addressed by Scholl, who said the planning and engineering departments recommended leaving them where they are after an evaluation of the issue. "The staff's evaluation was that (the panel's placement) met every one of the milestones necessary for approval and location where they are," Scholl said. "The staff's recommendation obviously is to leave them where they are and not to move them." Scholl's response came after an inquiry from Commissioner Margaret Romero, who has frequently questioned the decision to mount the panels on carport structures as opposed to the roof of the building.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)
March 2, 2017

City fires planning director

Author: Scott Unger

Key West Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen** has been fired after holding the position for two years. Ineffective day-to-day management of the department and a lack of customer service were cited by City Manager Jim Scholl as reasons for **Cohen's** termination. "There's just been a lack of support for the day-to-day operations," Scholl said. "We've had some very good success on some big picture items ... but I'm just lacking that day-to-day customer service piece."

"We were just not keeping up with all of the more mundane planning staff requirements." The planning department's failure to properly issue public noticing for proposed zoning changes on College Road last week was a factor, Scholl said. "That was an issue, one issue in a series of minor things, but it adds up," he said. "It was just time for a change." **Cohen** will remain on-call until his official end date on March 31. Senior Planner Patrick Wright has been named interim director of the department until a permanent replacement is hired, Scholl said.

City Commissioner Sam Kaufman expressed frustration at last week's planning board meeting over the planning department's handling of this year's Building Permit Allocation System allocations that determined only 22 of the 91 available units will be used for affordable housing. A commission resolution allocating 100 percent of BPAS units was shot down by the Department of Economic Opportunity in November for contradictions with the city's comprehensive plan and inconsistencies with guidelines in the Florida Administrative Code.

The ruling delayed the release of the 2016-17 BPAS units and attempts by **Cohen** and planning to correct the inconsistencies were also denied, leading to the current allocations. "We've been asking for development plans for moving forward with affordable housing and the BPAS units (and) I had a big problem with the allocation for this year," Kaufman said. "Quite frankly when the City Commission directs that 100 percent should be affordable and the end result is 36 percent, I think that's a poor result."

"I just think that the Planning Department could use improvement and I'm very optimistic that city management is moving in the right direction." Before coming to Key West, **Cohen** was secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs under former Gov. Jeb Bush and assistant city manager of Pensacola. As Planning Director, **Cohen** received an annual salary of \$122,500, according to city officials. The search for a replacement will begin quickly and while the position will be open to all candidates with proper credentials, those familiar with local issues such as hurricane evacuation would be a benefit, Scholl said. "It helps to have somebody that had some Florida Keys credentials because (it's) an area of state critical concern," he said. "It's helpful; it's certainly not required, but it's helpful."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen
December 16, 2016

Housing plan changes cause rift

Author: Scott Unger

Proposed comprehensive plan changes were met with confusion by members of the Key West Planning Board and allegations of unfair practices by members of the community. The changes were proposed to satisfy the Department of Economic Opportunity's objections to a city ordinance allocating all Building Permit Allocation System units to be used for affordable housing for the 2016-17 allocation cycle, instead of the previously stated 50 percent, according to Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen**. "We have an objection from the DEO and what we're to do is to clear that objection," **Cohen** told the board. "We are specifically responding to a point that they made ... and that's what this language does."

The DEO complaint centered on restrictive language and a table displaying the BPAS allocation schedule, **Cohen** said. The city doesn't agree that the changes are necessary, but accepted recommendations from the department in order to move the process along ahead of the deadline to release BPAS units on June 30, 2017, **Cohen** said. "Internally we are confident that we could appeal DEO's decision," **Cohen** said. "We do not have the time to do that. We have a need to move forward with affordable housing. That's why we accepted the DEO language."

The legislation moves to the city commission, then will be sent to the DEO and other interested municipalities, which will then have 60 days to approve (the DEO has indicated it would expedite the process to 30 days). It will then go back before the commission where public readings will take place over two meetings, before going back to the DEO for final approval, according to Planning Staff Patrick Wright.

The changes also allow the city to pool units between allocation periods and gives the city the option to allocate units to itself without going through the application process. Board member Greg Lloyd said he was concerned the pooling of units could lead to a major developer taking all the units for a massive project. "I'm concerned about unintended consequences, I'd really like to be careful," Lloyd said. Community members raised concerns over the public notice and lack of relevant data given to support the changes, a possible violation of a memorandum of understanding between the city, Monroe County and the DEO that stipulates unused BPAS units go to other municipalities and language that nullifies current applications for the 2017 BPAS allocation cycle.

The cycle doesn't begin until the DEO approves, **Cohen** said. "In essence there is no year four application cycle right now because we don't have final approval from the DEO." **Cohen** said the MOU is not violated because it only applies to unused units, which the city won't have once the allocation cycle commences. Board members Cristy Spottswood said pooling units and city self-allocation are good things. "Hopefully we can get some more affordable projects on the books soon," Spottswood said.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Board member Michael Browning urged the planning department to clarify the language and reasoning before presenting the changes to the city commission. “I don’t have a problem voting for this because of our alleged timeframe, but I again urge you guys to better articulate (the changes),” he said. The board also approved plans to renovate a Duval Street property into four commercial units and seven residential units. The estimated \$2.7 million renovation of 725 Duval St. will partition the first floor into four separate businesses and construct four market rate and three affordable residential units on the second and third floors, according to plans.

Construction on the 10,892-square-foot building will begin as soon as the project is approved, with an expected timeline of one year, plans say. The board also approved a parking variance for the property, reducing its off street parking lot from 20 spaces to nine.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

August 27, 2016

City looks into micro-units

Author: Scott Unger

To solve the city's big housing problem, officials may need to think small. Micro-unit apartments of 400 square feet or less are gaining in popularity in cities like San Francisco, Seattle and New York and some Key West officials say the idea could work locally. "I think they're very interesting and if we had a space going forward that'd be great," said Mayor Craig Cates.

The Key West City Commission recently voted to allocate all 91 of the annual Building Permit Allocation System (formerly known as Rate Of Growth Ordinance) units to affordable housing and the Planning Board recently approved easing density limits to 40 units per acre for city-owned property on Stock Island. That land could be a good place for micro-units, according to Cates. "I'd like to use (BPAS) for that and they'd be affordable," he said.

The idea is being discussed during Land Development Regulations revisions, but there are still questions to be answered, according to Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen**. "I still believe a unit is a unit so I would be disinclined to go to fractionalized units, but it's something we're trying to consider," **Cohen** recently told members of the Planning Board. "I understand the point, which is you can get more of them, but our living style doesn't say that because you have a smaller unit that there is a smaller impact necessarily."

Board members Michael Browning, Sam Holland and James Gilleran agreed the idea is worth exploration. "Every time I turn on (the TV) there's something about this trend for people in small housing now. Instead of McMansions, people are figuring out ways to build in a storage container and all these other things," Holland told **Cohen**. "I would just encourage you to think outside the box. Obviously this has been an ongoing crisis situation."

"I think it really deserves more review because other communities that have this type of issue of extreme high density and lack of affordable housing, these type of micro units are pretty amazing and they would provide some relief," Gilleran said. "I would like to see us move forward on that." The idea would help solve the shortage of efficiency units, but other strategies need to be in place for families, according to CITY Commissioner Clayton Lopez. "I'm a proponent of the micro-units but I don't want to invest everything we have in micro-units and ignore the fact that there are full families that also need houses," Lopez said.

Commissioner Sam Kaufman called micro-units "a great idea" as long as plans are in place for hurricane evacuation. "We're limited to our allocation anyway and as long as the state approves of the development plans... then it's good," Kaufman said.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The idea was discussed in the LDR 2015 workshop presented by consultants Calvin, Giordano and Associates. Those plans called for 300-400 square foot units that would account for half of a BPAS unit, although no official zoning has been determined for micro-units. A 49-story, 328-unit tower was recently proposed in Miami by mogul Moishe Mana, according to the Miami Herald. Utah tycoon David Hall wants to take micro-units a step further, with plans to spend \$250 million on a micro community with 20,000 residents in 200-square foot apartments, according to the Wall Street Journal.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)

July 14, 2016

Controversy over art at City Hall

Author: Scott Unger

Several art projects for New City Hall are being included in Art In Public Places funding, despite not being approved, according to members of the AIPP board. Under city ordinance, 1 percent of new projects costing more than \$500,000 and renovations costing more than \$100,000 are required to be set aside “for the commission and installation of works of art to be placed on the site.”

Three pieces of art for the \$18.8 million New City Hall have been called into question by the AIPP board: the tiger sculpture that has called the site its home for more than 30 years; the historic murals that were preserved for the project; and a city-owned piece of art by Antonio Jacobsen. AIPP Chairman Richard Tallmadge said the costs of all three pieces — totaling more than \$100,000 — are being attributed to the AIPP fund despite the board not approving any of the works.

The six-foot-tall, 15-footlong steel tiger was refurbished pro bono by Key West artist Cayman Smith-Martin. Now the city is charging \$16,000 for the refurbishment out of the AIPP fund, according to Tallmadge. “A pro bono refurbishment has turned into a \$16,000 renovation bill,” he said.

Commissioner Margaret Romero said the refurbishment deal was made with the Monroe County School District so they should be in charge of any payments for the work. There is also an ongoing argument over where the statue should be placed. City Hall Architect Bert Bender originally wanted to move it to the corner of Varela and United streets, but earlier this year city officials directed it back to its original perch at the corner of White and United streets after receiving public input. AIPP members want the sculpture at the Varela Street location or the new butterfly garden at the western end of the property.

In a recent meeting with City Planner **Thaddeus Cohen**, Assistant City Manager Greg Veliz, Engineering Director Jim Bouquet and Senior Construction Manager Kreed Howell, Tallmadge said it was made clear that the final location of the sculpture hasn’t been decided. However, in an April 18 information bulletin from Bender, it states, “The tiger will be installed by the City at the NE corner of the site at a future date,” meaning the White Street location. Mayor Craig Cates confirmed the location.

The preservation costs of \$75,000 for two 1936 murals by William H. Hoffmann were included in the April 2013 Executive Summary approving the contract of Bender and Associates Architects. In the AIPP ordinance it states that the 1 percent set aside will exclude architectural fees. Cates said the public should be able to decide how the money is spent. “I can understand

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

that's in the contract already but it's a question for the taxpayers and how they want to spend their money," he said.

In the minutes of an April 28 meeting between city officials, Bender and Associates and Contractor Burke Construction, it was stated, "The question of whether the money spent on restored murals counts against the AIPP money has not been resolved. (City Manager) Jim Scholl will write a memo to City Planner **Thaddeus Cohen** stating the City's position." At Monday's AIPP meeting, **Cohen** indicated that Veliz has a ruling from the legal department that the mural restoration can be applied to part of the one percent.

Veliz wanted to be at the meeting but is currently on vacation, **Cohen** said. "It is his intent ... to come and say what he told (Tallmadge), which is their perspective of their view," **Cohen** said. The AIPP board expressed the most collective disgust over the inclusion of a city-owned painting by Antonio Jacobsen.

The picture was found on Mallory Square and is owned by the city, according to Tallmadge. At the Monday meeting, **Cohen** indicated he was unsure if the painting is owned by the city or was gifted to them. The "phantom picture," currently hanging in a hallway at the Habana Plaza offices is an attempt by city officials to save money on the project by over-appraising it and attributing it to AIPP funds, according to Tallmadge. "They're grasping at straws trying to make some savings on the project," he said. "It's stupefying to me that in an \$18-plus million renovation ... they are using the 1 percent as a form to come in under the budget."

"I think it's our collective view that it's a non-issue, it's a nonstarter, it doesn't even belong in this conversation." AIPP members haven't seen or had a chance to vote on the inclusion of the painting, according to board member Connie Gilbert. "I have not seen it, this board has not seen it, I am offended we are expected to pay for something when we haven't seen it," she said.

The painting shouldn't be included in the one percent and more attention needs to be paid to appointed boards, according to Romero. "Whatever the value of it might or might not be, it is already in the city's possession and should not in any way be counted towards the one percent fee. If we have boards who have been appointed by commissioners ... we should be listening to what they have to say and listening to their ideas."

The AIPP board is drafting three separate resolutions concerning the projects to bring before the Key West City Commission at the August 7 meeting. **Cohen** recommended the board bring each issue individually to the commission. Tallmadge said he is working to bring all art enthusiasts in town to the meeting to express their opinions. Repeated calls to **Cohen**, Scholl and Assistant City Attorney Ron Ramsingh were not returned. Veliz and City Attorney Shawn Smith are currently on vacation.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)
September 4, 2015

City planners hash out new zoning laws

Author: Gwen Filosa

In Key West, locals pride themselves on living on a tropical island that doesn't resemble the typical South Florida tourist town, city planning director **Thaddeus Cohen** said this week. "We don't want to be like 'name that community'," **Cohen** said during a workshop on updating the land development regulations that govern development, outdoor signs, landscapes and other aspects of urban design.

The problem is, **Cohen** said, aerial photographs of Key West neighborhoods show that the island is headed in the direction of mainland mainstream development. "When we look down on us, we're slowly becoming that type of place we don't want to be, because of the pressure to continue to build and build and totally build out our lots," **Cohen** said. "As we write this code, we will wind up with a community we want to have." The workshops Wednesday and Thursday, held at the Florida Eco-Discovery Center on the Truman Waterfront, are being recorded and videos will become available at keywest.cgasolutions.com, the consultants' website where the videos of two workshops held in July - on affordable housing and parking - are posted.

Under state law, Key West must update its land development regulations (LDRs) to make them consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, which the city updated in 2013. The consultants and planning departments will host a fifth community workshop in December. By March 2016, the planning board will hold public hearings on the proposed updates and by May, the city commission will take the final look at it at two meetings. During the workshops, the city's hired consultants have been frank about naming Key West's shortcomings they say come from inadequate zoning. "In New Town, we see that there are signs everywhere," said Gianni Feoli, of Calvin, Giordano and Associates, at Wednesday's workshop. "So much signage is competing against each other that at the end of the day you don't see it. It becomes visual white noise."

The solution, Feoli said, is to install size requirements for signs in New Town and offer business owners up to 10 years to comply. Other zoning laws can prevent Key West from paving over land needed to soak up rainfall, said consultant Richard Cannone. During Wednesday's workshop, the consultant team showed one aerial photograph of a New Town home at an undisclosed address. From above, almost the entire lot appears paved over. "I apologize if this is your house," Cannone said. "It's almost all completely paved over. I'd be willing to bet \$100 the majority of [rain runoff] from that roof is going onto the neighbors' property."

Cohen urged locals to drive around their neighborhoods and participate in the process. "What we put down in this code is going to last for the next 35 years or so," **Cohen** said. "It's very important as to how we treat the spaces on our properties, between our properties and what happens on the public part of the properties."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)

February 5, 2015

City names top planner

Author: Gwen Filosa

A former state official who was a finalist for the city manager's job in 2012 is Key West's new planning director. **Thaddeus Cohen**, an architect who was secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs under former Gov. Jeb Bush and later assistant city manager of Pensacola, starts March 30. "He has verbally, formally accepted," city manager Jim Scholl said Tuesday night. "I spoke with him yesterday." **Cohen's** annual salary will be \$122,500, Scholl said.

Cohen succeeds Don Craig, who resigned last year but was hired back as a consultant. Craig attended Tuesday's commission meeting. **Cohen**, of Delray Beach, recently has been working as a consultant and director of operations at MBR Construction of Fort Lauderdale. He has also been job-hunting in various city governments since being fired without explanation in Pensacola. "The new administration is moving in a different direction, that is all I was told," **Cohen** told the Pensacola News Journal in May 2011.

"I left on good terms with the city," **Cohen** wrote in his 2014 application for Oakland Park's city manager job. In 2013, **Cohen** had been a finalist for Miramar city manager. The next year, he made the short list for Delray Beach's city manager.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.
May 19, 2011

Mayor terminates city official's job

Author: Jamie Page

Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward on Monday fired **Thaddeus Cohen**, a top city department head, as part of what the mayor says is a streamlining of city government. **Cohen's** last day is June 3. "The new administration is moving in a different direction; that is all I was told," **Cohen** said. "I am an at-will contract employee, so it's not unusual that this happens when an administration is going in a different direction." **Cohen** was hired in January 2008 to manage both the downtown's Community Redevelopment Agency and its Community Development Department.

Mayor's Office Spokesman Travis Peterson sent the PNJ this response about **Cohen's** termination: "As the mayor has indicated in past public statements, he is initiating a reorganization and streamlining of city government. As part of this process, there will be personnel and departmental shifts, promotions, and deletions," Peterson wrote. "Out of respect for the individuals impacted by this process, the mayor will reserve comment on personnel matters until these decisions are finalized and the appropriate staff and employees are notified. "Under the new city charter, the mayor has the ability to "remove a department head with or without cause, and without the consent of City Council."

Cohen came to the city after serving as secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs from 2004-07. Prior to that he owned an architectural firm for 20 years in Delray Beach. **Cohen** is a registered architect in Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New Jersey and has more than 33 years of private and local government experience in Florida, and experience in urban planning and growth management. Within months of being hired, **Cohen** began launching new programs. He asked permission from former City Manager Tom Bonfield to use \$50,000 in CRA funds set aside for downtown events to create a downtown entertainment scene. This created events such as Sunsets at Plaza de Luna, Friday Family Flicks, Live After Five, and the Palafox Farmer's Market.

"I enjoyed the opportunity I have had in Pensacola," **Cohen** said. "I would like to think we have made some significant improvements in our downtown and neighborhoods. I have an outstanding staff who contributed greatly to any of the successes we had. They are creative and those are the things you are supposed to have to progress at any organization." **Cohen's** compensation is a \$105,000 annual salary, plus \$35,893 in fringe benefits.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.
June 28, 2010

City, county eye old cleanup site

Author: Jamie Page

The Pensacola City Council wants to annex 831 acres into city limits surrounding the old Escambia Wood Treating Co. Superfund site off Palafox Street. The mound of polluted soil known as Mount Dioxin -- which stood on the Superfund site for 18 years -- is gone and the soil has been cleaned. The plan for what to do with the site after it's clean, for the past 10 years, has been to build a commerce park. A county-contracted study about 10 years ago cited 117 acres -- which includes the 31-acre Superfund site and adjacent residential areas -- as ideal for industrial development.

But Community Redevelopment Director **Thaddeus Cohen** envisions something much grander: annexing an 831-acre area around the Superfund site that includes mostly commercial or vacant properties already. Few occupied residential properties remain. And the site is relatively close to the airport, rail lines and Interstate 110. "So it's really an ideal location for creating a very large commerce park area," **Cohen** said.

When the City Council heard **Cohen's** presentation earlier this month, it agreed and asked city staff to begin moving forward in concept with the effort. "I am ecstatic about this," Councilman P.C. Wu said. "I am looking at taxes and jobs. Personally, I don't see a downside. I am in support of the whole thing."

Meanwhile, Escambia County -- which will act as the developer and eventually the primary owner of the land surrounding the Superfund site -- is in the process of obtaining ownership of roughly 117 acres owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This area already is within city limits. But hearing of the city's much larger annexation plans came as a surprise to Keith Wilkins, the county's deputy chief of the Community Services Bureau, who has been handling the Superfund property issue for the county. "We could not get a response from the city on this project so we were moving on without them," Wilkins said. "For the community, as long as it gets redeveloped it doesn't matter, as long as it's for the benefit of community. But the county has put several million dollars in getting this thing turned around, and it seems once the hard work is done then the city can come in and scoop it."

The area proposed to become the MidTown Palafox Commerce Park is bounded by a CSX rail line to the east, Fairfield Drive to the south, North Pace Boulevard to the west, and Brent Lane to the north. Councilman Sam Hall's initial reaction was that the city should not only annex the larger area but consider making it a Tax Increment Financing District. TIFs are for low-income areas in great need of revitalization, which allows a city government to collect additional property taxes there. "District 5 is the poorest district," Hall said. "You are looking at having a piece of property that is worth basically nothing right now that we could make into a TIF before it becomes valuable property."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Without a TIF, the city and county would benefit from property taxes. But under a city TIF, only the city would collect taxes. If that approach is taken it is likely to create a problem for county officials, whose plan to develop the property relies entirely on collecting county taxes from the site, Wilkins said. "If they do vote to annex it, obviously we could still move forward but we would have to rethink our development plan and our marketing strategy," Wilkins said. "This really takes it back several years."

Annexation area

The 831 acres the city is looking to annex includes 581 parcels of land. Here's how they are currently zoned:

- 181: Vacant
- 161: Residential (mostly vacant)
- 166: Commercial
- 37: Industrial
- 36: Church/school/hospital

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.

May 24, 2010

ECAT seeking ways to make service quicker

Author: Jamie Page

A plan is afoot to cut wait times to only 15 to 20 minutes for most Escambia County Area Transit bus routes in order to boost ridership. Long waits for bus service is the primary reason the local public bus system is underutilized by residents, a city official said. Right now, riders wait between 35 minutes to an hour and a half to catch a bus. And most routes take an hour to run full circle.

"Today the ECAT system is discouraging at worst and inconvenient at best, characterized generally by long waits and long trips," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, the city's Community Development director. Instead of just complaining about it, **Cohen** has written what he's calling a transformational plan that slices and dices ECAT's traditional routes into a streamlined system that will make most have a 15- to 20-minute wait time. Perhaps the dangling carrot here is that the changes, he says, will not cost the county additional money.

The poor, the elderly and the disabled are often cited as the only people filling the seats of the public bus system in Pensacola because they often don't have a choice. City and county officials have recognized this for years, but say they don't have the money to add buses and new routes to the ECAT system to create more efficient wait times where more average working people can justify taking the bus. The City of Pensacola withdrew its funding for ECAT in 2008, and left all local transit funding to the county.

There is a version of **Cohen's** plan adding one more bus route. However, ECAT has a fleet of 42 buses and currently only runs 28. An additional bus may not have to be purchased, **Cohen** said. County commissioners will discuss the proposed transit plan at Thursday's committee meeting. The goals of the proposal came from the Mass Transit Advisory Committee. They were fleshed out by stakeholders polled throughout the community, then gelled into a proposal by **Cohen**. "A rider-centric transit model would encourage a more diverse population to become transit dependent," **Cohen** said. "In other words, transit would become their first choice for mobility."

Warrington resident Shari Drew is one. She's a full-time student at Virginia College and relies on the bus to get to her classes on Garden Street in downtown Pensacola. Her trip from her home near the Navy base to downtown takes five hours to attend a single class that lasts less than two hours. Between waiting on the bus and travel time, she spends three hours en route to one class. And if she misses her bus, it will be an hour wait until the next one arrives. Having a shorter wait time would ensure she continues to use the bus system, she said.

"The drivers are friendly and helpful, the bus is always on time, the fares are reasonable and cheaper than owning a vehicle, but the wait time is just horrendous," Drew said. "Otherwise, I

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

don't mind taking the bus. That's the only thing I hate about the bus is the wait time. "But they could cut out the stops on the small side streets and make the routes faster."

Actually, that's primarily how **Cohen's** proposal achieves shorter wait times: By avoiding side streets and minor stops, and mostly keeping routes focused on major thoroughfares. "We have what some may call a peanut butter spread approach to transit "[broken bar] same level of service spread thinly throughout the area," **Cohen** said. "This approach is not necessarily conducive to building ridership. The current headway of 60 minutes is a nonstarter if we want transit to be a first choice for mobility."

Interim County Administrator Larry Newsom's initial look at the plan was positive. "I think his plan has a lot of merit," Newsom said. "He is looking at this from an economic development standpoint, and I commend him for that. Still, it does have to be a cost benefit analysis. We have to be able to justify these changes."

The proposal comes just as commissioners on Thursday approved a new ECAT route change plan, which will be implemented within 45 days. These route changes -- entirely separate from **Cohen's** plan -- were mostly to improve on-time performance and safety, and reduce complaints, ECAT General Manager Kenneth Gordon said. "The routes were scheduled so tight that bus drivers were driving too aggressively to maintain the schedules," Gordon said. "These changes will provide slightly more time on the routes to make it safer, and we have tried to modify routes with as little inconvenience as possible."

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.

April 28, 2010

Cohen's vision of future

Author: DeeDee Ritchie

The regional commercial real estate family gathered last week to hear Community Redevelopment Agency Director **Thaddeus Cohen** present the blueprint for Pensacola's future. Joe Buehler, Bo Johnson, John Tice and Florida House of Representatives candidate Doug Broxson were among those at the impressive presentation.

Cohen has been responsible for many innovative downtown programs, including the New Year's Eve Pelican Drop, Sunset Concerts at Plaza De Luna and Friday Flicks. If he can pull off this plan, he has my vote for strong mayor. If he moves here, that is.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Outdoor Movie Events

May 18, 2009

Pensacola, Florida: Friday Family Flicks Come Back to Pensacola

By Open Air Cinema on in

When **Thaddeus Cohen** came to work as the city’s Community Redevelopment Agency director in December 2007, he immediately started identifying ways to bring people downtown.

One of those ideas was “Friday Family Flicks,” a series of free outdoor family-friendly movies shown on a three-story inflatable screen every third Friday from May through August, at Commendencia Slip Pier. And it worked. The average crowd at last year’s Friday Family Flicks was about 900 people, **Cohen** said. Last year’s final showing in August drew 1,400. This year’s flicks start Friday.

It takes about \$5,000 a year in CRA funds to offer the movies. Vendors sell popcorn and snacks. Families, teens and older couples alike bring yard chairs and blankets and have a picnic while watching a G- or PG-rated movie. Some folks just sit in their parked cars and pretend it’s a drive-in. “We think the downtown restaurants did well because of it last year, too,” **Cohen** said. “We would see a lot of people with takeout boxes before and after the movie.” Music and activities start at 7:30 p.m., and the PG movie, “Bedtime Stories,” starts about 8 p.m.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)
December 20, 2006

County sends bad tier maps to state to meet deadline

Author: Ann Henson

The Monroe County Commission has agreed to submit incorrect development maps to the state, with the promise that the state will correct 147 improperly designated parcels before approving the documents. Property owners fear the corrections - mostly to allow development where the maps now prohibit it - will fall through the cracks after a new governor and state department heads take over Jan. 1. If the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) overlooks the detail, the county must go through a process that can take up to nine months to change each lot one by one.

Several property owners who attended the second and final public hearing on the issue Monday asked the county to submit corrected maps and questioned why commissioners were rushing the vote. Even freshman Commissioner Sylvia Murphy, the lone board member to vote against sending the incorrect maps, questioned the hurry. "I understand that a great deal of the 147 lots have come from the Upper Keys and we have not had a public hearing there?" she asked.

Debra Harrison, the World Wildlife Fund's Keys manager, said 105 of the 147 lots are in the Upper Keys. "You are costing the taxpayers thousands of dollars and are denying public participation," she told the commission. "[DCA Secretary] **Thaddeus Cohen** called each of you and told you to do this" now, so he can claim credit that it was done during his tenure, she said. "You have never said we will not hear from the people of the Upper Keys."

The state required that the maps be sent no later than today, and that they match the draft set DCA already has on file, according to County Attorney Suzanne Hutton and County Administrator Tom Willi. Gov. Jeb Bush, frustrated that the county kept changing the maps after DCA gave them preliminary approval, ordered Monroe to stop tweaking them. "Ideally it would be better to have one [public hearing] in the Upper Keys, but that's not legally required," Hutton said during Monday's meeting.

The maps, part of the county's new growth management system, divide all land into three categories, or tiers: buildable, not buildable and buildable but with more restrictions to protect native habitat. Once DCA approves the maps, the Tier System and its maps will become a part of the county's comprehensive plan that guides development. Tom Wyatt of Upper Sugarloaf Key owns one of the misidentified lots. "It's important to me, my wife and our family that this error gets corrected," he said. "I've heard that it will not fall through the cracks, but I urge you to correct it now."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)
December 13, 2006

Gov. Bush reviews debated meeting

Author: Ann Henson

The governor is reviewing the Florida Cabinet's Dec. 5 approval of an annual report assessing Monroe County's progress on state-mandated environmental and housing goals, as well as statements county officials made before the vote, according to Jeb Bush's spokeswoman. "We understand that there are concerns and we are reviewing the report of the Cabinet meeting and may have more to say later this week," Kristy Campbell said.

The accuracy of County Administrator Tom Willi's statements about wastewater funding and hurricane evacuation times has been questioned since the meeting. Willi told the Cabinet an 18-hour hurricane evacuation time had been incorporated into the county's comprehensive land-use plan after public hearings, and he denied that the county used Key Largo wastewater funds to purchase a waterfront restaurant and help fund an artificial reef project.

County documents appear to contradict both statements, and two former county officials who wrote the phased hurricane evacuation ordinance dispute Willi's interpretation and time calculations in the evacuation issue. A spokeswoman for Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said the state agency stands behind Willi's conclusions, despite an agency attorney acknowledging the county's comp plan does not specifically cite an 18-hour evacuation time. "The plan is what guides the evacuation process and has been accepted into the comprehensive plan, when we run the models the number [18] comes out," Alexis Antonacci said.

The state requires Monroe County to be able to evacuate in less than 24 hours before it can build more homes. Willi said a staff report explained the county could shave 3.5 hours by eliminating tourists, as they must leave 48 hours before the general residential population, and another three hours because mobile home residents must leave 36 hours in advance. Although the report states no total hours, Willi told the Cabinet it refers to 24 hours and that time could be saved "if we early evacuate these two groups."

Marlene Conaway, a former county planning director, and Tim McGarry, a former county growth management director, said mobile home residents never were meant to be counted in the hours saved through a phased evacuation for hurricanes of Category 3 or greater. Further, a document summarizing what county and municipal emergency managers approved during a 2004 hurricane symposium did not refer to mobile home residents in their endorsement of the phased evacuation plan.

Conaway and McGarry said the 18-hour time frame is far-fetched, considering the intent of the ordinance, which Conaway said she worded specifically to include mobile home owners in the general population of full-time permanent residents. "You can ask them to leave early, but you

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

cannot force them," she said. "It's in the language very clearly. And if you cannot force them, you cannot include them in your calculations [to reduce clearance time]. And I will testify to that in court."

Comments she made during an April 2005 Planning Commission meeting support her perspective. She told planning commissioners the phased evacuation clearance time "will drop from 24 hours to 21 hours and 41 minutes," indicating only tourists were to be eliminated from the calculations. "Sounds like her opinion, not the view of the people that she works for," Willi wrote in an e-mail to The Citizen last week. He has not returned repeated phone calls seeking comment.

McGarry said Willi's interpretation involves legal and policy issues. "If you want to count the mobile home residents as leaving early, you will have to amend the comprehensive plan" to say they are something other than full-time permanent residents, McGarry said, referring to the term "Keys residents" in the ordinance. "Residents and tourists are two different things -- tourists are in hotels that you can close down." He said the evacuation plan becomes more dangerous with every group that is eliminated, as it increases the margin for error. "It becomes a safety issue," he said.

The legal issue stems from what constitutes a resident, he said. Because evacuation and growth management are tied, if mobile home residents are classified as less than a full-time permanent resident, the building allocation earned by their early evacuation would be less than a full building allocation, McGarry said. He also noted that all of the calculations would be meaningless if a storm were to form quickly off the Keys coast.

The topic of updating the county's hurricane evacuation time arose in September 2004 when **Cohen** called a hurricane symposium. "As I came into office, it appeared that the only issue that is still out there is the hurricane evacuation component," he told the group of county and municipal emergency managers assembled at the time. The ensuing series of meetings focused on developing a hurricane plan for the county and municipalities to adopt.

Cohen's concern stemmed from the fact that the Keys technically were built out, because the evacuation time was 23 hours and 38 minutes. To continue with that time frame would mean cutting off all building permits. But with the new 18-hour evacuation time, the county theoretically could add as many as 12,000 building permits to its yearly allotment, as it could gain 2,000 permits for every hour under 24. At the Department of Community Affairs' suggestion, officials formally approved a phased evacuation plan that informally had been executed for years.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampabay.com
October 17, 2006

Growth law will protect way of life

A Times Editorial by **Thaddeus Cohen**

Every citizen values something and holds those values over something else. The family over the job, the job over the ball game; we all live within a pyramid of values that help define us as a society. Florida's new growth management law passed last year, formerly known as Senate Bill 360, has given local government officials a new opportunity to show citizens what values they hold dear as well.

Local officials should have a good idea about what residents value and what growth challenges have emerged during Florida's recent population boom. The values piece comes into play when these two factors are added into proposed changes by a local government to add new development to communities, known in the world of community planners as changes to a comprehensive plan.

This landmark growth legislation requires local governments to consider much more seriously how they plan to pay for services like water, sewers, schools and roads. Not surprisingly, most local officials have responded to these new requirements with enthusiastic efficiency. After all, why shouldn't they? The new growth management legislation is in synch with what most Americans value most.

For example, say a development is built in your community for 2,500 new single-family homes. They'll need services, won't they? Has the local government figured out how to make the changes in its comprehensive plan to accommodate this new development, including how these services would be paid for? If not, how can they even approach the state in good conscience and ask for approval?

Should a new homeowner in this community have to send his or her children miles from home to get them to the closest school? Are the homes built in an area that will make the cost of building sewage facilities and providing clean drinking water a drain on the pocketbooks of these new residents? Will the roads be able to accommodate all the cars, or will all the members of this community regularly miss their child's soccer games and school plays because they're stuck in traffic on the way home from work?

Regardless of age, income or political affiliation, don't we all hold these values dear? Helping to ensure that all of these elements are accounted for is what makes the legislation a great contribution to our state. It helps provide new and former residents with a way of life that continues to make our state the best place to live and work in the country. Local governments are getting on board, taking the steps necessary to make concurrency a reality, to ensure that all major development impacts are accounted for and ensuring that the local plans are financially feasible, with meaningful links to local budgeting.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Of course, this requires more work for local governments, but they don't have to face this work alone. The state Department of Community Affairs is not just enforcing the new growth management law; it is also working hand in hand with local governments to provide technical assistance to help them meet the challenges that come with growth. Using the new law, local governments can focus on development that provides services necessary to ensure that Florida families enjoy the best possible day-to-day living conditions. What value can a local government hold above that?

Thaddeus Cohen is secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Ledger
August 25, 2006

PCOC to Try to Avoid Legal Fight

Author: Rick Rousos

BARTOW -- The chairman of the Polk County Opportunity Council says he will attempt to mend the rift with the state agency that is attempting to pull \$911,000 from PCOC's budget. PCOC boss Kevin Roberts said he would rather talk things over with the head of the state Department of Community Affairs before a formal legal proceeding begins.

Roberts said Thursday night during a PCOC meeting that he and Executive Director Gary Hartfield will ask state Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** to hear their contentions that the agency has vastly improved and the withdrawal of funds is unnecessary. Roberts is asking for a meeting in Tallahassee, on **Cohen's** turf, "before the whole legal route" of fighting the pulling of funds takes place. Hartfield said he will send a letter to **Cohen** next week requesting the meeting.

The \$911,000 that the DCA is attempting to take away from PCOC is used for job training and tuition for poor people. The DCA will continue to fund the program until all of PCOC's legal appeals have been exhausted, and if the money is taken from PCOC, the state will find another agency to provide those services.

Roberts also said Thursday night that he and Hartfield were scheduled to meet today with U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam, a Bartow Republican who has been a frequent critic of PCOC. Roberts said he was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Putnam and will attempt to demonstrate to the congressman that PCOC has come a long way. PCOC has been without a finance director since April, but that's expected to change Monday when Gail Adderley starts as finance director. For the past five years, she has served as the finance chief for a community action agency in Lake County.

During an interview Thursday, Hartfield declined to divulge her salary, saying her contract has not been completed and won't be until the paperwork is filled out and signed, either today or Monday. The salary range for job is between \$49,000 and \$73,000. During the meeting, board member Ozell Wilson mentioned that Adderley will be paid \$72,000. Wilson wondered what would happen a year from now when Adderley can't get a merit raise of more than \$1,000 because she's reached the top of the salary scale. PCOC is also attempting to set up a meeting, at Roberts' insistence, to learn more about the state's open meeting and open records laws.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)

April 14, 2006

DCA head mum on lawsuit backing

Author: Ann Henson

The Department of Community Affairs secretary wants to assure Florida Keys residents that his department is always watching for signs that Monroe County has run amok. **Thaddeus Cohen** heads the agency that has overseen growth management in Monroe County since it was declared an Area of State Critical Concern in the 1970s. On the phone from Tallahassee Thursday, **Cohen** said he understands residents' concerns and apprehension about a proposal to lift the designation. He freely discussed how the state-county partnership would continue, but said he'd have to consult his attorney before answering one of the most important questions: Would the state back the county in lawsuits that property owners file when they can't do what they want with their land Monroe officials have said that could cost the county hundreds of millions of dollars.

"What the future looks like, I don't want to speculate," he said. "We feel there's been a real change, from a regulatory oversight role to a partnership where we crafted a framework that works for everyone. It has been a struggle to get to where we are today, but with time we can both look back at the accomplishments we have made. "But we're not done; we need to continue to be vigilant, review the actions of local policymakers, and citizens can still express concern to the state when actions are not consistent with the land-development regulations," he said. The state seized control 30 years ago when the county was failing to control development. The state has mandated that the county upgrade wastewater systems to clean nearshore waters; provide affordable housing; protect habitat for endangered species; and control growth enough to evacuate the Keys within 24 hours of a hurricane. State Rep. Ken Sorensen, R-Key Largo, said he believes Monroe is complying with state regulations now, and should be set free to handle its own affairs. A year ago, county officials asked the governor and Cabinet to lift the designation, but the state denied the request. This year, Sorensen, now in his last term, sponsored a dedesignation bill.

Weeks of wrangling brought a compromise between the state, environmentalists and Sorensen, who will add the resulting amendments when his bill is heard on the House floor sometime before the session ends May 5. The amendments allow the county to retain the benefits afforded to critical-concern areas, such as letting the county tap into special funds and keep its Land Authority. **Cohen** said he believes the county is in fine shape and will continue to work toward meeting a list of goals the state set. "I'm not talking of being completely sewerred, but of making meaningful progress in changing nearshore water quality," he said. "That had been of great concern to the department." **Cohen** doesn't think future administrations, either state or county, will renege on the growth management plan after the designation is lifted. "We feel the schemes we have in place and the issues the bill talks of, the interlocal between the county and Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority," he said, "all these things provide for folks to move forward regardless of who the players are."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News (FL)

February 8, 2006

**Florida growth management law, Thaddeus Cohen local
State official defends new growth management law**

Author: Larry Hannan

No one can fully explain a growth management law that went into effect in Florida in 2005. But **Thaddeus Cohen**, secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, knows the new law better than most. **Cohen** believes, despite vociferous criticism from Collier County officials, the growth management law has a chance to be beneficial to all of Florida. On Tuesday he met with the Naples Daily News editorial board. The law has been roundly criticized by Collier officials, who believe it will damage their concurrency management system of collecting impact fees and prohibiting growth until capacity improvements are made to an area. DCA will be responsible for enforcing the new law.

Cohen said the law, often referred to as Senate Bill 360, needs time to work before changes are made. He said the county commissioners have some valid concerns, but they haven't looked into some of the benefits of the new law. "We don't think this is a straitjacket," **Cohen** said of the law. Throughout most of the state, the new law has been received positively. Collier is the exception. "You are unique," **Cohen** said, speaking of Collier County. "We have not had this in other places." Collier's main complaint is that the law doesn't let the county create a tougher growth management program than the state allows. Collier County's current program is tougher than the state's, so commissioners fear the local program will become moot and they'll have to abide by weaker state requirements under the new law. If the law is given a chance to work, Collier might be surprised at how much the county benefits, **Cohen** said. The key to the new law is the paying of proportionate fair-share mitigation. That means a developer or homeowner has to pay a fair amount to the local government so capacity improvements can be made to offset the effect of the new development. If the fair-share payment is made, development can proceed, even if the capacity improvements have not yet been made. "This says everybody pays because everybody impacts the system," **Cohen** said.

"Under proportionate fair share, local governments can handle backlogs" of infrastructure needs. Impact fees can't do that because by law they only can pay for future infrastructure needs, not existing needs. "A lot of people were unhappy with growth management throughout the state" before this law was passed, **Cohen** said. "There was a sense that people were taking advantage of the system." Under the new law, it will be easier to get funding for schools, water and road improvements needed because of the growth within the state, **Cohen** said.

Collier officials are pushing for a glitch bill in the next legislative session that would make changes to Senate Bill 360. That bill would address their concerns and allow them to keep collecting impact fees. **Cohen** isn't thrilled about the idea of a glitch bill. He thinks it's too soon. If a glitch bill is passed, he'd like it to be narrowly focused.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Collier Commissioner Fred Coyle has been vocal in his criticism of the new growth management law. Coyle believes it will decimate the county's concurrency management system. Coyle said he wants two things from a glitch bill. "We want to retain our impact fee system," Coyle said. "We also want the ability to have a concurrency system that guarantees transportation capacity before development is approved." The existing law prohibits Collier from doing both, Coyle said. If the county can get those things, it will be fine with the rest of the growth management law, he said. Coyle said sacrificing impact fees for proportionate fair share makes no sense. "We know our impact fee system works," he said. "Why should we give it up for something that we're not sure works?" Coyle also said the proportionate fair-share system isn't as effective. If one development pays \$1 million for proportionate fair share, that's not enough to make a road improvement. But that development could be up and operating before they get money from other developers, Coyle said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
January 27, 2006

**State Paid FEMA Without Checking
Audit Criticizes Lack Of Oversight**

Authors: Megan O'Matz and Sally Kestin

Florida paid \$155 million for its share of federal disaster aid to residents after the 2004 hurricanes without checking the legitimacy of the claims, a state audit has concluded. The Federal Emergency Management Agency regularly provided the state with details of individual payments, yet for more than seven months Florida "did not perform any sampling or verification" on roughly 471,000 awards, according to the report released Thursday by Florida's auditor general.

Only after the audit began did the state's Division of Emergency Management make any attempt to check out the claims -- by calling 2,000 people. "We just paid the bill without any accountability or oversight," said state Sen. Ron Klein, one of three legislators who requested the audit after a South Florida Sun-Sentinel investigation revealed waste and fraud in FEMA payments in Miami-Dade County.

The county was spared the devastating effects of Hurricane Frances, which struck 100 miles to the north on Labor Day weekend 2004. Yet the president, at the request of the governor, declared Miami-Dade a disaster area. The designation allowed residents there to collect \$31 million from FEMA. The audit focused on the Division of Emergency Management's oversight of aid payments by FEMA statewide.

Each month, FEMA billed Florida for 25 percent of the aid given for damaged belongings, medical and dental costs, transportation, funerals, clothing, tools, generators, chain saws and other clean-up items, according to the audit. From September 2004 through June 2005, FEMA paid \$618 million to residents for the losses. Of that, Florida paid FEMA \$155 million but did nothing to verify the accuracy or appropriateness of the payments until May 2005, after the audit began, the report states.

At that point, the state sampled 3,500 claims, reaching 2,000 of the applicants by phone, the report states. Officials asked claimants to confirm, "both the type and dollar amount of assistance received," the audit states. Florida determined that only 10 claims required additional scrutiny. At the close of the audit, emergency officials still had not taken steps to verify the remaining 1,500 claims in the sample, according to the report. "The state has done a terrible job, just like FEMA, in making sure that there's verifiable payments of losses," said state Sen. Walter "Skip" Campbell, D-Tamarac. "They're choosing not to get involved intentionally, but that's the wrong way to spend the state's dollars."

In a written response to the audit, **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, which oversees emergency management, said it would cost the state more to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

further verify the FEMA claims and could slow payments to disaster victims. "The Division will continue to review and revise as necessary, its verification of the process," he wrote. "This verification process involves contacting applicants for each disaster and determining if they have actually received FEMA financial assistance ..." Klein said Thursday that he would push for additional funds for the department to ensure that it has the resources to properly oversee the program. "Why are we just writing a check for 25 percent of the cost of this program without even knowing where this money is going?" the Boca Raton Democrat said.

State Sen. Nan Rich, D-Weston, also called for greater accountability by the state, citing problems with the automobile reimbursement program. The audit criticizes the state's policy for replacing destroyed automobiles, saying that it resulted in some people collecting more in aid than their vehicles were worth. "We have people who received nothing, and yet we're giving someone \$6,500 for a vehicle that's worth \$850. It's kind of outrageous. We obviously need to revise these procedures," she said.

Auditors suggested that the state work with FEMA to come up with a more reasonable method of paying for destroyed automobiles than setting a standard amount, which in 2004 was \$6,500 per vehicle. A U.S. Inspector General audit in May of Miami-Dade claims found more than a dozen recipients collected \$6,500 even though the value of the destroyed car was less. That same month, Florida revised its agreement with FEMA, lowering the rate for destroyed cars to \$4,000.

Cohen, in response to the state's audit, wrote that his department is reviewing its practice for setting standard amounts for cars and other items, such as generators. The Sun-Sentinel reported in December that FEMA reimbursed numerous Floridians a set amount -- \$836 each -- for generators after Hurricane Wilma, even when people paid less. The state is considering discontinuing the reimbursements for generators altogether, **Cohen** wrote.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 9, 2005

DCA- County doing OK on growth

Author: Ann Henson

The county's growth management report card from the state shows that of 17 requirements, the county has completed 12 items and nearly completed another three. But one of the key requirements for the county -- that everyone be able to leave prior to a hurricane -- may become an obstacle over which the county has no control, due to the growth in South Florida. The state Department of Community Affairs and the state Division of Emergency Management will take a regional look at hurricane evacuation with a report out by September 2006 that considers evacuation behavior and population growth of the entire area, according to the state's report card on Monroe County. Overall, DCA Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said the county has made substantial progress, and recommends giving the county a passing mark. However, **Cohen** said he believes the designation as an Area of Critical State Concern should continue. And he did not make a recommendation on how long the designation should remain. "I recommend that we continue the designation in order to ensure completion of the work program recently adopted by the Governor and Cabinet," **Cohen** stated. The governor and Cabinet will make the final determination on whether or not the county has made substantial progress in its yearly plan as well as the critical concern designation. It will also decide how many new housing units should be allowed in the county. Should they find the county in compliance, the nutrient reduction credit program would be eliminated.

That program requires eliminating a cesspit or improperly functioning septic system for each building permit the county issues. **Cohen's** report also included challenges that lie ahead for the county -- aside from the hurricane evacuation issue, the county must continue to find funding for construction of wastewater facilities, for land acquisition and preservation and for affordable housing. What the county has not completed includes:

- Completing the new growth management plan called the Tier System. Overlay maps for the Tier III Special Protection Areas have not been finalized. However, following a joint field trip to review some of the areas, this item should be finalized and adopted in January.
- Amending land development regulations to prohibit natural areas as receiver sites for development that is exempt of county regulations and to limit clearing. This item, too, should be complete in January, according to **Cohen's** report.
- The county has hooked up only 28 percent of the homes in the Key West Resort Utility service area on Stock Island. **Cohen** wants these hookups completed as soon as possible.
- Assuring that affordable housing will remain affordable. The county has met a portion of this requirement.
- Providing \$10 million in bond financing from the Tourist Impact Tax for acquisition of land for workforce and affordable housing. The county has done its part but awaits approval from the state for the bond issue.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)
December 7, 2005

State DCA secretary hears concerns about sprawl
Author: Robert Silk

LAYTON -- Meeting with the Layton City Council Thursday, Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** sought to assure officials that his department weighs regional hurricane evacuation when making rulings that will impact growth in South Florida. "It disheartens me to read the articles that say the DCA is not concerned about evacuation issues, when to me that was the first thing I was concerned about," **Cohen** said in reference to his early days as head of Florida's lead oversight agency for growth management. **Cohen** became DCA secretary in the spring of 2004.

But the secretary stopped short of agreeing with the suggestion of Layton City Councilman Scott Shamlin that the DCA should not approve any expansion of Miami-Dade County's Urban Development Boundary until the department develops a tool that quantitatively measures regional evacuation times. For years the DCA has used a similar tool, called the Miller Model, to measure Florida Keys hurricane evacuation time and to set Keys growth-related policies. Shamlin, echoing the view of many officials countywide, told **Cohen** that the rapid development in Homestead and Florida City could make all considerations of Keys evacuation moot. Once on the mainland only the Florida Turnpike, U.S. 1 and Krome Avenue provide evacuation routes to points further north. "Unmanaged growth is putting families in the Keys in danger and I mean that in the most literal sense," Shamlin said.

Cohen's visit to Layton City Hall, which was arranged on short notice, came the day after the Miami-Dade County Commission decided to forward for DCA review nine applications for expansion of that county's UDB. Development is restricted to one home per five acres in areas outside the boundary. The boundary is designed to provide a buffer between urban, agricultural and environmentally sensitive land.

On Friday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez vetoed the commission's decision. The commission was to weigh an override at its meeting on Tuesday. Lennar Corp.'s plan to build a 6,000-home development near Card Sound Road, south of Miami-Dade's UDB, is not among the nine applications in question. In August the South Florida Regional Planning Council told Lennar officials that its application for the so-called Florida City Commons project was incomplete. The company has until the middle of this month to resubmit the application, or it can ask for additional time.

Cohen's Layton visit also came on the heels of a decision by the DCA to allow 2,616 new homes in Homestead despite the fact that the South Florida Regional Planning Council recommended against approval of the homes. Under Florida Statute, the regional planning council reviews large development plans, called Developments of Regional Impact, and makes a recommendation to the DCA. The Miami Herald first reported on the DCA's Homestead decision

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Nov. 17. Shamlin told the secretary that the DCA's Homestead decision gave reason for pause. "Judging from what we saw in Homestead, we are concerned that the DCA might approve these [Developments of Regional Impact] without lengthy review on the impact of evacuation on the Florida Keys," he said.

But **Cohen** said that despite the ruling, the DCA does want Homestead to consider the regional impact of developments in the city. "It seems to be prudent policy for them to think about how their actions will affect their neighbors," he said. **Cohen** also hinted at a planning tool that the state Division of Emergency Management is devising to measure regional evacuation times. He provided no details but said he hoped to know more about the matter in the near future. He defended the Homestead decision as just one frame of a much bigger picture. "You can focus on each decision as it is made," he said. "But you can also look at it as a large puzzle and some of the puzzle units can be more beautiful than others."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)

December 7, 2005

Cohen: Bus tour to check parcels goes 'very well'

Author: Alyson Matley

Monroe County Commissioner Murray Nelson and state growth chief **Thaddeus Cohen** are calling a bus tour of the Keys a success. Friday, Nelson, county staffers and **Cohen**, secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs, set out to "ground truth" up to 200 lots that Nelson has argued do not belong categorized with larger unbuildable properties. "We were looking at lots one acre or less," he said, "and agreed not to have them fall in the [most protected areas.]"

"The trip went very well. It was a constructive fact-finding mission," **Cohen** said Tuesday. "I had an opportunity to talk with Monroe County officials and review the maps before our bus tour. The bus tour enabled the group to visualize some of the concerns Commissioner Nelson has. DCA will continue to work with local officials to build consensus on important habitat preservation issues."

In an agreement with DCA, county officials agreed last year to designate contiguous parcels of sensitive native habitat of more than one acre as protected. In October, Nelson began pushing to change the agreement, saying many lots, especially in the Upper Keys, would be unfairly restricted from development. The mapping of lots is part of a larger agreement between the county and DCA. It commits the county to invest millions in sewer projects and land acquisition. In return, DCA agreed to provide additional building permits as well as reinstate past permits the county lost because it was not complying with state mandates to protect the Keys environment.

Nelson challenged a provision in the agreement that does not allow most roads to count as breaks in vegetation. As it stands, a somewhat wooded lot across the street from a wooded parcel of more than one acre would count as part of that acre and likely be nearly impossible to build on.

After looking at each lot, Nelson said, "Everybody agreed there was no connectivity." Overall, he said the tour addressed about 11 acres, some 200 lots. "They are still protected," Nelson told the Keynoter. "They are restricted to a maximum 40 percent clearing." Nelson said county staff is drawing up the maps to document the lots this week. He hopes to have them in hand Monday when he plans to attend a meeting with state Cabinet aides in Tallahassee.

"We hope to present them at the Cabinet board meeting Tuesday for their approval," he added, though the maps are not part of the Cabinet agenda. "Then they will come back to County Commission for adoption. After that they will go to [the U.S.] Fish & Wildlife [Service] as our habitat protection program."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Reporter (Tavernier, FL)

August 4, 2005

DCA Secretary plays broker

Author: Ann Henson

The county mayor and water utility chairwoman met with state officials in Key West to hash out their wastewater differences. **Thaddeus Cohen**, Secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA), said the purpose of the meeting was to encourage both sides to come together and get the relationship between the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and the county back on track. "Both acknowledge that the relationship is not where it needs to be," he said following the meeting. "They recognize that there has been too many voices so they cannot see clearly what their goals are."

County Mayor Dixie Spehar said the meeting was productive. "He concentrated on the partnership and gave us some tasks, which I cannot talk about, to take back to our boards for the August meeting," she said.

Cohen said his goal is to reunite a marriage between the county and the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority (FKAA). At last month's county commission meeting, Spehar's motion to withhold future funding from FKAA unless it would guarantee "reasonable rates" for sewerage passed in a 3-2 vote. Commissioners George Neugent and David Rice voted no. **Cohen** won't settle for that. "If the goal is to get pipes in the ground and connected, they can work through the issues," **Cohen** said in a phone interview last week. **Cohen** sees his role as more marriage counselor than referee. "They have lost the ability to talk to one another, lost their vocabulary," he said. "Direct conversations are the best because you don't have intermediaries to skew the message," he added. "The goal is to get sewers built efficiently, cost effectively and expeditiously."

During the luncheon meeting held on Wednesday, Aug. 3, the two women agreed to pick one individual each to resolve the issues and confer with **Cohen**. Spehar said that County Manager Tom Willi will be her point person. Last week Spehar was frustrated by the chain of events. "I want to see the most affordable and efficient project and I don't mind who does it as long as it's affordable and efficient," she said. Spehar said that she sent her resolution to Mary Rice in time to put it on the FKAA meeting agenda, but it was not added. "That's the second time she's refused to put our resolution on their agenda," Spehar said. Rice said last week that she would try to be cooperative and discuss the issues at this week's meeting, but it was clearly **Cohen's** agenda. "Historically, the county's two roles were to locate and purchase the sites and to assist in funding," Rice said. "It kind of got corrupted from there into the county wanting the authority to approve the project and telling what the project would be."

Rice said the two entities need to stop the fighting and spreading misinformation. "Second, we need to work out something that's equitable to all the county - it's not fair to give Key Largo \$20 million and not give Big Coppitt the same." Rice could not be reached for comment Wednesday evening.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

During the meeting, **Cohen** laid out the ground rules that there would be no finger pointing. Instead, **Cohen** said the focus was on how the two agencies could partner and provide the best possible service to Keys residents. The county could face dire consequences if it doesn't resolve its differences with FKAA. An attorney for DCA contacted the county attorney's office and raised the spectre of non-compliance if the county continues on its present course. **Cohen** acknowledged responsibility for the DCA's deputy general council's comments and the big stick the state wields on such matters.

The governor and Cabinet meet in September to review the county's progress. Should the county be found lacking, the state can withhold building permits. And, the county may be on a short timeframe to work something out with the FKAA. "Often it takes folks time to work their way to possible solutions," **Cohen** said. "But there is a sense of urgency to makes these things happen, that's why we offered our office to get on track and do what they feel is necessary."

Spehar said the Secretary told her he must update the governor on the situation in late August. **Cohen** initially asked for time to speak to the commission at its July meeting, but was turned down by Spehar. Spehar said it was simply a timing issue, that **Cohen** wanted an hour and the agenda was already packed. **Cohen** said his discussion with Spehar was not about the agenda. "The fact of the matter is that the mayor said that she had made a commitment to bring the [FKAA funding] issue forward," **Cohen** said. "If that's the direction she needs to go, to explore her concerns with the colleagues, maybe the time was not right to have our conversation," he said.

The DCA's other concern with the county is its tier system for controlling growth and protecting endangered species and habitat. **Cohen** said he was looking at the two-tier system submitted by the county. A three-tier system was originally proposed, but commissioners found tier two to be too ambiguous. Instead, commissioners approved two tiers -- build and no build. **Cohen** said he had concerns that some of the sensitive land and habitat may fall through the cracks in new system. "We think there is more work that needs to be done so all will feel comfortable," he said. He proposed ground truthing lot by lot any questionable areas. "Our goal is to provide required protection for habitat," **Cohen** said. "We have \$93 million to buy land that the county has identified as sensitive."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Englewood Sun (FL)
June 7, 2005

Hurricane recover, funds filtering down

Author: Steve Reilly

PUNTA GORDA -- Charlotte County Commission Chairwoman Sara Devos and Punta Gorda Mayor Steve Fabian were more than happy Monday to accept a token check for \$9 million from Lt. Governor Toni Jennings and Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen**. "Every time I see (**Cohen**) he's bringing us money," Devos quipped. "He's my new best friend. We really do (appreciate the) support we've been getting," she added in a note of seriousness.

The check symbolized the county and city's share of \$100.9 million in federal community development special reimbursement grants for hurricane recovery. The state DCA was given the authority to distribute the money statewide. The actual money wasn't deposited into county and city coffers Monday, since county and city staffs have to work out details with state officials on what projects and how the money is to be spent. County and city officials will divide the \$9 million equally.

Jennings and **Cohen** are actually touring the state and meeting with officials from the hurricane-damaged counties. Besides Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, St. Lucie, Indian River, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties all received a \$9 million share of the money. Brevard, Martin, Palm Beach, Polk, Orange, Okeechobee, Volusia and Osceola counties received \$4.4 million each for their hurricane recoveries. To date, state officials estimate \$780 million has been distributed for public assistance and reimbursement for debris removal, emergency response and other recovery projects. "I said we weren't coming with bags of money, but what we would be doing is coming with ways you could access money," **Cohen** said, referring to a recent statewide workshop on grant applications.

The city and county are now anticipating another \$20 million in July, specifically for affordable housing, when the state's budget goes into effect. When asked whether the first hurricane of this season or state housing money will be seen locally first, Jennings said she didn't want to think about any more hurricanes hitting Florida. She also said the state will not be just be handing the city and county \$20 million. "They will have to have plans," Jennings said.

Bob Hebert, the county's disaster recovery director, said county and city officials are already working on those plans. But while state officials say they see recovery funding being processed at faster than normal bureaucratic speed, Hebert said after his most recent meetings with state and federal officials, he thinks the processing of that funding may be slowing down a bit. "I think (federal and state officials) may be getting nervous about all the money that was promised in the beginning," Hebert said.

Cohen said after the \$20 million, the state plans to work with Charlotte and other local officials in identifying funding sources to make long-term recovery plans a reality. Much has been done

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

to recover from the damages left by Hurricane Charley and last year's hurricane season, but Hebert said he could see Charlotte County ultimately facing \$100 million in recovery costs. "You can see places that are all new and rebuilt, but you go two streets away and it's just like the day after the storm," he said. "Those are the hard-core problems."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

North Port Sun (FL)
May 14, 2005

Time to look forward
New hurricane season approaching
Author: Bob Reddy

TAMPA -- It became clear very quickly that a different approach to recovery would be needed after Hurricane Charley blew through Southwest Florida nine months ago. "Helping desperate people at the moment of need became the focus, and we need to do better," Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said Friday during the last day of the 19th annual Governor's Hurricane Conference. William Gray, a renowned hurricane forecaster, also hinted he might increase his forecast for the upcoming hurricane season.

Cohen said communities that had their economies destroyed by the hurricanes of 2004 needed to recover quickly, and a long-term recovery process was established on the fly thanks to the efforts of many people. With the bleak forecast of two decades of increased hurricane activity, the lessons learned this past season need to be applied to the next community that suffers from disaster. With the help and initiative of Derek and David Dunn-Rankin and the Charlotte Sun, **Cohen** said, the state and Federal Emergency Management Agency created a housing strike team and started the long-term recovery process. "If you had one thing that you would want your community to do, it is to move forward with your future plans right away," he said. "Using the existing comprehensive plan, which is your list of future goals and wishes, is the ideal place to start." **Cohen** repeatedly cited examples in Southwest Florida about how to plan for the future after disaster based on the plans created thanks to the collaboration of a government and public cooperation. "In DeSoto County, we are trying to develop the tourism of the Peace River," he said. "In Charlotte County, we have the community group called Team Punta Gorda, which is planning the revitalization of that city."

Southwest Florida should be commended because of the amount of public input into the process, what **Cohen** calls the "silver lining" to the storms. More than 1,100 people attended a FEMA planning meeting in Charlotte County, and 400 went to meetings in DeSoto and Hardee counties. "We don't want to restore a community to where it was," **Cohen** said. "We need to take it beyond that point and make each community better and stronger for the next storm."

Gray warned the next storm may hit Florida this year, but then again, it may not hit Florida for another decade. "Think of how lucky you've been for the past four decades," Gray said. "We are in a new era -- with more major storms than ever before," He also said he believes the Atlantic is in the type of environment when more land-falling hurricanes are likely. "It's a bleak picture which could last another 15 to 20 years," he warned. Gray said that if anyone says he can predict a hurricane can hit any one point on the U.S. coastline, he is lying. "Nobody can tell for sure, but I can give you the odds," he said.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Those odds, based on extensive research of salinity levels in the ocean, water temperature and a look back at history, do not look good for the upcoming season.

Gray forecasts a busier-than-normal season, with 13 named storms, seven hurricanes and three intense storms forecast. A normal season sees 10 named storms, 4.5 hurricanes and 1.5 intense storms. An intense hurricane is a Category 3 or greater, with maximum sustained winds of 111 mph or higher. The hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

Gray said there is a 73 percent probability a major hurricane will strike the U.S. mainland. He gives the U.S. east coast, including the Florida Peninsula to just north of Tampa, a 53 percent probability. Gray and his team at Colorado State University will come out with their next forecast on May 31 and he said he will likely increase the numbers then. "Right now, the Atlantic looks very favorable for hurricane development," he said. "A weak El Niño and above normal sea surface temperatures and the numbers do not look favorable for a slow hurricane season." Gray's team updates its forecast three times during the season on Aug. 5, Sept. 2, and Oct. 3. The National Hurricane Center issues its own seasonal forecast Monday.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Business Wire
February 3, 2005

Department of Community Affairs Secretary Thaddeus Cohen to Address the South Florida Regional Planning Council at its February 7th Council Meeting

Dateline: HOLLYWOOD, Fla.

South Florida Regional Planning Council, Hollywood Isabel Cosio Carballo, 954-985-4416
On Monday, February 7th, Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** will meet with the South Florida Regional Planning Council Board at its monthly Council meeting to discuss the Department's recommended growth management reforms for the 2005 Florida Legislative Session. The Department's "Principles for Reform" of Florida's Growth Management System include focusing state activities on priority state interests; increasing local government accountability in local land use decisions; emphasizing citizen role in community forums, rather than in judicial forums; updating the Development of Regional Impacts review process and removing duplication; and improving regional coordination. Secretary **Cohen's** biography follows below.

The Council Board will also hear from Commissioner Sidney C. Calloway of the Florida Transportation Commission regarding Florida's Transportation System and needed investments that are needed to manage congestion and keep South Florida's economy growing. Commissioner Calloway is South Florida's representative on the Florida Transportation Commission. The Commission was created by the 1987 Legislature to provide policy guidance and public accountability for the Florida Department of Transportation. Commissioner Calloway was appointed by the Governor in December 2001 and is serving a four-year term. He is a Partner in the law firm of Shutts and Bowen, LLP, and a member of the Urban League of Broward County, the Broward League of Cities, and the Port Everglades Trade Association.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council's meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, February 7th and will be held at the Council's offices at 3440 Hollywood Boulevard, Suite 140 in Hollywood, Florida. For additional information please contact Isabel Cosio Carballo, Legislative & Public Affairs Coordinator, at 954-985-4416.

About Secretary Thaddeus Cohen

Thaddeus Cohen was named by Governor Jeb Bush as Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs on March 10, 2004. Secretary **Cohen** has over 30 years of experience in architecture, urban design and community planning. He has provided economic and development strategies for public and private clients. His areas of design expertise include urban planning, health care development, educational, recreational and water treatment facilities. In his approach to planning, Secretary **Cohen** will place specific importance on the need for comprehensive planning in order to achieve a working relationship between public and private sectors.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Secretary **Cohen** has a history of proactive involvement in his community through professional and community organizations. Secretary **Cohen** is the past chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County; past chairman of the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County, a former member of the board of directors of the Broward Alliance, and a former Broward Workshop member. On a state level he served on the boards of 1000 Friends of Florida and the American Institute of Architects Florida Chapter.

Prior to his appointment as DCA Secretary, he was asked by Governor Jeb Bush to serve on the 2000 Growth Management Study Commission. He quickly garnered the respect and admiration of his fellow board members establishing himself as a creative thinker and charismatic speaker. Born in California and raised in New Jersey Secretary **Cohen** attended Kent State University in Ohio where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture. He currently resides in Tallahassee, Florida with his wife, daughter and grand daughter.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

January 22, 2005

Push for growth changes envisions power locally

Author: Hector Florin

When it comes to managing Florida's explosive growth, the state should play the role of "marriage counselor," not judge or referee, while local and regional governments set the stage for their futures. That's the crux of the statewide growth initiative that **Thaddeus Cohen**, Department of Community Affairs secretary, presented Friday to the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. **Cohen** said he hopes the bill that has been drafted will pass in the state legislative session that begins in March.

This year, **Cohen's** first as the state's top land-planning official, is also the 20th anniversary of the state's Growth Management Act that **Cohen** hopes to tweak. The initiative urges local and regional bodies to collaborate with citizens and among themselves and forecast growth trends, while working within the state's priority interests. With available technology, "there's the opportunity to think about where we might want to go," **Cohen** said, adding that planning should start "when you're thinking about thinking about a road."

The initiative is currently being discussed at House committee meetings. State Rep. Mike Davis, R-Naples, who sponsored the bill's draft, said the measure would reverse the current "top-down approach" of growth plans, in which the Department of Community Affairs sits atop of the organizational chart. Responsibility should lie at the local level, in particular with citizen involvement, Davis said. "This initiative seems to be turning that around," Davis said. "If there's more of a regional approach, you're looking at the bigger picture to maintain and develop the character of an area in a certain way."

Davis said the initiative's language is still a work in progress. The draft does not spell out how the state and local governments would forge common goals. But like **Cohen**, Davis is optimistic the initiative will be heard. Warren Newell, Palm Beach County commissioner, said the Department of Community Affairs should act more as a partner with local and regional bodies. "Land-use issues are really local issues," Newell said. "Local governments really have the resources and the connections with the people."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Englewood Sun (FL)

December 22, 2004

Task force launches weekly hunt for recovery money

Author: Barry Millman

Members of a high-level task force representing dozens of federal and state aid agencies scattered from Washington, D.C., and Atlanta to Tallahassee and Orlando have begun weekly teleconferences to find money for the ambitious projects outlined in hurricane recovery plans for Charlotte, DeSoto and Hardee counties. The task force, co-chaired by **Thaddeus Cohen**, secretary of Florida's Department of Community Affairs, and Todd Davison, mitigation division director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region IV, met for the first time last week and scheduled continuing meetings every Thursday to devise and develop funding packages to finance long-term recovery plans.

"There was a multitude of agencies and groups on the line," Davison said Tuesday of the first meeting, at which he estimated more than 40 government and municipal entities participated. "It lasted about an hour and was largely spent on introductions, getting familiar with one another and what everyone has to offer, and setting up a schedule and strategies for getting the job done."

"I'm enthusiastic about the level of commitment shown by our state and federal partners as we continue with the recovery process," said **Cohen**, who attended the Dec. 7 formal presentation of the long-term recovery plan to Charlotte and Punta Gorda officials. "I'm looking forward to more productive meetings as we continue to find solutions to the issues facing the communities impacted by this hurricane season."

Davison, who led similar task forces following widespread weather-related disasters in North Carolina and North Dakota in 1996 and 1997 respectively, was flown in to mobilize and run FEMA's Port Charlotte "Charley Command" center in the weeks after the August storm. He said the long-term recovery process he now helps oversee is the most sophisticated he has experienced to date. "The level of public outreach, input and participation has been quite cutting edge," Davison said. "And with the Tri-County Recovery Collaborative in place, we should really be able to address the counties' needs on an individual and regional basis effectively." The collaborative is a nonprofit agency formed by public and private interests in the three counties to leverage and coordinate relief and recovery efforts within Charley's impact zone. Davison said FEMA is taking its commitment to the long-term aspect of the recovery seriously, having already made provisions to staff its Port Charlotte office through August 2007, and to train and transition local county employees to take their places to continue recovery efforts.

Meanwhile, as the task force gears up to find the funds for rebuilding the storm-struck counties, DCA and FEMA representatives are huddling with local officials to draw up job descriptions and strategies for three full-time managers who will be stationed in each of the hurricane-ravaged counties to guide their rebuilding efforts. The managers will be employed by the DCA with salaries paid by FEMA.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The managers and a regional coordinator are expected to be in place early next month. Bob Hebert, Charlotte's former grants manager who has been drawn by the post-storm scramble for relief funds into his current role as county recovery director, said he welcomes the additional firepower that a full-time recovery manager plugged directly into state and federal financial resources will bring to the county's recovery battle. "I think it's critical for each county to have a full-time DCA recovery manager on board to streamline the process," he said. "I'm sure they will benefit from our work as we benefit from theirs, and together we'll be able to get the county everything it needs in the most efficient way."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Daily News

December 5, 2004

Architects win awards for design

Author: Robert Janjigian

On Nov. 16, architectural professionals from Palm Beach County gathered in The Breakers' Circle Dining Room for drinks, dinner and the presentation of the Palm Beach chapter of the American Institute of Architects' annual honor awards for design. The organization has held the annual competition and awards ceremonies for the past 57 years. There were 21 entries in this year's competition, in three categories: built projects, unbuilt projects and renovation. Smith Architectural Group of Palm Beach won two awards. The firm was cited for its renovation of the Graff diamond salon on Worth Avenue and for its design of a Mediterranean-style residence in Naples.

Also receiving honor awards were: Currie Sowards Aguila Architects of Delray Beach for their proposed design for the Savage Creatures of the Ancient Seas Museum in Boynton Beach; Jupiter architect Thomas Kirchhoff for his design of a Jupiter Island residence; Retzsch Lanao Caycedo Architects of Boca Raton for their design of The Ellington, a town house block in Fort Lauderdale; and REG Architects of West Palm Beach for their unbuilt Bay Shore Golf Clubhouse in Miami Beach.

After the design awards were presented, Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen**, now serving as secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee, received the AIA Gold Medal, the highest honor an AIA chapter can bestow on one of its members.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

April 1, 2004

Friends of Florida's loss of Cohen is Florida's Gain

About the March 22 article "Governor's choice for growth chief seen as curious," on the appointment of **Thaddeus Cohen** of Delray Beach as secretary of the Department of Community Affairs: I write to express 1000 Friends of Florida's appreciation and support for one of its own.

As an officer and valued member of our board of directors, and as an architect and officer in the American Institute of Architects, he is an ardent proponent of smart growth, citizen involvement and good urban design. We know he will work to keep the best interests of all Florida's residents in mind as he assumes this critically important leadership role in helping improve the state's growth management programs.

We always have known him to encourage people to speak out and make their ideas known, as he did while a member of the governor's Growth Management Study Commission. Pa County should be proud that his local knowledge will be brought to bear on the far-reaching Scripps Research Institute project now under way. We look forward to his stewardship and pledge our support in working together for a better Florida. 1000 Friends of Florida's loss will be Florida's gain.

CHARLES PATTISON,
Executive director
1000 Friends of Florida
Tallahassee

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)

March 24, 2004

New DCA chief has Keys links**Thaddeus Cohen worked with Bahama Village**

Author: Alyson Matley

Calling the Keys "romantic," the newly appointed secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs is heading to Tallahassee this week to look for a place to live. "There's a lot of romance associated with the Keys, and everyone has a special place in their heart for what they see them as," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, an architect from Delray Beach who was tapped by Gov. Jeb Bush to fill the shoes of outgoing Secretary Colleen Castille. Bush moved Castille, who has worked closely with Monroe County, to head the state's Department of Environmental Protection. Although **Cohen** doesn't begin officially until April 14, he has a steep learning curve ahead of him, especially when it comes to the intricacies of the Keys. Add to that the stress of finding somewhere to live and closing down his architectural firm.

Despite it all, the easy-going **Cohen** is amiable. He took a few minutes Monday to talk with the Keynoter before heading north. **Cohen** is no stranger to the Keys. In the early 1990s, his firm worked on the Bahama Village Redevelopment Study, and later the Neighborhood Preservation Plan. "From a professional standpoint," said **Cohen**, "it got me into the Keys, working with Norma Jean Sawyer. An outgrowth of that plan is the [Bahama Village] Community Development Corp., and that moved forward to the land trust. At that time, it was the only one in the state." The Bahama Conch Community Land Trust, which **Cohen** calls successful, is a system of keeping local homes affordable in Key West through various rules.

Connection to the Keys apparently runs in the family. **Cohen** tells the tale of his father who drove straight through from New Jersey to the Southernmost Point before turning around and visiting his son in Delray Beach - just to stand in the Keys and see if he could see Cuba. "He was a merchant seaman," said **Cohen**, "and he remembered the ferry that ran to Cuba." **Cohen**, 53, grew up in New Jersey and moved to Florida in 1978.

He has served on several boards, including the environmental group 1000 Friends of Florida, a position he will resign before taking over DCA. He formerly chaired the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County and the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County. Although he says he needs more time to study the details, he is well aware of a recent agreement drawn up between Castille, Monroe County, Marathon and Islamorada. That agreement is aimed at bringing the county into compliance with the state's requirements to protect habitat, provide affordable housing and protect nearshore water quality. It provides a mechanism for the state to begin funding some of the projects as well as an impetus for the county to begin raising some of its own money to reach those mutual goals. Balance, says **Cohen**, is the key. "What happens when the world becomes your market?" He said. "That creates pressures. How do you handle those pressures and keep that special place in your heart so your grandchildren can stay there?"

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

He says he hopes, with the help of the recent strides made through Castille, to find a balance in the Keys. He says working with local government is a key to dealing with what he calls "the inevitability" of what happens in the Keys. "We need to have a balance between accommodating more folks, the issue of affordability of housing, and infrastructure issues. How can you manage all those things and still preserve the romance? I don't think anyone on any side of the issues is in favor of losing the essence of the Keys. If you do, then it's Plain Jane Anywhere."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

March 22, 2004

Governor's choice for Growth Chief seen as curious

Author: Jane Musgrave

Less than a month ago, **Thaddeus Cohen** was doing what has consumed him since he hung his shingle on a Delray Beach storefront 20 years ago. "I was just down here toiling away, trying to make a living," said the architect, who has a staff of one. Three weeks later, he found himself at a news conference standing next to Gov. Jeb Bush. **Cohen**, the governor announced as news cameras flashed, was to become the secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, a far-reaching agency that has roughly 360 employees and a \$625 million budget. "I'm basically having an out-of-body experience," the 53-year-old said last week of the dramatic turn his life has taken in what alternately feels like a nanosecond and a lifetime. **Cohen** is far from the only one stunned by his appointment.

Unlike his predecessors, who were well-known in political circles, **Cohen** is barely known in southern Palm Beach County, much less the state. "Never heard of him," said state Sen. Ron Klein, who was miffed that Bush didn't alert him that someone from his district and his political party was being considered for the powerful post. Still, the Delray Beach Democrat said that since the surprise March 10 announcement he has heard good things about **Cohen**. "He has a reputation as a very committed person," Klein said. "As an architect, he's very well respected."

While not questioning **Cohen's** ability, others question Bush's motives for tapping an unknown to head the agency that has long been at the apex of the state's ongoing war over development. The appointment bears an eerie similarity to Bush's decision to name Mary Hooks head of the Department of Labor and Employment Security six years ago. Like **Cohen**, Hooks was a black Democrat from Palm Beach County who ran her own business and had no statewide political experience. Ten months after Hooks' appointment, the Labor Department was torn apart, 3,800 of its 5,712 full-time jobs cut and many of its programs eliminated. Hooks died March 4.

In the months before he appointed Hooks, Bush made no secret of his desire to revamp the Labor Department, and he's making no secret now of wanting to revamp the Department of Community Affairs by merging it with the Secretary of State's Office. Mindful of that history, some wonder whether **Cohen's** appointment is merely a way to seal those goals. "The agency's under a lot of pressure," said Lance deHaven-Smith, a public policy professor at Florida State University. "There's an obvious need for someone with a strong hand to lead it, that is, unless you don't want it to go anywhere."

Speaking both of **Cohen** and his Department of Community Affairs predecessor, Colleen Castille, a former Cabinet aide whom Bush shifted to head the Department of Environmental Protection, deHaven-Smith said: "Not to put world-class talent in these positions, at the base of it shows a lack of dedication to growth management and environmental protection." The only others interviewed for the post, according to Bush's staff, were Charlotte County Commissioner

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Matt DeBoer and Ginny Myrick, a former Jacksonville city councilwoman who is a land-use and business consultant.

Not regarded as yes man. Those who have watched **Cohen** say that if Bush thinks he appointed a yes man, he tapped the wrong guy. Hank Fishkind, an Orlando economist, said he was impressed with **Cohen** as a member of the Governor's Growth Management Study Commission, created in 2000. Surrounded by such political heavyweights as then-Orange County Commission Chairman Mel Martinez, who went on to head the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, former Florida Agriculture Secretary Bob Crawford and J. Allison DeFoor, the governor's Everglades policy director, **Cohen** did more than hold his own, Fishkind said. "He was really a powerful figure," Fishkind said. "He has good problem-solving skills. He's articulate. He's a strong guy. That's what we want in a secretary." Most, including **Cohen**, say his role on the commission caught Bush's attention and led to the appointment.

As he has done in his architectural work throughout South Florida, **Cohen's** focus on the commission was the need to keep cities vibrant, to meld buildings into their surroundings so they become part of the larger community. As a member of the study panel, **Cohen** said, he saw his philosophy reflected in residents' frustration. "The citizens in the state, in many cases, are not happy with what they see, what they drive through, what they experience," he said. "A lot of that is to do with how we design physical spaces." By focusing on the impact of development, growth-management laws often fail to address what buildings will look like and what effect they will have on a community. The laws often inhibit urban redevelopment at the expense of rural areas. "If we have cities that are more functional, then rural areas can be more successful because there will be less pressure on them," he said.

Scripps project on his watch

Ironically, two of the biggest projects **Cohen** will face when he takes over the agency on April 12 at a salary in the \$107,000 range are the antithesis of his passion for urban development. He will oversee the plans for the development of an expansion branch of The Scripps Research Institute on thousands of acres in rural northwestern Palm Beach County and of the St. Joe Paper Company's plans for its 1-million-acre holdings in the Panhandle.

While some suggest **Cohen** was tapped because Bush wanted a Palm Beach County resident to shepherd the Scripps project through the regulatory process, **Cohen** said Bush never mentioned the biotechnology research park. Charles Pattison, executive director of 1000 Friends of Florida, said the job of Department of Community Affairs secretary is too far-reaching to appoint someone solely on the basis of one, albeit massive, project. Like others, Pattison said he wishes there was more on which to judge **Cohen**. But, he said, that might have been one of things that made **Cohen** attractive. "Others might have had more baggage," Pattison said. Still, he said, it's difficult to predict what a person will do once they are in power. "Look at Tom Pelham," he said, "when he became secretary of DCA everyone said he was just a developer's attorney. He turned out to be one of the strictest directors we've ever had."

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Rosalind Murray, a program director for the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, said one thing she has learned about **Cohen** over the years is that he is unflinching in his beliefs. "He doesn't march to your drummer or my drummer," she said, "he marches to his own drummer."

Thaddeus Cohen

Education: Kent State University, B.A., architecture.

Professional: **Thaddeus Cohen** Architects, president, Delray Beach.

Civic involvement: Governor's Growth Management Study Commission 2000-2001; board member, 1000 Friends of Florida; past member, Delray Beach Housing Authority; past chairman, Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Commission; former board member, Broward Alliance; past chairman, Black Economic Development, Broward County.

Selected projects: Spady Elementary School, Delray Beach; Anne Kolb Nature Center, Hollywood; Spanish Courts, Riviera Beach; High Ridge Family Center, West Palm Beach; Loxahatchee Preserve Nature Center, Palm Beach County; Bahama Village/Southwest Neighborhood Preservation Plan, Key West; Northwest Neighborhood Study, West Palm Beach.

Personal: Married to Sylvia, a researcher at the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University; 19-year-old daughter.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
August 7, 1998

Delray Housing Board earns B+ - Federal agency raises grade after visiting the site
Author: Brad Bennett

The Delray Beach Housing Authority has risen above its "troubled" status, HUD officials announced on Thursday. The local agency, which supervises the 200-unit Carver Estates public-housing project, is now classified as a "standard performer" and has raised its management score above failing, officials with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said. The score will not be final until next month. "We are happy with the tentative scoring that we've received," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, the Housing Authority's vice chairman. "I wasn't concerned. I knew we would do well."

Thursday's announcement concluded a visit this week by HUD officials to the Delray Beach agency, where they spent three days poring over documents to determine whether the agency actually made the improvements it claimed. A 1996 HUD audit designated the management as "troubled" for keeping sloppy records, mismanaging finances and improperly maintaining public-housing buildings.

Last year, the agency improved its tentative score to 60.88 out of a possible 100, or a D, but that was based largely on a self-evaluation. Despite the apparent improvements, HUD officials continued to list the agency as "troubled" until they could confirm the score with an on-site review. Following this week's review, **Cohen** said the Housing Authority has a new score of 89.72, or a B-plus, a marked improvement over the 54.40 score in 1996.

HUD officials would not confirm the new score until it is final. "We can hardly wait until it becomes official," said Dorothy Ellington, the local agency's executive director, in a news release. "This is excellent news. The staff has worked hard over the past 18 months to reach this point, and they are to be congratulated." HUD sent in consultants last year after learning that Ellington was receiving applications for the director's job _ a position for which she was applying.

The Housing Authority gave the permanent job to Ellington last month, crediting her with overseeing the improvements as interim director. Previously, two directors were fired for illegal check-writing schemes. Former interim Director Ronald Range was accused of writing agency checks for personal business and was fired in 1996. He was arrested earlier this year and sentenced to three years' probation. To avoid jail time, he agreed to pay back the \$2,296 he stole from the agency and do community service. Range was under house arrest for the first year of probation. On Tuesday he pleaded guilty in Palm Beach County Court to charges of violating his house arrest by visiting a Broward County pawnshop in April, court records show. He was given 36 months of house arrest for that charge.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
July 31, 1998

Delray agency balks at architect's high fee
CRA won't sign contract for redoing historic home
Author: Mary Lou Pickel

The city's Community Redevelopment Agency says it won't sign a contract with an architect to design and manage the renovation of the Solomon D. Spady house because the price is too high. "It's a lot of money for a little project," CRA Executive Assistant Diane Hervey said of the architect's \$31,500 price tag. CRA Executive Director Chris Brown was unavailable for comment. The CRA board unanimously chose architect **Thaddeus Cohen** earlier this year over two others based on his qualifications. **Cohen** later asked for \$31,500 to design plans to renovate the home of former educator S.D. Spady. He also would supervise an estimated \$275,000 in renovations.

The house is slated to be a multicultural history museum. The entire project is expected to cost about \$560,000. Vera Farrington, president of EPOCH, the non-profit group that began the preservation effort, said her board had some questions about **Cohen's** contract. "Naturally, we're trying to keep the cost down," she said. But Farrington said the group wants **Cohen** as the architect because it likes his work. The group needs an architect on board before it can take advantage of a \$150,000 state historic preservation grant it will get this year. The CRA board is expected to approve paperwork at its next meeting to get the money.

Cohen and the two architects who bid for the job but didn't get it said renovating a house is more time-consuming and expensive than building a new one. But **Cohen** said he's flexible on his price, which equals 11.45 percent of the estimated construction cost.

Architect Jeff Silberstein said he would probably charge 8 percent to 15 percent for designing a house although he wouldn't say how much he'd charge to do the Spady job. Architect Gary Eliopolous, said he would ask 8 percent for the Spady House job, or \$22,000. The local Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity hopes to raise \$25,000 this month toward efforts to renovate the 1926 Mission Revival house. And pastors began asking for donations during sermons on Sunday.

EPOCH has received \$25,000 from the Delray Beach Historical Society, and \$5,000 from the Forrest C. Lattner Foundation. About \$20,000 has come from memberships and community donations, Farrington said.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
March 18, 1998

BRIEFLY

DELRAY BEACH - Police honored **Thaddeus Cohen** and Zane Emerson Tuesday for the parts they played in solving separate crimes - a homicide and an armed robbery - during the past two months. **Cohen**, a Delray Beach Housing Authority board member, heard shots outside his home Feb. 15, saw 21-year-old Eric Schunk on the ground and spotted someone riding away on a bicycle. **Cohen** stopped Brian Glatzmayer, 19, of Delray Beach and held him for police, officer Jeff Messer said.

Glatzmayer and three other teens were charged with murder. Emerson, a retired Boca Raton fire lieutenant, witnessed an armed robbery, chased a suspect and took him back to the police station, Messer said.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
February 20, 1998

I'm no hero, hero says, after nabbing Delray slay suspect

Author: Steve Nichol

When **Thaddeus Cohen** collared a bulky teen-ager attempting to flee on a bicycle, he hastened four arrests in the murder of a popular construction worker, police said on Thursday. "His willingness to get involved, to have enough presence of mind to keep him there, was tremendous in helping us," Delray Beach Police Detective Ed Flynn said. "He definitely saved us a lot of footwork."

Cohen, awakened by gunshots, snagged Brian Glatzmayer, 18, at 2 a.m. on Sunday as he pedaled away from the Rainberry Woods park where Eric Schunk, 21, was shot to death. Glatzmayer later confessed to calling Schunk to meet him for a drug deal that was meant as a robbery but ended in murder, police said. A white substance was found on Schunk that could be cocaine but police have not tested it.

Statements by Glatzmayer, of Delray Beach, led to arrests and confessions on Tuesday of three teen-agers from Boynton Beach, including Ramon Franco, 15, identified as the shooter, police said. Glatzmayer, Franco, Carlos Umana, 16, and Charles Israel, 17, face attempted armed robbery and murder charges. All were in jail before Schunk's funeral on Wednesday. Flynn said he plans to nominate **Cohen** for an award. "If we didn't have [department awards] I'd get him something," Flynn said. "I was glad to help," **Cohen** said.

An architect in Delray Beach for 20 years, **Cohen** serves on the city's Housing Authority board. He has been married for 26 years and has a daughter, 13. "He's basically a good guy. He's not perfect," said his wife Sylvia.

The **Cohens** were asleep when they heard a "pop, pop" sound of gunshots outside of their Rainberry Woods home. **Thaddeus Cohen**, looking from his bedroom window, saw a car speeding away. He went outside and saw a young man standing near a body in the swale. **Cohen** told his wife to call 911 and went back to the house to get a flashlight. That's when he saw Glatzmayer leaving on a bicycle.

Cohen, who is 6-foot-1 and 230 pounds, said he reached out and stopped the inch-taller, 220-pound Glatzmayer. "I grabbed him around his neck and shoulder. His bike fell. He fell. I had a hold of him. I told him to get up. I started dragging him back," said **Cohen**, 47. "That's when I asked him what happened," **Cohen** said. Glatzmayer told **Cohen** that Schunk was a victim of a drive-by shooting. **Cohen** said he ordered the boy to "get down on one knee and don't move" until police arrived. "It happened so fast," **Cohen** said. Glatzmayer told police the same story he gave **Cohen**, Flynn said. Physical evidence did not match the story, police said. Schunk's wounds indicated a close-range shooting. Eventually, Glatzmayer changed his story and the arrests resulted, Flynn said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cohen and his wife said that four days after the shooting incident, they were not thinking of **Thaddeus Cohen's** personal danger or heroism but the lives of Schunk and the four teen-agers charged in his death. Friends of Schunk have erected an elaborate memorial to him across from the **Cohen's** home. "He's dead, and the four kids, their lives are practically ruined," Sylvia Cohen said.

It's not the first time **Cohen** has been around violence. As a teen-ager in 1967, **Cohen** said he was working a summer job as a janitor in Newark, N.J., when the New Jersey National Guard, in armored personnel carriers, was called to quell racial rioting. "Just tried to stay out of the way," **Cohen** said. As a second-year architecture student at Kent State University in 1970, **Cohen** witnessed an anti-Vietnam War rally outside the architecture building that ended when Ohio National Guard members opened fire and killed four students. **Cohen** said he helped keep space around the victims in the tumult that followed.

Schunk's final moments alive brought back memories of Kent State, **Cohen** said. This time **Cohen** was down on the ground, applying cardio-pulmonary resuscitation to a young man with a bullet hole in his chest. Schunk died by the time paramedics arrived. Because the murder case was wrapped up so fast, Flynn said he did not get around to conducting a full interview of **Cohen** until Thursday. He was effusive afterward. "I'm impressed by the man. He's a very honest, straightforward person. I am going to enjoy having him as a witness."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
January 12, 1997

Architect has built a solid reputation, career

Author: Marcia H. Pounds

When architect **Thaddeus Cohen** came to South Florida in 1978 to visit a former professor, he couldn't help but notice all the cranes. He decided that this market, with its growing population in need of schools, hospitals and government centers, would be the place of opportunity for him and his young family. Now, 18 years later, **Cohen**, 46, runs his own architectural firm in Delray Beach and he finally feels he has the lay of the land.

"It takes time, particularly for a black architect, to have credibility," **Cohen** said. "Often times people don't listen to us. Then they come back and say, 'You know what you're doing. You were right.'" His firm has built a solid reputation in government work with projects including Spady Elementary in Delray Beach, the first public Montessori school in Palm Beach County; the Anne Kolb Nature Center in Hollywood; and the 79th Street Tri-Rail Station (where Tri-Rail ends in Dade County).

Cohen "is very insightful, he's innovative, and certainly energetic," said James Garver, president of the Broward Economic Development Council. "He's one of those ultimate salesmen who is always out selling his wares and trying to do a little bit better." As a certified minority contractor, **Cohen** said he sometimes gets frustrated when his firm fails to make the short list for a project. But he doesn't believe in public grousing. Instead, "I get a better understanding of what people are expecting from us," he said.

Garver said it is **Cohen's** willingness to listen and to get involved in the community that has been the design for a successful architectural career in South Florida. To help establish his architectural firm, **Cohen** paid for \$1 million in professional liability insurance. That's what was necessary to team up with a larger firm for a project. "We eliminate the excuses. We carry it. ... I've always tried to position ourselves so there was no question of our ability to do the work," he said.

Cohen also immersed himself in the community, which often takes time away from business and family. But **Cohen** said he understood early on that "if you don't do it, you're not a player." He has been chairman of the Palm Beach County's Affordable Housing Commission and now is a Delray Beach Housing Authority board member, which has proven to be a formidable task. Soon after he joined the board, the Housing Authority became mired in trouble. The last two executive directors have been fired in connection with investigations of financial misconduct.

But **Cohen** faces such problems matter-of-factly. "You discover problems and then you go about the business of fixing them," he said. **Cohen** said one of his most satisfying architectural projects was renovation of the historic Tabernacle Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, the oldest African-American church in Palm Beach County. Robert Dillingham, trustee of the church's

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

board during the renovation, said **Cohen's** design work was instrumental to financing the renovation project of the 104-year-old church. "I know how difficult it is being a black professional. I'm a black professional myself. A lot of times people are very leery of your services. I average two to three phone calls a week from people about **Cohen** and the work he's done. ... He would get a personal recommendation from our church anytime."

Cohen has helped other minority businesses get a running start by forming a monthly Business Forum to introduce minority business owners to mainstream business people, Garver said. **Cohen** still finds himself traveling from Brevard County to Monroe County to find government projects of interest that also pay the bills. Now settled in South Florida with his wife, Sylvia, and their 12-year-old daughter, **Cohen** said the challenge before him is to expand his firm so he can take on several projects in a closer geographic area. "In the next 10 years, hopefully we'll break the mold and pursue private work," **Cohen** said

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
September 21, 1996

DELRAY BEACH

Six Delray Beach Housing Authority board members were dropped as defendants in a lawsuit filed by former executive director Deborah Castellow after she was fired in January.

Palm Beach County Circuit Judge John J. Hoy dropped defendants **Thaddeus Cohen**, Howard Ellingsworth, Robin Preston, Judith Colvard, Kevin McCarty and Tom Carney on Thursday, saying the six were not served with court papers within four months as required.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
June 8, 1996

Third person arrested in agency's check scam

Author: Barbara Feder

A maintenance worker for the Delray Beach Housing Authority was charged Friday with using bogus checks to steal from the agency, a day after its former executive director and former board chairwoman turned themselves in on identical charges. David McNeil, 57, turned himself in Friday. He was charged with one count of grand theft and was released on \$3,000 bond.

Former Executive Director Deborah Castellow, 43, who was fired by the agency's board in January, and former board Chairwoman Rosetta Rolle, 73, turned themselves in Thursday. Each was released on \$3,000 bond.

McNeil and Castellow could not be reached for comment Friday, and Rolle declined comment. The arrests resulted from an investigation into 36 checks worth \$5,800 that were written for cleaning services that were never performed.

The checks were made out to two of Rolle's relatives and to a woman believed to be McNeil's relative. Interim Executive Director Ron Range gave the checks to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement after he could find no invoices for the work.

"Clearly, there have been problems and this does not help," said board member **Thaddeus Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect. "But I don't think it takes away from what we're doing to improve our management and fix up our units."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
February 7, 1993

Familiar faces: Black businesses must find support in own community

Author: C. Ron Allen

When Donnie Dobson serves breakfast, all the faces he sees are black. When he takes phone orders for dinner, the voices he hears are those of black people. Blacks are the backbone of Dobson's business, Parker's Kitchen on West Atlantic Avenue. "If they don't support my business, I'm out," said Dobson, 42. "Ninety- nine percent of my business is black. I have a few whites who work for the city, but that's only a few."

Dobson's concerns mirror those of several other established and progressive Palm Beach County blacks who rely on black people to keep them in business. While many black professionals and business owners -- lawyers, funeral directors and restaurateurs -- said they have both black and white clients and customers, blacks account for most of their business. And even with their mixed clientele, some said they fail to gain a greater share of white business.

Architect **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, in private practice since 1986, said hard work and membership in community groups and national trade organizations are ways for blacks to develop a larger white clientele. "The more people that you know, the more your name gets around," he said. "You've got to tell people that you exist." Some blacks must be prepared to make a financial sacrifice to provide a product that is competitive and presentable, he said. "It's going to hurt badly in the beginning to meet the expectations, but if you're trying to grab local people, you have to provide them a quality comparable to what they're receiving," he said.

This also may mean working twice as hard to gain an edge over the competition as well as to gain trust among other blacks. "It's hard to convince the black community that a black attorney or even a black doctor is competent," said Wilbur Chaney, a Delray Beach attorney. "We're still faced with that stigma. ..." Bill and Caroline Wilson, owners of Village Cleaners in Delray Beach and Lantana, hoped to expand their clientele when they moved their business from Hollywood to Boca Raton in 1982. Despite a prime Boca Raton location, business was so bad, they had to close their doors.

In June, the Wilsons opened a pickup location in a shopping center on Lake Ida Road. Although they have some white clients, most of their customers are either members of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church -- a black church where they worship -- or Haitians. Businessman Alfred "Zack" Straghn stresses the need for blacks to support neighborhood businesses. If blacks fail to support their own, many neighborhood businesses will crumble, he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
December 29, 1993

Consortium names leader
Author: Staff reports

Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** has been named the new Board of Directors chairman for the African-American Cultural Consortium of the Palm Beaches. The advocacy organization, founded in 1988, serves cultural interests in the county on behalf of African-Americans. It has organized such events as the Gospel Jubilee concerts in West Palm Beach and the African-diaspora fine arts festival.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Miami Herald (FL)

June 14, 1992

A closer look at four architects and their imprints on S. Florida

Author: Beth Dunlop

Here's a look at the lives and the work of the four architects pictured on Page 1G. When he was a boy growing up in East Orange, N.J., **Thaddeus Cohen** watched the construction of a freeway right through his neighborhood. The public housing projects were soon to follow. "I'd wanted to be a farmer till then," he said, "but then I began to wonder who were these people who designed public housing projects that looked like jails?" He decided to become an architect. He went to Kent State University in Ohio, then went to work, first as a ditch-digger, then as an estimator and finally as an architect. He became the chief architect for Cleveland's Metro Parks System.

One winter he came to Boca Raton to visit a friend and was drawn to Florida. He worked for two large firms -- Peabody & Childs and Darby & Way -- and then "quit on Friday the 13th and started working out of my own house on Monday." That was six years ago.

Now he has an office and is designing schools in Delray Beach and Pompano Beach, a community center in Cocoa, a hospital fitness center in Hollywood and, not ironically, public housing in Deerfield Beach. He also is designing a three-building complex for the Anne Kolb Nature Center as part of a new park in Hollywood.

Cohen also is the urban planner for several major neighborhood projects, including the Sistrunk neighborhood in Fort Lauderdale and the Bahama Village in Key West.

Neil Hall has traversed the tropics -- born in Jamaica, reared in the Bahamas and educated in Florida. He came to Miami on his way to McGill University and changed his mind when he discovered how cold it got in Montreal. Instead, drawn to architecture by his interest since early childhood in art and math, he started at Miami-Dade Community College and went on to the University of Florida, where he got bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. After graduation, he started at the Jacksonville firm of Reynolds Smith & Hills, then returned to Miami. He began at Greenleaf Telesca, Bouterse Perez & Fabregas and then went to Spillis Candela & Partners. Along the way he worked on such projects as Florida International University's Interama Campus, Barnett Bank Plaza in Fort Lauderdale and Sailfish Point in Palm Beach. "I was given a lot of latitude, a lot of responsibilities," he said.

Eventually, Hall went to work for Borelli & Associates, where he was the firm's project manager for the Miami Beach Convention Center (done in conjunction with three other firms) and the North Dade Vo-Tech Center, a new high school.

Then he got a little help from a friend. Actor Philip- Michael Thomas (of Miami Vice fame) hired him to design a house and, with that yet-to-be-built commission, he opened his own firm in 1990. Now, among other projects, he's at work on an important study of the McFarlane Historic

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

District in Coconut Grove, where he's looking at ways to preserve early shotgun houses and other vernacular architecture.

As a child in Jamaica, Hermine Ricketts knew what she wanted to be, "but I didn't have a name for it. I didn't know any architects. I didn't have any role models." In Jamaica, no school offered a full architectural degree, so she set off to Howard University in Washington, D.C. She moved to Miami "on my way back to Jamaica" and started along a nice safe path -- getting an MBA -- and then changed to the chanciest of all courses to follow. She went into business for herself, choosing to "be the person who handles everything." As the only black woman registered architect in South Florida, Ricketts finds she faces a double bill of discrimination -- racism and sexism. But she has surmounted both to renovate hospital labs and wards at Jackson Memorial Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital and schools.

Two -- Miami Shores and Comstock elementary schools -- were done in partnership with a white male Broward firm and two -- Jan Mann and Carol City Elementary schools -- were done on her own. She also designed African Square Park on Northwest 62nd Street.

When he got his master's degree from Harvard in 1974, Craig Stark set off on a series of apprenticeships in Boston-based architecture firms. He ended up at Boston's black-owned Stull & Lee, architects for Biscayne Tower in downtown Miami's Park West area and other buildings. He got a second education there. He learned about finances, an area "where white firms don't let you in the door." Soon, he was ready to go out on his own, so he made a big leap. He moved to Miami to open Cruz Stark, and luck struck: The firm was selected the local liaison for the Miami Arena.

Eventually, that partnership dissolved, and Stark is in a new joint firm, Heisenbottle Stark & Partners, with some high- profile jobs. Among them are the renovation of and additions to Edison Middle School and the design of 115 bathrooms at Miami International Airport, "a project that could be thankless, but we're going to do and do it well!"

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post
October 6, 1991

Delray architect coaches community rebirth

Author: Sonja Isger

The term for it was "urban renewal," but all he knew as a kid growing up in East Orange, N.J., was that his friends were moving because the freeway was coming through. The stark, imposing building going up down the street was rumored to be a jailhouse, but it was really a government housing project. And all that young **Thaddeus Cohen** could wonder is why a building for people had to look like it imprisoned them. Thirty years later and hundreds of miles away, **Cohen**, 40, is still challenging the old school of architecture and urban design. It's a luxury he can afford now that he owns a small firm in Delray Beach. It's also an attitude he must sell if he's to stay in business.

Cohen has spent the better part of six years networking with those who dole out contracts for schools, courthouses and other public buildings. He's out to convince them that those buildings should be the center of their communities. They should be identifiable. And they should convey their importance. "Those buildings should become visible in the community because you get more participation, they're more inviting," he said. "When you build a bank, it ought to be substantial. And when you drive by a school, it should say 'school' to you," **Cohen** said. "Around here you can't tell the difference between some schools and industrial parks. You could hang a sign in front that says 'IBM' and you'd believe it."

Cohen also has worked with residents in West Palm Beach and Delray Beach who want to improve their neighborhood or whose neighborhood has been targeted for redevelopment. One of the few black architects who heads a firm in Palm Beach County, **Cohen** also serves on many advisory boards including the county's Affordable Housing Commission. "When people talk redevelopment, the people in that community fear displacement," he said. "They think, 'Something's going to happen to us,' not 'for us.'"

The tenor saxophone player and former college running back said starting his own business was one of the easiest things he's ever done. **Cohen** graduated from Kent State in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in architecture and came to Florida in 1978 after visiting a former professor who lived in Boca Raton. He became one of the minions in a larger architectural firm. Then, while he was the director of architecture for an engineering firm, he had a change of heart. "I quit my job on Friday the 13th, and on Monday I woke up and was in business," **Cohen** said. "The hardest part is staying in business."

DESIGNS SPADY RENOVATION

But his efforts are slowly paying off. **Cohen's** firm did some of the preliminary designs for redeveloping Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach, designed a multi-purpose county government building in Belle Glade and the north Broward County Courthouse. Most recently, **Cohen** cracked the Palm Beach County School Board contracting circle and earned a job near to his

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

heart and home: renovating Spady Elementary School in Delray Beach, where his daughter Amanda attends first-grade.

For almost four decades, Spady's front door opened just yards from Eighth Avenue. Though the school sat on 10 acres, the classrooms huddled on the parcel's east side with their backs to the predominantly black neighborhood. A chain-link fence secured the grounds. Under **Cohen's** pencil, the school's entrance has done a 180-degree turn back into the neighborhood. And the chain-link fences have disappeared from most of the school's perimeter.

SCHOOL NOW MORE OPEN

"By moving the school's orientation, we were able to take down the fence and the school now opens up to the community," **Cohen** said. The move has also turned a grandfatherly ficus tree on the school's backside into a landmark "signature" in the school's front yard. And **Cohen** has planned renovations to the inside as well, creating dance and art studios for the Montessori and magnet programs that will draw children from various ethnic backgrounds to Spady, said Susan Storm, a plan review specialist at the school district. "You can tell kids to stay in school because it will get you somewhere. In that neighborhood, we can just point to it and say, 'I know, because I did that,'" **Cohen** said.

Cohen's knowledge of the community helped him get the contract, Storm said. "He's very well-aware and perceptive of what the community wants," Storm said. "He was able to capture the flavor of the neighborhood and give the school a presence." But a school with presence is not enough to turn around an entire neighborhood in decline, so **Cohen** has gone to the residents and suggested how they might help themselves. Three years ago, West Palm Beach paid him \$67,000 for a study of the blighted northwest neighborhood, an area bounded by First Street, Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard and the Florida East Coast and CSX Corp. railroad tracks. "We don't think people look at communities as a whole," **Cohen** said. "They look at schools, but not at businesses. They look at businesses, but not at homes."

NORTHWEST AREA WORK

You can rebuild the downtown, he said. But businesses won't survive without resident customers. And residents won't move in if their kids will be bused to distant schools. And then the community falls apart, **Cohen** said. West Palm Beach was on the verge of beginning downtown redevelopment, calling for plans to build what would become the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. **Cohen** went to residents of the northwest neighborhood and told them that it was time to end the residential exodus and neighborhood decline. "You need to develop a marketing strategy so that your community becomes known," **Cohen** said. "Right now all people read is that this neighborhood has one of the highest crime rates."

But the neighborhood packed natural appeal, **Cohen** argued. "You're a New Jersey or Canadian resident and you get something in the mail. It asks, 'How would you like to live in sunny Florida, less than 5 miles from the beach, minutes from a downtown district and within 20 minutes of some of the biggest malls in the area? How would you like to live in a historic area on the highest point in town-- where from the third floor, you can see from the Intracoastal to Clear

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Lake?" "I asked, 'How many of you would like that?' and they all nodded. And then I said, 'That's where you live.' You just have to sell it." They took his advice, beefing up their neighborhood associations and working with police to curb crime. While the neighborhood's problems are far from over, publicity soon focused on neighborhood housing projects and renovations as well as crime statistics.

TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS

And the city through its Community Redevelopment Agency has dedicated money to further change, said Sharon Jackson, a senior planner for West Palm Beach. "I don't know that his ideas were so different as that he spent a lot of time with the residents and other members of the community to get a consensus," said Jackson, who supervised the study for the city. "He brought various groups together so that when the plan came before the City Commission, it was what they all wanted and there was very little opposition."

Cohen has extolled similar advice from Delray Beach to Key West. Even when he isn't hired to make a difference, he finds a way to get his word in. As a member of the Affordable Housing Commission, he gets to influence the county's policies, such as how densely projects can and should be built. "He is quite reserved yet thorough in whatever he says," said fellow commission member and Wellington developer George DeGuardiola. "There is a certain amount of evidence that the ideals he expressed of traditional neighborhoods are principles that are getting ready to be accepted."

Says **Cohen**, "That's not glamorous, but it's the kind of thing that, when it's done, will help people build better affordable housing. And it's not just for them, it's for me. I get involved in development issues because if the restaurant doesn't exist, I don't have a client. And if they don't grow, I don't have a client again."

THADDEUS COHEN

HIS STORY: **Cohen**, who owns a small architectural firm, has worked with residents in West Palm Beach and Delray Beach who want to improve their neighborhood or whose neighborhood has been targeted for redevelopment. One of the few black architects who heads a firm in Palm Beach County, **Cohen** also serves on many advisory boards.

QUOTE: 'When you build a bank, it ought to be substantial. And when you drive by a school, it should say "school" to you. Around here you can't tell the difference between some schools and industrial parks. You could hang a sign in front that says "IBM" and you'd believe it.'

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
March 25, 1991

Minority firms feels betrayed

Author: Jane Musgrave

Lorry Hufford laughs when you ask whether she has ever gotten a county contract. "They say, 'Who are you? We've never heard of you.' And then it's, 'What would a woman know about that?'" said the owner of a West Palm Beach office systems firm. "They discriminate against you because you're small, that's a given. But if you're a women or a minority, then it's a double bias." Hufford's view of Palm Beach County's contracting practices is not unique. During the past two months, dozens of women and black and Hispanic business owners have spun similar tales to county committees charged with devising ways to give all business owners a fair shot at county work.

After watching and participating on the committees, many, like Hufford, thought that county officials were actually listening after years of ignoring them. Those hopes were crushed two weeks ago when county commissioners refused to accept a \$175,000 study that found that the county had been a passive participant in discrimination that has kept women- and minority-owned firms at the bottom rungs of the county's economic ladder. The commission's refusal to accept the report meant the committees' recommended ways of reversing the discrimination were put on hold.

An outraged Hufford said she thinks the commission is just looking for a way to ensure that the recommendations, opposed by the predominantly white, male Associated General Contractors group, never become reality. When the recommendations are reconsidered on April 9, "they're going to say, 'Now that we were magnanimous enough to accept the study, don't force us to do anything else,'" she said. However, others said, if that is the commission's grand scheme, they're in for a surprise.

The release of the report in December was a catalyst for formerly isolated women and black and Hispanic business owners to start talking to one another, said Tony McCray, head of the Minority Business Development Center. The commission's refusal to accept the report underscored the need to join forces, he said. "We've had more calls (this week) from people than ever before," McCray said. "It's galvanizing us."

While the commission has been worrying that white, male contractors will sue if the county implements the programs, the minority community now has good grounds to file suit if the commission refuses to take meaningful steps to reverse the discrimination, McCray said. Ironically, if forced to do so, the minority community can could use the county's own report as a basis for legal action, said Clarence Anthony, a management consultant who is also mayor of South Bay.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

That discrimination exists is irrefutable, said **Thaddeus Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect. The study, by the Tallahassee-based MGT of America, found that of the \$97 million in construction contracts the county awarded in 1989, \$73,000 went to minority or female-owned firms. "The numbers speak for themselves," he said. And, he and others said, the steps they want the commission to take to narrow the gap are small compared to what discrimination has cost women and minorities.

The most controversial recommendation would ensure a certain percentage of county construction projects are awarded to women- or minority-owned firms. The general contractors group has vowed to fight any so-called set-aside program, saying that would hurt small firms owned by white men and drive up the cost of projects. But, Assistant County Attorney Tammy Field said, the set-asides would be limited to projects that cost less than \$200,000 and only be offered when there are at least two minority- or women-owned firms capable of doing the work. Even then, bids would have to be close to county projections. "We're not going to spend extra county money to obtain participation," she said.

Anthony said, "If I was a public official, I'd jump on those recommendations because they're minimal." **Cohen** said the issue goes beyond merely who gets county contracts. It is an economic issue that has long-range effects for the county. By continuing to cut certain groups out of the economic pie, the county is ensuring that those groups never get ahead and fend for themselves. If you don't give people a reason to succeed, they won't, **Cohen** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
January 16, 1991

Over opposition, builder added to minority panel

Author: Meg James

Despite objections, county commissioners Tuesday added a spot for the Associated General Contractors on an advisory committee of minority and women business owners. Earlier this month, committee members voted not to allow an AGC representative as a voting member on the 16-member committee. The contractors' representative would be divisive and stymie the group's work, they said. The committee is supposed to suggest by March 12 ways the county can award more contracts to minority- and women-owned firms. A \$175,000 report concluded last month that the county is a "passive participant" in discrimination. The committee includes women, Hispanics and blacks as well as County Commissioner Maude Ford Lee.

AGC spokesman Geoffrey Sluggett said his group should be included because it represents big builders who receive county contracts. Any changes in the system "will directly affect our industry," he said. But **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect and a member of the committee, argued the AGC shouldn't be on the panel because it is not a minority- or women-owned enterprise. Besides, he said, "they already have access to the County Commission."

Commissioner Carol Roberts said an AGC member should be the 17th member of the committee. She said it would "almost be a slap in the face" not to include them. Commissioners voted 5-2 to put the AGC on the board. Commissioners Karen Marcus and Lee voted no.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)
October 16, 1990

Poitier admits she was wrong
Commissioner tried to steer job to friend
Author: Steve Bousquet

Broward County Commissioner Sylvia Poitier, one of five people evaluating proposals for a half-million dollar contract, tried to steer the job to an architect friend -- an effort she acknowledged Monday was "wrong." Nevertheless, Poitier will try today to block award of the job to another top-rated firm after filing what is apparently the first protest by an elected official over the county's contract negotiations procedure. At stake is a \$520,000 contract to design a badly needed 110-bed drug and alcohol treatment center on Blount Road in Pompano Beach.

Before she even heard the competitors' presentations, Poitier made it known she wanted Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** to get the project, the commissioner said Monday. She said she told two rival architects, Chuck McKirahan of N-Y Associates and Michael Shiff, she favored **Cohen**. "It's probably unfair, but I think it's best to tell the truth," Poitier said. "**Thaddeus** was my favorite. I know how good he is."

Poitier said she knew of the quality of **Cohen's** work on the Stanley Terrace apartment complex in Deerfield Beach, where she lives. The firm also has done work for the Broward County School Board and several cities. **Cohen**, 39, is chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development in Broward and is on the boards of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the American Lung Association. "We feel we've done a lot of things that merit consideration," **Cohen** said. "We were kind of surprised we didn't get it."

Poitier's protest, which will be discussed by the full commission this morning, comes at a time of growing discontent among blacks about their economic stake in the county. In addition, rising interest rates and a tougher growth law have created tougher competition for government contracts. Poitier filed her protest Oct. 3 but did not specify the basis for her complaint. In an interview Monday, she declined to elaborate. "I have a protest," she said. "I don't plan to discuss it in the newspaper."

"It's very unusual," Commission Chairman Scott Cowan said of the protest. "I think she'd like to see a minority architect get this particular project." He said he doubted Poitier's protest would be upheld by the other commissioners today. By state law, architect and engineering contracts are not awarded to the lowest bidder. Instead, under a process known as competitive negotiation, the county can consider other subjective factors. A five-member committee met Sept. 26, heard 20-minute presentations from all eight firms and ranked them. Each member of the panel listed the firms by preference, with 1 being the highest rank. It was a close vote.

Peacock-Corrales Architects of Pompano Beach was ranked first with a total score of 13. **Thaddeus Cohen** Architects was ranked second with 14, and N-Y was third with 16 points.

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Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Besides Poitier, others on the committee were Commissioner Gerald Thompson; Phil Woolaver, the county director of construction management; Russ Bachman, head of facilities; and Marie Reynolds, who runs the drug and alcohol division.

Poitier ranked **Cohen** first; Thompson and Reynolds rated Peacock-Corrales first. Peacock-Corrales' two partners in charge are a woman and a Hispanic. Both firms qualify as minority-owned businesses under county policy. "I was distressed to hear that Commissioner Poitier filed a protest," partner-in-charge Tamara Peacock said. "The main issue is (she) did not like the outcome of the selection process."

Poitier raised questions about the voting procedure used by the selection committee. Thompson was still calculating his rankings while other members' votes were being read aloud, according to a county audio recording of the session. Poitier asked County Attorney John Copelan if it were proper for the vote tally to be announced while one ranker was still voting. "At best, an argument could be made that a procedural error occurred," Copelan said Monday. Woolaver dismissed the effect of the voting procedure on the result. "The process was fair," he said.

During deliberations, Woolaver was recounting how much county work each firm received. He said that **Cohen's** firm worked as an assistant on a Hollywood courthouse parking garage, but has never had the control of a contract. "We talk about spreading the wealth around," Poitier interjected. Asked to recall the last time a commissioner protested the way the architects were ranked, Woolaver said: "It's never happened."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
September 29, 1990

Minority firms make pitch at trade fair- qualifications

Author: Joan Fleischer

Networking. A key word in the 1980s may be critical in an economic slowdown of the 1990s. A number of small minority business owners networked on Friday in Boca Raton with corporate purchasing agents from some of the region's biggest companies at a Minority Business Trade Fair. Booths were set up by 70 exhibitors -- including IBM, Florida Power & Light Co., Pratt & Whitney, NCNB and SunBank/South Florida. And minority business owners, many of whom run small graphics, printing, office supply and janitorial businesses, had a chance to pitch their goods and services.

Turnout was so good at Palm Beach County's first Minority Business Trade Fair that its sponsors now want to make it an annual event. "The word is out that we're here," said Carlene Lichtenstein, executive director of the Florida Regional Minority Purchasing Council, one of the sponsors of the fair held at Florida Atlantic University. The Florida Small and Minority Business Assistance Act of 1985 encourages state agencies and state universities to award 15 percent of funds for goods, services and construction to state-certified minority business.

Groups qualified to seek state certification for their businesses include blacks, females, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and the physically disabled. Some have criticized potential abuses of the minority set-aside law. In some cases, it has been discovered that a wife or minority partner was being used to front a business. The state law requires at least 51 percent of the business be owned and managed by a minority.

There is no government law requiring private enterprise to buy supplies from minority owners, but many companies find positive returns to affirmative action in the marketplace. "From an equal opportunity standpoint, we feel it's in IBM's best interest to seek out business with minority owners," said Brent W. Campbell, minority supplier programs coordinator for International Business Machines Corp. **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect who also is president of the Council for Black Economic Development, said he was pleased with the trade fair at FAU. "We're a small firm looking to market itself," **Cohen** said.

What does it take to be a state-certified minority business?

--Independently owned business with fewer than 25 employees and a net worth of less than \$1 million.

--Be at least 51% owned and managed by a Florida resident who is one of the following: Black, Asian, Hispanic, female, Native American Indian or Native Hawaiian.

--Business should have started and be in Florida.

--Complete a 10-page application with the Department of General Services in Tallahassee.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
April 22, 1990

Affordable-Housing Panel picks chairman, executive committee

Author: Meg James

Members of the county's Affordable Housing Commission met for the first time Friday, tried to define their mission and selected a chairman and executive committee. Nine of the commission's 21 members did not attend. County Commissioner Carol Roberts, who serves on the panel, said the meeting's short notice, not a lack of interest, contributed to the low turnout. John Corbett, a contractor and chairman of the Florida Housing Foundation Inc., was elected to head the county panel. **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, president of his own architectural firm, was named vice chairman.

The group selected five others to serve on an executive committee. Lake Worth Mayor Ron Exline, a member of the panel, objected to the balloting process and voted against the nominees. Commission members were told their goal was to "promote and encourage affordable housing." Affordable housing is defined by county officials as new homes costing less than \$90,000 or monthly rent or mortgage payments that do not exceed 30 percent of a person's or household's income. The Affordable Housing Commission's next meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. May 2 at the Governmental Center.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
June 17, 1989

Old Northwest section on way back
Author: Bill McGoun

Thaddeus Cohen believes the old northwest section of West Palm Beach already is on the way back up, and he has a lot of ideas about sustaining the momentum. **Mr. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect and planning consultant, is preparing for the Community Redevelopment Agency a plan to bring new life to the oldest existing black neighborhood in Palm Beach County. He would encourage new housing, cluster commercial uses and establish a historic district down the spine of the city's highest ridge.

Both population and home ownership have been declining in recent years in the area, defined for the purpose of the study as between the railroads from First Street north to Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard. Those who remain have feared their neighborhood would be gobbled up as downtown revitalization progresses. The demolition programs being carried out by Downtown/Uptown to the south and by the city within the area have done little to ease those fears.

The city says its demolition program is more than half completed. **Mr. Cohen** sees the task now as stabilizing those buildings that need work but still can be saved. In fact, the word stabilize recurs frequently as he speaks. This is the key to saving the neighborhood for residential use, he says. The forces of growth are inevitable as downtown bounces back, he says, and if there is not a stable residential base in the neighborhood it will be overwhelmed. Such a base also is necessary, he says, if new businesses are to be attracted, bringing job opportunities with them.

So how should the area be stabilized, and how should it be revitalized? **Mr. Cohen** believes the former already is pretty well accomplished and the latter can be realized through sound planning and some incentives. The 6-acre tract on the east side of Rosemary Avenue that almost was the site of a warehouse development would instead be developed in multifamily residential structures, thus acting as a buffer between downtown and the predominantly single-family areas to the west.

Replacement of razed homes in those areas would be in character with existing uses, though there may be some zero-lot-line townhouses to make a virtue out of narrow lots, much as envisioned for the old section of Lake Worth. One problem of the area as it stands, according to **Mr. Cohen**, is that there are too many small businesses competing directly with each other. In his plan, commercial areas would be clustered on Tamarind Avenue between Sixth and Eighth streets and on Rosemary between First and Fourth. Sapodilla Avenue already has a good mix of uses, he said.

The capstone of redevelopment would be on the city's highest land, where a historic district would extend along Division Street. At the north end would be Palmview Elementary, a campus

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

of great significance because it once housed Industrial High, from which many older residents graduated. To the south are the distinctive church buildings that used to dominate the skyline and the historic block between Fifth and Sixth streets, where one notable home is to be rehabilitated and another rebuilt.

A lot of details remain to be worked out, but **Mr. Cohen** says he thinks the very fact of revitalization will help draw the new residential and commercial uses that will complete the process. He envisions a mixed-income area, much as it was before new housing opportunities allowed the black middle class to move westward. What he does not want is a repository for low-income housing only.

The trend is back toward city centers, he said, and this puts the old neighborhood in an ideal location. It is convenient to the Tri-County Commuter Rail, to downtown jobs, to hospitals, to festivals and to the proposed civic center-performing arts complex. On Tuesday, **Mr. Cohen** will present his plan to the CRA. If the CRA goes along, the task then will be to make these dreams come true.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)

June 6, 1987

Minority businesses get a boost

Author: Steve Bousquet

Florida Commerce Secretary Jeb Bush was in Fort Lauderdale on Friday to hail a new joint effort by Broward executives to identify black businesses and to help minority merchants survive and succeed. The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the Broward-based Council for Black Economic Development announced they will begin an effort to get Chamber members to purchase some goods from black-owned businesses. But first, they said, they need to find out how much business is being generated by black entrepreneurs.

The Black Business Procurement Program has two parts: a survey to determine the bottom line on the amount of business in black-owned shops, and an "Adopt-a-Business" venture, patterned after a Jacksonville program, to match minority merchants with executives of larger, established firms for technical advice. "One of the negatives of the past was the inability of these organizations to work together," said Richard Clark, chief executive officer of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber. "They're so busy running the shop, they haven't got time to go around knocking on doors."

"What we're looking to do is create an atmosphere," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, president of the Broward-based Black Council for Economic Development. "All things being equal, people will give business to somebody they know."

Leaders of both groups said they hoped the joint venture will serve as a way for people to make new contacts in Broward's rapidly expanding business community. By "networking," as he put it, **Cohen** met a purchasing agent from Broward Community College and was able to apply for a job he otherwise would not have known about. **Cohen** works and lives in Delray Beach, but his architectural firm does business in Broward. Bush came face-to-face with the sorry state of communications when he met with a dozen business owners at Fort Lauderdale's Northwest Boys' Club.

Newspaper publisher Levi Henry told Bush that even though his company is worth up to \$2 million, he can't get credit for a \$5,000 bank loan. "We're not getting to somebody," Henry said. Henry had no idea -- until Bush told him -- about plans to form an investment partnership between major banks and black-owned businesses in large Florida cities. The program is under way in Miami and should begin in Broward by year's end, Bush said. "I'm amazed that you hadn't been told about a hell of a good program," Bush told Henry. "I'm actually kind of shocked."

Their exchange was all the more significant because Henry's newspaper, the Westside Gazette, is a primary source of news and information for Broward's blacks.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"Small business growth is really the backbone of this area," said Jerry Miller, vice chairman of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber's board of directors.

In a breakfast speech to about 400 Chamber members, Bush said, "The rules are changing a little bit in the economic development game." As northern states have become increasingly competitive in finding and keeping companies, Bush said, Florida must work even harder to attract business. He also leveled a broadside at the career civil service system in Tallahassee, with its low wages and generous benefits. "It's almost as if the whole system is geared toward not working, rather than working," Bush said.

Bush also toured Fort Lauderdale's Sistrunk Boulevard business district from the air-conditioned comfort of a Cadillac limousine. With Assistant City Manager Jim Hill acting as a tour guide, the blue sedan slowly cruised past grocery stores, game rooms, homes and apartments, a junkyard or two and the new City View townhouse development.

Research Compiled by: Tammie Browder and Cara Slade
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 6

Carmen Y. Davis

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

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June 18, 2021

Mr. Colin Baenziger and Mr. Rick Conner
Colin Baenziger and Associates
2055 South Atlantic Avenue, Suite 504
Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118

Dear Mr. Baenziger and Mr. Conner,

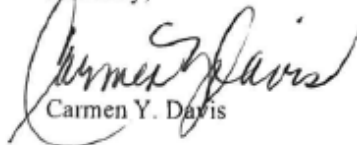
It is with great interest that I submit this letter, as well as, the accompanied application and resume for the position of City Manager with the City of Lake Worth Beach FL. After reviewing the job description and researching the community, with nearly 20 years of experience as a local government professional and over 9 years of managing a mid-size county, I believe that I am well suited for the position and community.

With over nine years of experience as County Administrator with Hinds County, MS, I am prepared to address challenges and share my county management knowledge with the Lake Worth Beach community. Hinds County has approximately 250,000 residents and is the largest county in the state of Mississippi, which is home of the state's capital and largest city in the state (Jackson, MS). During my tenure with Hinds County, I have implemented a conservative budget which yielded savings and led to full salary restoration after a 9-month furloughs period, improved the county's fiscal position so to secure bonds for facilities and infrastructure projects, comprehensively revised and updated the county's 1994 personnel and procedure policies, addressed and improved criminal justice issues, and managed over \$20 million capital improvement projects. In addition, I developed professional development workshops for department heads that resulted in improved efficiencies and working relations among department heads and elected officials.

As a 10-year City Planner with the City of Detroit, I had the opportunity to develop policies/ordinances and improve community relations among community/neighbor organizations and developers.

My resume details the accomplishments and qualifications reflecting my ability to be a value-added team member for the City of Lake Worth Beach community. I look forward to talking with you to further discuss my contribution to the Lake Worth Beach community.

Sincerely,


Carmen Y. Davis

Carmen Y. Davis

106 Stonebridge Lane, Clinton, MS 39056
601-488-4961 home 601-665-5527 cell
cyd05@live.com

PROFILE SUMMARY

Committed, ethical, team leader, and experienced local government management professional with a proven track record of effective management, community/business relations and consensus building, policy implementation, capital improvement and project management, negotiation skills, and staff and leadership development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Jackson, MS

March 2020 – Present

Founded in 1996 by Dr. Aaron Shirley, the Jackson Medical Mall was transformed from an abandoned shopping mall to a modern medical and retail facility. The mission, to provide healthcare for the underserved and to promote economic and community development, was made possible through strategic partnerships with the University of MS Medical Center, Jackson State University and Tougaloo College. Over twenty years later, the Jackson Medical Mall sits proudly in the center of the state's capital city, providing high quality health and community services to the public. Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (JMMF) has over 130 employees and an operating budget of about \$14 million.

Key Responsibilities:

- Oversee the day-to-day operations of six (6) departments – Facilities (Environmental Services and Maintenance), Security and Safety Services, Transportation Services, Events, Information Technology, and Care4ME Services (HIV Outreach Program)
- Develop, in collaboration with the CEO and the CFO, an annual operating budget that supports the JMMF's short-term and long-term operations strategies
- Assist the CEO in overseeing the JMMF's achievement and maintenance of a satisfactory competitive position within its industry
- Ensure communications, resolution of issues and project development
- Attend meetings of the Board and its Committees and present the information necessary or relevant to the Board or such Committee for discharging its duties
- Foster a corporate culture that promotes ethical practices, customer focus and service and encourages individual integrity
- Assess and manage the principal risks of the JMMF's business within operations (proposals, projects, and staffing)
- Assist the CEO in establishing an appropriate organization structure
- Set goals for departments and individual managers
- Develop and implement policies and improvements
- Build strong relationships with tenants, key external stakeholders, community leaders and vendors

County Administrator, Hinds County, MS

September 2010 - January 2020

Home of the Capital City, Jackson, MS, Hinds County is the largest county in the state of Mississippi and has a population of approximately 250,000. The county has about 900 employees and an operating budget of approximately \$115 million. Appointed by a five-member board of supervisors and assigned to oversee day-to-day operations with thirteen (13) direct reports.

Key Accomplishments:

- Negotiated annual employee healthcare benefits yielding over \$1.5 million in savings (reduced potential 25% cost increase to an average of 5% over 6 years)

- Oversaw and completed a comprehensive revision/update of the 1994 County Policies and Employee Handbook
- Initiated/began the County's first Health and Wellness Program which included the creation of the annual 5K walk/run
- Received "clean" (unmodified and free of misrepresentation) audits from independent auditor for 8 consecutive years
- Conducted comprehensive audit/review of all county property, equipment, and vehicles yielding no increase insurance premium cost.
- Created ADA Compliance Office, Record Management and Retention Office, Safety and Training Office, Pre-Trial Services Program
- Initiated and Upgraded County-wide technology network system to advanced fiber optic technology and increased internet speed nearly 100 times at a lower cost than the existing system cost
- Negotiated purchasing cost with vendors resulting in over \$1.0 million in savings to the General Fund, as well as, able to end furloughs and increase year-end cash balance by over 85%
- Achieved increasing cash balance from about \$26,000 in 2010 to over \$2.5 million annually by 2012
- Assisted in managing and monitoring the \$40 M bond issuance for roads, bridges and capital improvements
- Assisted in new bond issue, bond refunding and debt restructuring totaling over \$50 million yielding debt service savings
- Co-chaired newly established Criminal Justice Coordinating Council for two (2) consecutive years with the Senior Circuit Court Judge
- Oversaw and implemented the purchasing of new voting machines for 110 polling locations
- Initiated ADA Improvement Program which consisted of facility improvements, and policies (communications grievance, and non-discrimination policy)
- Initiated purchase of two additional buildings to enhance needed office space to improve operational efficiencies
- Managed and oversaw capital improvement projects such as: \$2.4 million reconstruction project for adult jail housing unit and over \$7 million in jail facility upgrades and improvements, and \$2 million ADA improvements to historic courthouse
- Managed and facilitated the development of the adopted 2017-18 Strategic Plan
- Developed and conducted professional development workshops tailored for department heads to enhance interdepartmental relations, increase moral and improve departmental performance
- Recipient of the Patriotic Employer Certificate from the Office of the Secretary of Defense as an Employer Supporting the Guard and Reserve

City Planner, City of Detroit, MI

**June 1993 – July 2001 and
January 2007 – August 2009**

Key Accomplishments:

- Supervised, planned, and coordinated community benefit agreements and conducted conflict resolution sessions among community organizations and Fortune 500 Companies on behalf of City Council (Marathon Oil, Ambassador Bridge Expansion, Chrysler New Mack Engine Plant)
- Chaired effective meetings with community leaders and groups, large and small business owners, and other city departments and agencies on various land use, zoning, and policy issues
- Reviewed and analyzed the social, economic and physical impact of neighborhood commercial development trends
- Organized and developed community master plans with neighborhood and community associations
- Directed office and field work required for effectuation of plans and studies
- Planned, coordinated and laid out the work of professional, technical and clerical employees in one or more of the functional areas of the Commission
- Managed the process for Michigan liquor licenses and activity permits for City Council's consideration
- Authored zoning ordinances, zoning map amendments, city codes, and public policies on major urban issues as well as directed the preparation of recommended changes

- Created reports, recommendations and presentations to the City Planning Commission, the City Council, groups and organizations in and for the City of Detroit
- Participated and represented the City Planning Commission and City Council on task forces and conferences with other planning staff

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration, Dec. 1993
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

Bachelor of Art, Urban Planning and Geography, May 1989
Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Current Member, International City/County Management Association
Current President, Mississippi City/County Managers Association
Current Member, National Association of County Administrators
Member, MS Association of County Administrators and Comptrollers, 2010-2020
 President 2015-16
 Vice President 2014-15
 Treasurer 2013-14
Co-Chair, Hinds County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, 2017-2019
Executive Advisory Board of Directors, Jackson State University Institute of Government, 2013-2016
Board Member, Leadership Greater Jackson, 2013-17
Board Member, U.S.S. Jackson Commissioning Committee, 2015-16
Member, U.S. Navy League, 2016

REFERENCES UPON REQUEST

Section 6

Candidate Introduction

CARMEN Y. DAVIS

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration, Wayne State University (MI)
Bachelor of Arts, Geography and Urban Planning, Wayne State University (MI)

EXPERIENCE

Chief Operating Officer, Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Jackson, MS	2020 – present
County Administrator, Hinds County, MS	2010 – 2020
City Planner IV, City Planning Commission/City Council, Detroit, MI	2006 – 2009
City Planner IV, City Planning Commission/City Council, Detroit, MI	1993 – 2001

BACKGROUND

Hinds County is the most populous county in MS of approximately 245,000 residents. Home of the state capital and largest city, Jackson, MS, is centrally situated in the state. Hinds County is a professional, educational, business, and industrial hub in the state. Two major thoroughfares intersect in Hinds County: I-20 and I-55. The County has a total of 877 square miles of which 870 square miles is land and 7.6 square miles is water. The largest and major hospitals are located in Hinds County serving the region and state. In late 2019, Continental Tire opened its most technology advanced tire plant in North America. The plant produces large truck and bus tires for the U.S. commercial vehicle market. The nearly \$1.4 billion investment will create about 2,500 jobs over the next decade.

Hinds County’s General Fund budget comprised of about \$65 million, and the total budget was approximately \$110 million in 2019; in addition to, major capital projects such as road and bridge repairs and construction of \$40 million and \$4 million for facilities improvements. The County has 900 employees with thirteen departmental directors reporting directly to the County Administrator.

The three most significant issues facing the County are:

1. Declining conditions of the roads and bridges. In 2017, the County secured bonds for \$40 million towards repairing deteriorated roads and bridges. This effort is a beginning step towards addressing years of deferred maintenance and repair.
2. Federal consent decree with the Department of Justice concerning the juvenile and adult detention centers. In 2012, Hinds County agreed to address and improve the conditions, policies, and constitutional rights of the detention center detainees.
3. Maintaining property tax revenues. The city of Jackson is the largest municipality within the County. Jackson’s declining population and deteriorated infrastructure will continue

CARMEN Y. DAVIS

to be issues with capturing the needed tax revenues to support and maintain the county's needed level of service.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I am interested in the City of Lake Worth Beach, FL because of its unique historic character and stable community. Coming from Detroit, MI and Jackson, MS where history is highly regarded and cultivated, I will bring that same historic spirit to Lake Worth Beach. Also, I am drawn towards Lake Worth Beach because of the opportunity to bring my local government, community planning, and organizational management and structure experience to assist the City Commission in carrying out its strategic plan and mission to guide future development, as well as create a more citizen centric community.

My leadership with over 20 years of local government experience has been rooted in integrity, transparency, and stability – in line with Lake Worth Beach's core values. My career has been guided by the principle of servant leadership and being an ethical public servant for the community in which I serve. Prior to my appointment as County Administrator with Hinds County, the County had three different County Administrators within four years. My tenure of nearly 10 years brought leadership stability and consistent management to Hinds County. This approach would contribute to the progress that Lake Worth Beach has begun in the community. Furthermore, my urban planning and community development background would be valuable in addressing the development needs of Lake Worth Beach to assist the Commission in carrying out the city's Strategic Plan, Capital Improvement Projects, and other community sustainability plans and programs. I have worked on and led major land developments, land use and zoning matters, and comprehensive and master plans.

My management style consists of a combination of participatory, collaborative, and consultative. As a professional local government manager that is responsible for implementing the policies and goals of the local government leaders, I believe that my role is to keep the team informed of the organization's goals and direction, utilize the skills and knowledge of the team, and encourage/expect the team to be innovative and creative to address challenging issues. Therefore, in my experience with overseeing a wide range of departmental directors, I found that each director is different and may require a different managerial approach from another director. My position is that the team and their staff are the backbone of any community. A leader must be in tune with the wellbeing of the team. The success of the community is based on the staff being competent and equipped to do their jobs.

Staff would say that I am an approachable, trustworthy, insightful, solution oriented, organized, and dedicated manager. As far as elected officials, they would say that I am accessible, helpful in addressing their needs and concerns, communicative, and budget conscious. My philosophy in working with staff and elected officials is to ensure that they have the resources to carry out their designated roles and state mandated duties to meet the needs of the residents, visitors, and

CARMEN Y. DAVIS

community. In my career, I have worked with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Additionally, I can work with all aspects of the community from employees, elected officials to the grassroots of the community to forge collaborations and partnerships to accomplish results where all parties are proud of.

My strength is the ability to maintain a cool and collected demeanor in difficult or stressful situations. I am able to bring calm to a situation. For example, there was an instance when one of our elected officials had not carried out a particular state mandated duty for which he/she was responsible. I was able to gather several staff members to assist me in making sure the particular state mandated duty was performed. The completion of the duty satisfied the state officials and spared the county from embarrassment and financial penalties. On the other hand, concerning a weakness, I am thorough and concise in addressing a matter or situation. This tendency is usually a positive trait; but it can also be an issue when a quick action or decision is needed. However, I have learned over the years to trust my 20 years of experience, along with my instincts and leadership abilities.

In regard to the performance measures used to determine that my staff and I are meeting the organization's goals, at the beginning of each budget year, I implemented a practice that each department director and I set goals which correlated with the departments' roles and the organization's strategic plans and/or priorities. At the end of the budget year, each department's progress was reviewed to determine whether the goals had been achieved. One of the achievements while serving Hinds County was that a cohesive, mutual respect of each other's strengths/skills, and collaborative management team was created. When I began in 2010, the management team was lacking direction, trust of each other's leadership ability, and professional development opportunities. I began monthly meetings, bi-annual retreats, and regular professional/leadership workshops which resulted in strong team relationships, improved across departmental communication, and supportive management team. A mistake that I made was not trying harder to retain a very competent and valuable grants officer. The grants officer was offered a position with another organization. Unfortunately, it took over a year to hire a comparable replacement. I learned that it is more efficient for the organization to work harder to retain employees with proven, as well as valuable talent.

In my career, I have had to fire people. Generally, and depending on the severity of the situation, the drastic action was after providing consultation on the concern with the opportunity for corrective action. Most of the time, the person would align with the corrective action. However, after being counseled and given the opportunity to correct the undesired behavior, the employee was informed that he/she will no longer be able to continue their service with the organization. It is not a pleasant action to take or communicate to a person; but, if the person was given the opportunity to change his/her behavior or have conducted a severe violation, I felt that I did what I could do to address the matter for the good of the organization.

The challenges that I think the person who takes this job are:

1. Shape and manage the redevelopment growth in keeping with Lake Worth Beach's unique heritage and character.
2. Manage the limited finances and resources. In addition, work with the Commission to develop an allocation plan for the \$10 million federal stimulus funds to effectively meet the needs of the community.
3. Utilize the current tax revenues efficiently and create a projected resource allocation plan for future tax receipts anticipated in 10 years from the CRA's developments.
4. Ensure proper accountability from absentee property owners, particularly owners of residential rental properties.
5. Review how Lake Worth Beach does business to ensure that programs and processes are fostering an efficient, transparent and citizen centric government. Determine whether resources are being used optimally.
6. Work with other communities (state, county and federal) to receive assistance in addressing local concerns/issues such as: homelessness, opioids, poverty, cleaning/protecting the Lake Worth Lagoon, flooding, and sea level rise.

What I would do in the first six months in Lake Worth Beach are:

1. Meet with each City Commissioner to understand their priorities, issues, and expectations. In addition, I would like to establish regular meetings with each Commissioner to keep open communications and build a trusting relationship.
2. Hold meet and greet meetings with other city officials, staff, residents, neighborhood associations, business groups, and county officials.
3. Hold one on one meetings with department heads to get acquainted, start building relationships, and become aware of the accomplishments, as well as the challenges in their department.
4. Visit the various city facilities, buildings, and properties, as well as tour the community (neighborhoods, businesses, industry, and potential development sites).
5. Review and become familiar with the City's infrastructure and capital improvement plans to ensure progress and management of their funds.
6. Review and become knowledgeable of the city's important plans, documents, codes, manuals, and agreements. This would allow me to get a better understanding of the city's operations.

I've worked very closely with the media. Being accessible, informative, and available to address their inquiries are important to fostering transparency to the public. Recognizing that there are subject matters that are sensitive, the City Commission may need to be informed of such sensitive inquiries from the media prior to providing a response. There is not anything in my background that would embarrass the City of Lake Worth Beach if it became public knowledge. Should I be privileged to be selected as a finalist in Lake Worth Beach, I do not expect any community activist that is likely to contact Lake Worth Beach with "the dirt" on me.

CARMEN Y. DAVIS

Social media is an essential tool to share information to the public about Lake Worth Beach in a timely manner. To ensure that information is shared on a consistent basis, a dedicated person who is well versed in social media outlets would be established to send information to the public. Because I understand that open communication to the public is vital to being a responsive and open government, as County Administrator in Hinds County, I created the position of Public Relations Officer to do just that.

In my leisure time, I like to walk, bowl, and relax with my husband while watching a good movie.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

1. Dependable to get the job done
2. Pleasant
3. Organized, focused, and detailed oriented
4. See the best in everyone and every situation
5. Integrity
6. Goal oriented

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE MOST RECENT JOB

The reason that I want to leave my current job is that I have the passion and desire to serve a local government. I count it a privilege to serve communities to enhance the quality of life for those that live and do business there.

CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY

At Hinds County, my compensation was \$125,000, including use of a County vehicle and cell phone.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Hinds County, MS	No Records Found
Wayne County, MI	No Records Found
State	
Mississippi	<i>Records Maintained by County. See Above.</i>
Michigan	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Hinds County, MS	No Records Found
Wayne County, MI	No Records Found
Federal	
Mississippi	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle	
Mississippi	No Records Found

Credit	Excellent
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Personal Bankruptcy	No Records Found
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Sex Offender Registry	Not Listed
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Education	Confirmed
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Employment	Confirmed except for: Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (2020 – Present)
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Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found
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**Background Check Summary for
CARMEN Y. DAVIS**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
CARMEN Y. DAVIS
Personal Disclosure**

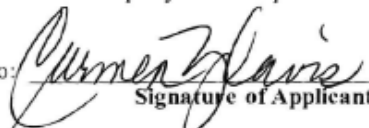
Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Carmen Y. Davis

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

- 1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes Y No
- 2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes Y No
- 3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes Y No
- 4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes Y No
- 5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes Y No
- 6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes Y No
- 7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes Y No
- 8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook.com/carmen.davis
- 9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes Y No
- 10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: 
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

Phil Fisher – Former Supervisor, Hinds County, MS 601-924-5474

Mr. Fisher was on the Board in Hinds County from 2010 to 2013. Ms. Davis was outstanding and on top of everything. Hinds County can be very chaotic with five supervisors who are going in five different directions. She kept up with everything that needed to be done, organized it, and kept the Board moving in a forward direction even then they started chasing rabbits. Under the former administrator they were often voting in arrears. She made sure they had the correct paperwork in the right timing to make decisions. She organized the County and did very well.

Ms. Davis reviewed the organization when she was hired and had to let some employees go that were not performing. She brought in some excellent individuals to replace them. Rather than promoting employees who may not be qualified, as had been done in the past, she hired professionals in their field who were already trained which greatly enhanced the County's credibility in financial audits, budget, communications, and more. Her decisions in general are also good. She keeps everyone informed.

Former County Administrators did not show up to community events, but Ms. Davis was always there. She took much initiative to attend the chamber banquet and every type of gathering in the community. She is easy to talk to. Constituents like that she is responsive and gives them an answer, even when the answer is not what they had hoped for. She is customer service oriented.

Being able to put together a budget with County employees who are intimidated by the Board, balance the budget and provide necessary funding is something Ms. Davis did well. Her budgets were balanced, fair, and they made sense. She held the line even when elected officials made foolish promises but did so without placing blame on anyone.

Because Ms. Davis is so organized, she was timely in meeting deadlines. She handled stress by laughing. Most of the stress came from the elected officials who wanted things done their way even when the idea did not receive support from the majority. She also knew that she worked at their pleasure, which would have caused some stress but is the nature of the position.

Controversial issues came up, like the landfill. Ms. Davis was involved to the extent of making sure that they addressed the issues, and everything was properly executed. Mr. Fisher is not aware of anything in Ms. Davis's history that would concern an employer.

Two of the Board Members who voted to let Ms. Davis go were newly elected and swayed by one Board Member who did not like her because she would not do everything he asked. She focused on doing what was in the best interest of the County, as long as it was legal.

Mr. Fisher would hire Ms. Davis, she has good experience.

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Energetic,
- Decisive,
- Organized, and
- Customer oriented.

Strengths: Organization, ability to herd cats, point people in the right direction and keep them moving, knew when to use gentle persuasion and when to be blunt, had the courage to do the right thing for the benefit of the County regardless of how it affected her personally.

Weaknesses: She is a trusting person who could be betrayed by those who have bad intent.

**Tomie Green – Senior Circuit Court Judge, Hinds County, MS 601-968-5568
601-955-0354**

Ms. Green worked on different committees and communications with Hinds County and has known Ms. Davis since around 2011.

Ms. Davis is excellent, she has been able to accomplish much. They worked together on the budget and served on other committees together. The one that sticks out most was the department of justice committee for the jail. The Committee ensured that the jail was in constitutional compliance with the use of force and the jail is still under that consent decree. The process took a great deal of time and it required almost daily attention during the process, but she made sure that the jail was in compliance.

Decisions made by Ms. Davis are definitely good. She is innovative in identifying problems, coming up with a solution, and then achieving buy in. Everyone knows Ms. Davis in the County. Whether the event is social or professional, she was very visible and her entire family was active in the community. Prior to her arrival no one really knew who the County Administrator was, but they knew her because she was very involved. She is also good about keeping others informed.

Emergency management and weather conditions are something that Ms. Davis organized procedures for. She dealt with emergencies like hurricanes, tornadoes, and bomb threats. Nine times out of ten, she was the person coordinating meetings to develop a plan for the emergency.

Being customer service oriented, Ms. Davis told the Court and the Board that the County was a business and citizens were the customers, and they needed to treat them that way. They could always depend on her to meet deadlines and respond in a reasonable amount of time.

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

Even though judges are state employees, the budget goes through the District Attorney's office. When they went over budget or needed appropriations, Ms. Davis was very helpful. She organized the process so that everything was on time and then went before the Board to present the budget. She has great financial skills.

After an election the makeup of the Board changed and they wanted to bring in their own administrator, which really upset everyone in the county because they all enjoy working with Ms. Davis. Nothing in her background or conduct would concern an employer.

Ms. Green tried to hire Ms. Davis because of her skills, abilities, and knowledge of the County, but she opted for a different position instead. She managed a very complex county and court system, with many different personalities. There is nothing that Ms. Davis cannot do, she is very talented. She has great character and values. She treats everyone with respect.

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Competent,
- Professional,
- Timely,
- Innovative,
- Committed to her job, and
- Bright or smart.

Strengths: Problem solving, good rapport with department heads and elected officials, good rapport with the committee, developing solutions, completed tasks well, very articulate in communication, very hard worker. Pulls people together and diffuses tense situations, which is a communication and an organization skill.

Weaknesses: She takes on the problems of other people and as such, her schedule is overloaded.

Darrell McQuirter – Former President, Hinds County, MS 601-927-3962

Mr. McQuirter reported to Ms. Davis from around 2012 to 2014 as the Permitting and Zoning Director, and then he was elected to the Board and she reported to him until she left in 2020. She is very efficient, knowledgeable, energetic, and did an overall good job.

Ms. Davis reported to the Board and was sometimes instructed who to hire, so she should not be held accountable for those hires. She conducted thorough background checks and gave her opinion but the Board made some of the hiring decisions. Her decisions in general are good.

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

When something is not working Ms. Davis can be a change agent. She made tough decisions which upset some but improved the organization. She gave employees the option to perform at a higher level and trained them in skills they were lacking. She is always looking for new and better ways to work.

In the community Ms. Davis is very visible and she works with the public quite well. She is a people person who has good communication skills. She keeps everyone informed. Customer service is very important to her.

When Ms. Davis was hired, the County was in disarray and all they did was fix issues. In reviewing the organization, she realized that the County was involved in a very risky bond with a \$8 million dollar exposure. She encouraged the Board to refinance the bond and they were able to secure a much better rate. They essentially went from a negative \$8 million to a positive \$3 million. The Board wanted to ignore the bond at first, but she made sure they did not because it put them in such a precarious position.

Most of the time Ms. Davis had one on one conversations with Board members. She typically has fourteen days to report back to the Board, and her assignments were already ready to go and on time. She does not like politics but knows how to maneuver through them. The stress of a task does not bother her.

Everything with the County was controversial because of the environment and the infighting between Board members. Ms. Davis was caught in the middle and had to do what was ordered by the majority of the Board. Her background does not contain anything that would concern a reasonable person. A newly elected Board majority knew that she would not go along with their plans because the plans were not proper and she has integrity. So, they voted 3/2 to not give her a new contract.

If they wanted to reinstate Mr. McQuirter as the President, he would only return with Ms. Davis and the attorney. She has integrity and is a good manager. The information she gave the Board was always accurate, reliable, and complete.

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Energetic,
- Pleasant personality,
- Compassionate
- Aggressive,
- Knowledgeable, and
- Determined.

Strengths: Ability to network and communicate, attention to detail.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

Mickie Parker – Former Human Resource Director, Hinds County, MS 601-896-8722

Ms. Parker worked with Ms. Davis at Hinds County. They met in 2010. Ms. Davis' job performance is above average, she always went above and beyond to ensure that everything and everyone was taken care of.

Ms. Davis made great decisions both in hiring and in general. She does not make quick decisions, she looks into the matter and puts thought into it. She considers how solutions will affect the organization on a long term basis. She is very innovative.

Before the pandemic Ms. Davis was very visible in the community. When citizens called with concerns, she handled their issues in the most professional way in comparison to other managers. She is always right on point. She kept the staff informed, she wanted them to hear about issues from her and not from hall talk.

On a daily basis Ms. Davis led teams to resolve issues. They were looking at the food service for the detention centers and it made sense to privatize the service. The process was long and before they moved forward, she led a team effort to look at different vendors and check their references. She considered how the change would affect detainees and officers. She created a back up plan if the vendor did not show up because inmates and officers need to eat. She offered different perspectives and made sure they thought through every contingency. When she gave suggestions or ideas, she always said "we" and not "you". She was part of the team.

Being ultimately responsible for the entire County budget, Ms. Davis was good in finance. She monitored purchases throughout the year to ensure that whatever was being purchased was something the County needed and money was not wasted. She is quick to complete tasks.

During tense or challenging situations, Ms. Davis always kept a smile and did not seem stressed. Unless you understand exactly what is going on, you would never know the type of stress that she was under. She sat through some rough board meetings and kept a very pleasant expression even though it was hard on her.

Nothing controversial has occurred related to Ms. Davis. The Administrator is reappointed every year and a new elected board did not reappoint her or the attorney at their very first meeting. They did not state a reason for this decision. While Ms. Parker and Ms. Davis did not always agree, they respected each other. Where Ms. Parker was weak, Ms. Davis was strong, and they balanced each other.

Ms. Parker would hire Ms. Davis, she was one of the best managers that Hinds County ever had and was the longest standing Manager in County history. Ms. Parker has worked in government since the 1990s, Ms. Davis is the best Manager she has worked under in her entire career.

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Organized,
- Determined,
- Strong,
- Team player, and
- Great communicator.

Strengths: Very organized, great communicator.

Weaknesses: She expects others to perform as well as she does, or better, which can be a hindrance.

John Morgan – Owner, JM Hughes Group, Hinds County, MS 601-672-4988

Mr. Morgan has known Ms. Davis since 2012 or 2013. They were both on the Leadership Jackson Board of Directors and got to know each other. Mr. Morgan was a lobbyist for Hinds County from 2016 to 2020. Ms. Davis is fantastic, she is a consummate professional and a pure administrator. Very few are able to navigate the political nuances and she did that marvelously.

Being the Administrator for Hinds County was a difficult job, it is the largest County in the state. Ms. Davis oversaw a large staff and a large budget with many constraints. She did very well. She is very good with numbers and budgeting. Government officials are usually on the low end of the communication spectrum, but Ms. Davis is tremendous and responds immediately.

When they met Ms. Davis was Vice President for Leadership Jackson, and she has been very involved in that organization and several other local charities. She is very visible, she attends the Chamber, ribbon cuttings, and to the local coffee shop where the business community meets.

Their work was mostly behind the scenes to create strategies for the County, but Ms. Davis proved her success in that Hinds County was not on the front page of the paper, they were always on the back page, during her tenure.

Ms. Davis is good about keeping others informed and they had regular communications throughout the legislative season. When legislation came up that Mr. Morgan did not understand, like fringe benefit payroll taxes, he called to ask for an explanation. Ms. Davis could always either answer immediately or she shortly found the answer.

When serving on the Board of Leadership Jackson, their budget was cut 70% even though they were the most successful Chamber program. They went from \$500 million to \$150 million and the topic was very touchy. Ms. Davis was very professional and classy through this time, she

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

was a good emissary between the Chamber and the Board of Directors. She is very tactful and navigates these types of situations and relationships well. She remains cool under pressure.

A shift on the Council after an election led to Ms. Davis' departure from the County. The majority of the Board wanted someone who would play the politics more than Ms. Davis, and game the system in their favor. She served under many Presidents and did not use her position to politically benefit one member of the Board. Even the Board members who voted against her reappointment speak very highly of her.

Mr. Morgan would hire Ms. Davis, she is fantastic. He has worked with many managers and she is the best manager in the state.

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Consummate professional,
- Pure administrator,
- Very high emotional intelligence,
- Strong financial skills, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: Consummate professional, pure administrator, very high emotional intelligence, very strong fiscally, responsive, has a natural sense of expediency that is not often found in government employees.

Weaknesses: Though a perceived weakness, she may seem introverted or withdrawn but that is only because she is very deliberate.

LaVonne McGee – Human Capital Development Director, Hinds County, MS 601-201-4311

Ms. McGee was hired by, and then reported to Ms. Davis for five years, from around 2015 to 2020. They worked on many excellent and successful programs. Ms. Davis was very detailed in the hiring process, and also hired strategically to meet the goals of the strategic plan. Her character has no flaws.

Because she thinks things through, Ms. Davis is not a quick decision maker. She assesses the entire situation so she can make the best decision for the County. She is innovative and she maintains an organization at a high performance level. Communication is important to her, so she tasked Ms. McGee with helping her to keep the staff informed.

Ms. Davis was out front participating in the entire makeup of the county. She was wonderful with the public. Her personality is such that she is easy to work with. She is very open and

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

honest, she listens intently to the residents, elected officials, and staff for their input into the overall operation of the County.

When issues arose between employees, Ms. McGee and Ms. Davis met with them to mitigate the situation and get everyone on one accord. Ms. Davis is great at mediation and resolving issues, she wanted to have a strong team and could not afford to have individuals who were not working together. She is very pleasant to work with because she is very sensitive and resolves issues in a way that is positive both in terms of finance and also stability. She ensured that Directors had enough resources to carry out their responsibilities.

The budget was always balanced during Ms. Davis' tenure, and the departments were never over their budget allowance. She was a stickler for waste. She made sure that assignments fell within the realms of the vision of the County, so they were always achieving the objectives of the Board. She dealt with challenging situations very well.

Being involved in controversy is not something Ms. Davis does, it is not in her makeup. When the Board changed after an election, they decided they wanted a new Administrator.

Ms. McGee would most definitely hire Ms. Davis, she is a good manager who is enjoyable to work with. When Directors had issues, she was very open and listened intently before speaking. She helped them work through it.

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Professional,
- Committed,
- Strong,
- Organized,
- Compassionate, and
- A leader.

Strengths: Compassion, services, and strong organizational skills

Weaknesses: Very compassionate, she cries at the sad stories.

Lure Berry – Finance and Budget Director, Hinds County, MS 601-214-5174

Ms. Berry has been with the County since 2008. When the Finance and Budget Director retired in 2016, Ms. Davis offered the position to Ms. Berry. From that time, until Ms. Davis left the County, Ms. Berry reported directly to Ms. Davis.

Reference Notes
Carmen Y. Davis

Ms. Davis is an excellent supervisor. She is easy to talk to and does not belittle the staff when they make a mistake. She had a nice voice and knew exactly what her role was. She was very enjoyable to work with. When given a project, she met with departments to create a plan to achieve it. She excelled at planning and organization.

Ms. Davis makes good decisions. She is innovative, a change agent, and the organization runs at a high level under her leadership. She did not change processes that were working well. She keeps everyone informed. She leads the organization to fulfill the Council's vision.

Visible in the County, Ms. Davis attended community events and worked with the public very well. She gave press conferences and was one of the few County officials to actually answer the questions. She is very articulate.

Hinds County is the largest County in the state, and they have the largest jail. When an issue occurred related to the jail, she rallied employees and elected officials to bring the jail to the standards it was supposed to be at.

Because she either answered the phone or returned the call, Ms. Davis was the person that constituents called. She followed the process through the system until it was resolved. She has good financial skills and accomplished tasks in a timely manner. If she felt stress, she hid it well.

Ms. Davis' background is free and clear of any incident that might concern an employer. She works at the will of the Board and left after a change in administration. Everyone that Ms. Berry knows has the same high opinion of Ms. Davis.

Ms. Berry would hire Ms. Davis, she is a good manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Carmen Davis:

- Kind,
- Motivated,
- Attentive, and
- Workaholic.

Strengths: Organization, planner, great communicator.

Weaknesses: Workaholic.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger

April 15, 2021

PHOTOS: Vaccine Day held at the Jackson Medical Mall

Author: ERIC SHELTON

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Carmen Davis** is listed below.]

Pharmacist Martha Johnson, left, prepares to administer the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccination to Jimmie Braddy at the Mississippi Urban League Building, located at the Jackson Medical Mall in Jackson, Miss., Thursday, April 15, 2021. Transportation was also available for residents. "Our goal is to make healthcare accessible to all," Jackson Medical Mall Foundation Chief Operating Officer **Carmen Davis** said. "Our transportation services program has recently expanded its services to provide the community free transportation to vaccination appointments."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press
March 26, 2021

City to Transport 400 Seniors for Vaccination at Medical Mall in April

Author: Kayode Crown

Four hundred seniors will get COVID-19 vaccines at the Jackson Medical Mall on a yet-to-be-announced day in April, City of Jackson Constituent Services Manager Keyshia Sanders told the Jackson Free Press Thursday. "We will be providing transportation for them to be able to get picked up and transported to the vaccination site and then transported back to their home," Sanders said.

Jackson Medical Mall Foundation Chief Operations Officer **Carmen Davis** confirmed the initiative on Friday. She said the program is an expansion of its outreach program to the seniors and people with disabilities funded by the Mississippi Department of Transportation, the City of Jackson, and the Central Mississippi Planning and Development District. "The Jackson Medical Mall (Foundation) not only will host it at our site, but we will also provide transportation for those who would need transportation to get here, to be vaccinated," **Davis** said. "And so we'll be utilizing our existing transportation program services to those who are registered to be vaccinated that day." "The event will mainly focus on seniors and also the disadvantage or the disabled; however, we are setting aside vaccination shots for the general public as well."

Working with Senior Apartment Complexes

Sanders said the City is working with senior apartment complexes. "We're working with service coordinators for the residential apartment complexes, and they have expressed that there is a need for seniors that do not have transportation, that have a desire to be vaccinated, but they might not have the transportation to get to the vaccination site," she said.

Meanwhile, on March 6, 1,818 people participated in the City's vaccination day, Mayor Chokwe A. Lumumba disclosed at a press briefing on March 8, where he described the event as a success and noted that the number constitutes more than 1% of the city's population. Lumumba pointed out some organizations that partnered with the City for the event, including Hinds Community College, Mississippi Department of Health, and "several pharmacists around the Metro area" and "various volunteers."

"The more than 1,800 vaccinations (are) the most vaccinations the state has given out in any one day (in one location)," Lumumba said. "We know that the numbers have been abysmal in terms of less than 13% early on of Black and Brown communities being vaccinated as it relates to the overall vaccination across the state. So we wanted to step in and do our part to help the residents of Jackson, to help in the effort so that we can have some semblance of normalcy here in the near future." The Mississippi State Department of Health, on its website, noted that as of March 25, Black people in the state now makes up 29% of those vaccinated, which, however, is still below their percentage of the total population—37.8%.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Those vaccinated on March 6 will take a second dose on March 27. In a Tuesday statement, the City asked for volunteers to assist in the event. "It is not possible to pull off an event such as this without an army of dedicated volunteers," the City stated. "The City is calling for volunteers to help with day of event logistics from registration to guides to runners and more." Volunteers must be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 27, to help run the event. To volunteer email volunteer@jacksonms.gov."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
January 16, 2020

New Hinds Co. Board of Supervisors fires county administrator, board attorney on 3-2 vote

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors, with three new members, have fired the county administrator and the board's attorney. No decision has yet been made about the status of the road manager Charles Sims, who has been on family and medical leave. When the new board took office Jan. 6, members had to decide which staff to retain or replace. After electing incumbent Supervisor Robert Graham as president and new Supervisor Credell Calhoun as vice president, the five-member board voted on whether to retain administrative staffers.

The board fired County Administrator **Carmen Davis**, who had been administrator since 2010. **Davis** had been a former Detroit city employee before moving to Mississippi. The county administrator runs the day-to-day operations of the county. The Board of Supervisors gave no reason for terminating **Davis**. The vote was 3-2, with supervisors Calhoun, Graham and David Archie voting not to retain **Davis**. The board named county employee James Ingram as a temporary replacement.

Supervisors Bobby McGowan and Vern Gavin voted to keep **Davis**. Gavin, who once was a Hinds County administrator, argued that the board was making a mistake. He said he hadn't seen anything she had done to warrant removal. Likewise, Gavin and McGowan voted against the motion not to retain then-Board attorney Pieter Teeuwissen. However, Archie, Calhoun and Graham voted to replace Teeuwissen. Scherrie Prince was named interim board attorney.

Gavin said he feared that the firing of **Davis** and Teeuwissen could impact the consent decrees the county signed with the U.S. Department of Justice to improve conditions in the county detention centers and juvenile justice center. Gavin said **Davis** and Teeuwissen have played integral parts in the negotiations with the federal government. Graham said the county will advertise for a permanent board attorney and county administrator.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press
September 17, 2019

JFP Questions Destruction of Public Records by Hinds County Board of Supervisors

Author: Seyma Bayram

The Jackson Free Press is asking the Hinds County Board of Supervisors to delay its unanimous vote yesterday to dispose of documents relating to its former administrations as well as former County Administrator's files from 1984 to 2007 without specifying the number or the content of those documents. After reviewing the State of Mississippi's records-retention schedule and guidelines for local-government records, this newspaper today sent a letter to the board expressing concern that the decision could violate Mississippi's public-records law. Today's letter also asks the board to provide further explanation and documentation to ensure the legality of the order. The vote occurred during the Hinds County Board of Supervisors' bi-monthly meeting on Sept. 16, 2019, after the County Administrator's office addressed the board about an "Order to Approve the Disposal of Files Related to Former Administrations of the Board of Supervisors as well as Former County Administrator's Files for the Period of from the Years of 1984-2007 (sic), Formerly Stored at the Public Defender's Building, in Accordance with Hinds County's Storage, Retention and Disposal Policy Adopted in 2017." The board did not discuss its decision during the vote nor did it, to our knowledge to date, invite input from the public.

The Jackson Free Press has requested access to the amended 2017 policy to which the order refers as well as a list outlining exactly which files will be destroyed, whether or not any files have been disposed of since the vote yesterday, and whether the board discussed a plan to digitize any documents before destruction. The County Administrator's office had not answered these questions at press time.

JFP Letter to Hinds Supervisors About Records Destruction

As with all Mississippi counties, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors is bound to the State of Mississippi's Local Government Records protocols. Mississippi's guidelines state that Board of Supervisors must keep the following records permanently: agenda files; original orders, already recorded in minutes; committee minutes; proof of publication; grant files and program records; activity reports (permanently if annual reports are not maintained); annual reports; policies, procedures and plans; correspondence, executive (elected and appointed officials); certain litigation files relating to "annexation, civil rights and other landmark or historical issues"; and records disposal documentation.

The supervisors control all operations and funding for the Hinds County Detention Center and the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. The Hinds County Detention Center, also known as the county jail, has been under a federal consent decree since 2016 after an investigation from the U.S. Department of Justice found that the jail infringes upon the constitutional rights of detainees through lengthy pretrial incarceration. Violence, infrastructural insecurity and mismanagement, among other systemic issues, also plague the facility in Raymond. The State of Mississippi updated many of the guidelines listed above, which the board must follow, in 2018,

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

suggesting that the updated guidelines supersede the 2017 policy to which the Board referred in its Monday vote. Board Attorney Pieter Teeuwissen told the Jackson Free Press today that he could not comment on the order, as it could violate attorney-client privilege, but that the county policy should follow state law. The Jackson Free Press also called the Hinds County Board of Supervisors' and County Administrator's offices, notifying them of our concerns surrounding the legality of the order and asking for additional information and documentation that would clarify whether or not the vote to approve the order was within the bounds of the law. District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said today that he is confident that the order, based on 2017 county policy, followed state protocols. "I'm not familiar with the exact policy, the wording of the policy, but it is in accordance with the state policy on record retention. We are following the state law," he said to the Jackson Free Press this morning.

County Administrator **Carmen Y. Davis** echoed Graham's sentiments in a phone interview today. "It's not overriding the state law," she said. "It is reinforcing the policy within the county, encouraging all employees, officials and department heads to comply with the state law. So it's an internal policy making sure that we are disposing, retaining records correctly, according to state law ... and the state law is referenced in our policy."

LaVonne McGee, director of human and capital development at the County Administrator's Office, told the Jackson Free Press today that she believes confusion stems from the wording of the order, which she had drafted. "It (the 2017 county policy) has been amended. It was amended in 2018, and we sent that out ... and I just didn't put 'as amended' on the agenda item, and I apologize for that," she said. "The board approved on October 1 (2018) the incorporation of the amendments made by the Department of Archives and History into the county's 2017 policy," McGee said.

When asked whether the disposal of files from 1984 to 2007 was legal, **Davis** responded: "Well, our staff has reviewed it. If there's an issue with those individual files, we can review those. ... They (the staff) were supposed to process those according to the retention schedule of the state law, so we can review those to verify that." **Davis** added that there was "an attachment of files" detailing a list of exactly which files will be destroyed. She, however, did not immediately provide the attachment when requested. Files are destroyed immediately following an order such as Monday's, **Davis** said, adding that "since there is a question, we will hold off on destroying them, certainly, because we are not trying to be in violation of the law. And if there is a question about any of the files, I want to review them again just to make sure that we're not missing something."

The Jackson Free Press asked whether any files have been destroyed, yet. "I will have to check with the staff, I'm not sure," **Davis** responded. The Jackson Free Press sent the letter to the Hinds County Board of Supervisors outlining concerns and requesting further explanation for the order. You can read the letter here. We will provide more information from the board as it comes in.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

November 14, 2018

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
NORTHERN DIVISION

J.H., et al., Plaintiffs,
v.
HINDS COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, Defendant.

Civil Action No.
3:11-cv-327-DPJ-FKB

ORAL ARGUMENT
REQUESTED
AMENDED MOTION FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE CONSENT DECREE AND
A CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, CONTEMPT

The Plaintiffs, children confined at Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center (“HenleyYoung”),¹ respectfully submit this Amended Motion for An Extension of the Consent Decree and a Corrective Action Plan or, in the Alternative, Contempt (“the Motion”).² Pursuant to Local Rule 7(b)(6)(A), the Plaintiffs respectfully request oral argument on this motion. 1. Hinds County (the “County”) for nearly seven years has failed to comply with key substantive provisions of the court-ordered consent decrees in this case,³ including in the areas of suicide prevention, educational and rehabilitative programming, and medical care, resulting in ongoing violations of the federal rights of vulnerable and disabled children.⁴

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:
https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/documents/0131_pls_amended_motion_for_an_extension_of_the_consent_decree_and_corrective_action_plan_or_in_the_alternative_contempt.pdf

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press

June 14, 2018

Hinds County Criminal Justice Council Gets to Work

Author: Arielle Dreher

JACKSON — A group of Jackson and Hinds County leaders has begun meeting bi-monthly to work on improvements to the adult and juvenile justice systems in the city and county, after Hinds County entered into a 2016 settlement agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. DOJ investigated the Raymond and Jackson detention centers in 2014, and the county's juvenile justice center, Henley-Young, was the subject of a federal lawsuit back in 2011. DOJ issued a findings letter in 2015 with concerns about inmate safety at the Raymond and Jackson facilities, alleging that the county was in violation of detainees' constitutional rights.

Hinds County Board of Supervisors attorney Pieter Teeuwissen said all the stakeholders involved in the criminal justice system need to figure out how to move people through the system faster. Right now, individuals can sit in jail for as long as four years, he said. "We need to figure out how to prioritize these individuals in these facilities," Teeuwissen told the Jackson Free Press. "... If they are not guilty, we shouldn't have them detained in less than appropriate conditions. If they are guilty, they are supposed to be processed through and put in the state correction system."

As a part of the settlement agreement, county and city stakeholders had to form the Hinds County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, which is working to ensure that people do not get stuck in the jails for too long and that cases move through the system quickly. The council meetings do not have to be public, Teeuwissen said, but he believes they will be in the near future. The settlement agreement requires the county to recognize that "it must provide prisoners with adequate supervision and housing in order to prevent violence between prisoners and the use of excessive force by detention staff," the settlement agreement says. "The county also acknowledges that government detention is a serious infringement on the rights of citizens and other individuals, and is thus subject to constitutional rights."

County leaders must work to decrease the incarcerated population "particularly special-needs populations, such as individuals with serious mental illness and juveniles," the settlement agreement says. Teeuwissen said he thinks the council's work will be long-term. "I think that what you're seeing now is a work in progress," he said.

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors voted to formally recognize the Hinds County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council on May 21. The council is divided into five groups that will work on improvements to address behavioral health, case processing, jail population management, prisoner reentry and juvenile justice, a press release from the Administrative Office of the Courts says. Senior Circuit Judge Tomie Green and Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** co-chair the 19-member council. The other council members include:

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- Hinds County Circuit Court Senior Judge
- Hinds County Chancery Court Senior Judge
- Hinds County Court Senior Criminal Judge
- Hinds County Youth Court Judge
- Hinds County Justice Court Senior Judge
- Jackson Municipal Court Senior Judge
- Hinds County District Attorney
- Hinds County Attorney
- Hinds County Sheriff
- Hinds County Administrator
- Jackson Mayor
- Jackson Police Chief
- Jackson City Prosecutor
- Hinds County Public Defender
- Hinds County Detention Center Warden
- Hinds County Juvenile Justice Center Director
- Hinds County Behavioral Health Director
- a representative of the Hinds County Board of Supervisors
- a representative of the Jackson City Council

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
August 8, 2017

Mississippi Department of Revenue ending printing of auto tag renewal notices for counties

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The Mississippi Department of Revenue will end printing auto tag renewal notices for counties later this year. “For at least 40 years, the Department of Revenue has printed the renewal card for the counties as a courtesy,” spokeswoman Katie Lawson said. “Each month, DOR prints the cards for the upcoming renewal month and mails those to the counties. The counties are then responsible for mailing those cards to the vehicle owners.

However, the number of counties DOR now prints renewal notices for is down to five, including the most populous, Hinds. The other 77 counties are using third-party vendors to print and mail renewal cards for them because they can get better postage rates, Lawson said. DOR sends an electronic file to the vendors so that they can print the cards for the counties. The other counties DOR prints renewal notices for are Choctaw, Scott, Sunflower and Washington.

The October renewal cards will be the last printed for the five counties. After that time, DOR will provide those counties with a pdf file that they can use to print the renewal information on standard letter-size paper for mailing to the vehicle owners. “That is because the DOR is launching a new motor vehicle tag and title system known as MARVIN,” said Lawson, referring to the Mississippi Automated Registration Vehicle Information Network. “MARVIN, a state-of-the art, web-based system, will take the place of the current system, which was developed in 1980.” It will cost \$18.8 million to implement the new automated system, DOR said.

On Monday, Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** recommended the Hinds County Board of Supervisors hire Dallas Printing in Richland to begin printing renewal notices and mailing them out at 34 cents per card. Dallas, the only Mississippi company, was one of three companies the county received quotes from. **Davis** said Dallas was the first option. Peregrine of Monroe, Louisiana. was the second option. A Chattanooga, Tennessee, company also submitted a quote.

Davis said the board decided to hire Peregrine, which submitted the lowest quote of 30.9 cents per card. DOR says there are 195,129 motor vehicle registrations in Hinds County, and each year the agency would print that number of renewal cards. The renewal notices include the cost an auto owner will have to pay to renew their vehicle tag. The notice also breaks down the cost, such as how much property taxes go into the tag fee.

For the past year, the DOR has actively been communicating and meeting with all 82 counties in preparation for the implementation of MARVIN, Lawson said. Multiple training classes have already been held at the DOR for expert users and bookkeepers of each county. Computer-based training videos have been provided to the counties. Additionally, DOR’s training team will be

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

conducting classes for all system users in each tax collector's office throughout the month of September, she said.

Washington County Tax Collector Patricia Lee said Tuesday she hasn't decided yet, but expects to select a third-party vendor to print and mail out roughly 2,500 cards a month in her county. Lawson said MARVIN will allow vehicle owners the ability to "opt-in" to receive email renewal notices rather than paper notices.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
May 19, 2017

Youth Court judge files another suit against Hinds County

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County Youth Court Judge Bill Skinner is again suing the Hinds County Board of Supervisors over proposed cuts to the Youth Court budget. Skinner said in a complaint filed last week in Hinds County Circuit Court that the board met May 1 in executive session during a special session and adopted a budget of \$788,230.12 for Youth Court for the next fiscal year. The amount reflects a budget cut of \$183,000, more if fringe benefits for salaries is included.

Judge Skinner has filed a new lawsuit against the Hinds County Board of Supervisors . Sorie Tarawally, Skinner's attorney, says the complaint challenges the power and the constitutionality of the Board of Supervisors' action. "The actions, rulings and or decisions taken by the board on May 1, 2017, are ultra vires and illegal and in violation of the Youth Court Act, and its presiding judge's constitutional and statutory powers and duties as provided and guaranteed to him in the state constitution, laws and case precedent," Tarawally said in the complaint.

The complaint asks Hinds County's four circuit judges to recuse themselves from hearing the case, saying it may place the judges in conflict or their impartial judgment may be questioned. Those judges — Bill Gowan, Tomie Green, Winston Kidd and Jeff Weill — all have signed individual orders removing themselves from the case.

In September, Green threw out a similar lawsuit filed by Skinner who was seeking a temporary restraining order to prevent the board from cutting his budget by roughly \$183,000 in salaries and \$71,854 in fringe benefits for the current fiscal year. Green said in her ruling that, should there be a deficit at the Youth Court or a need to request board reconsideration, Skinner has numerous remedies. Green said Skinner failed to advance facts to sustain any public interests, irreparable harm or likelihood of prevailing on the merits for granting the motion.

Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said in a letter to Skinner in September that, as a mandate to comply with a federally amended consent decree to meet mental health requirements at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center, the Board of Supervisors reduced the Youth Court's salary with fringes budget. Skinner and the Board of Supervisors have been at odds over the last few years about control of the youth detention center.

As the senior County Court judge, Skinner has served primarily as Youth Court judge. Recently he signed an administrative order stipulating he will handle the Youth Court and criminal cases. County Judge Melvin Priester was assigned to handle civil appeals, and Judge LaRita Cooper Stokes will handle civil cases in County Court. The senior judge has the authority to make assignments for the court. Skinner became the senior county court judge after longtime Judge Houston Patton retired.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
April 7, 2017

Surprise! Hinds County property taxes rise

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** called it “unintended consequences” that county property taxes went up for residents in Jackson, Clinton and most other areas of the county without the public's knowledge. When county supervisors adopted the \$64.3 million general fund budget in September for the current fiscal year, **Davis** emphatically said in a Sept. 15 public hearing that there would be no tax increase. However, recently county officials said they weren't aware that decreasing taxes for garbage collection in unincorporated areas while increasing it for volunteer fire departments and economic development would lead to an overall higher property tax rate.

Davis and then-county finance and budget coordinator Lillie Woods put the budget together, said Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun, who has voiced displeasure with the tax increase. Hinds County Tax Assessor Charles Stokes informed county supervisors and others there would be an impact on property taxes for much of the county. Residents began seeing an increase with the property tax bills in December. Stokes said his own overall property taxes went up about \$19 a year, with about \$4.40 of that stemming from the tax increase. He said some property also increased in value because of the reappraisal of property in the county in 2016.

On a home valued at \$75,000 in Jackson, the county taxes increased by about \$7.50. However, the county tax increase coupled with a property tax increase by Jackson led to higher overall increases. The 2017 budget the Jackson City Council adopted in September include a property tax increase of 3 mills, which translates into a \$300 property tax increase for every \$100,000 of assessed value. While the Board of Supervisors approved the budget, Calhoun said some supervisors didn't know it included a tax increase. The only areas where taxes didn't go up were Byram, Learned and unincorporated areas of the county. Byram collects all of its own taxes since it re-incorporated as a city. Learned is a village, and as such isn't assessed taxes. With the reduction in garbage taxes, the property tax rate also didn't increase in unincorporated areas. By law, counties are required to advertise when there is a possibility of a tax increase even if it isn't one by supervisors.

Calhoun said the normal process is to document it in the minutes when there is tax increase. “We didn't announce a tax increase and didn't announce it to the public,” Calhoun said. Calhoun said some at-will employees, including the county administrator, had raises proposed in the budget. Rank-and-file employees received \$100-per-month, across-the-board raises. Initially, **Davis'** raise was set at \$18,000. The amount of the proposed raise was reduced and later rescinded for her and some other at-will employees. There is nothing the county can do about the tax increase this year, but it could be rescinded for the next budget year, which begins Oct. 1. District 4 Supervisor Mike Morgan voted against the budget when it was approved, saying the county continued to spend down its cash reserves to cover budget shortfalls.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Clarion Ledger
December 8, 2016

Hinds to look at Medicaid for inmates

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County will look to Medicaid for help to try to reduce inmate medical costs. Last year, Hinds County was hit with medical bills totaling more than \$258,000 for one inmate. Cortaia Washington was convicted in August 2015 of witness tampering for an altercation with a woman who had been a witness against Washington's brother in a case. After Washington's conviction, she ended up in Merit Hospital and then was transferred to the University of Mississippi Medical Center due to an illness from her sickle cell disease. The bills from the two hospitals totaled more than \$258,000.

Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun said through research she has learned that a federal rule allows Medicaid benefits to be paid for incarcerated inmates if they were eligible for Medicaid and part of the system prior to needing medical service. Calhoun said counties and cities haven't been taking advantage of the Medicaid program when it comes to inmate medical costs. However, Mississippi Division of Medicaid spokeswoman Erin Barham said Thursday federal law prohibits Medicaid payment for most health-care services provided to individuals while incarcerated under a policy known as the "inmate exclusion."

Barham said Medicaid cannot be used to pay for the care of inmates outside of a limited exception. Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun wants to look at Medicaid for inmates. "In Mississippi, anyone (including a person who may be incarcerated), first has to be categorically eligible for Medicaid," Barham said. "I think many detainees can be covered," Calhoun said. "I think most would be eligible." Calhoun said cited a federal rule change in 1997, which she said allows Medicaid benefits to be paid for incarcerated individuals. Also, hospitals would charge for in-patient services based on cheaper Medicaid rates, she said.

Calhoun said the county could realize real savings with the federal government defraying some of inmates medical costs. "Once out of jail, they can continue coverage," Calhoun said of Medicaid for inmates. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors approved this week a motion by Calhoun to have County Administrator **Carmen Davis** work with others to develop a Medicaid reimbursement program for inmates and a plan to get inmates signed up for Medicaid. **Davis** will bring a proposal back to supervisors. No deadline was given.

Calhoun said Hinds County's legislative agenda for the upcoming 2017 session, which begins Jan.3, will likely include a request asking that a regional hospital be constructed or open to care for inmates in the metro area with mental illness. Calhoun said the state Hospital at Whitfield only has 25 beds statewide for such inmates now. "In our detention center in Raymond, we are housing inmates with mental problems," Calhoun said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

October 31, 2016

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
NORTHERN DIVISION

CAUSE NO. 3:15-CV-911-DPJ-FKB

GALE NELSON WALKER PLAINTIFF

VS.

ROBERT SHULER SMITH,

Individually and in his official capacity as District Attorney of Hinds County, Mississippi; and
Hinds County, Mississippi; and John or Jane Does 1-10 DEFENDANTS

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

SECOND AMENDED COMPLAINT

NOW COMES Plaintiff, GALE NELSON WALKER, by and through counsel, and files this Second Amended Complaint. Plaintiff brings this action to recover actual and punitive damages for violations of her First and Fourteenth Amendment rights and for state law claims of civil conspiracy, violation of the computer fraud and abuse act (CFAA), discharge in violation of public policy, invasion of privacy, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

[CB&A Note: The remainder of the case can be read here:

https://jacksonfreepress.media.clients.ellingtoncms.com/news/documents/2017/01/03/proposed_second_amended_complaint.pdf

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press
September 26, 2016

Youth Court Judge Sues Hinds County Over Budget

Author: Tim Summers Jr.

JACKSON — The Hinds County Board of Supervisors finds itself caught between two judges in their efforts to address issues at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. On Sept. 23, Hinds County Youth Court Judge William Skinner filed a lawsuit against the Hinds County Board of Supervisors in Hinds County Circuit Court. Skinner alleged that the county executive board overstepped its bounds when it approved a budget that moved funding and "four youth court staff positions to the detention facility," a decision the judge states is "beyond their power to do."

In a Sept. 16 letter the county administrator informed Skinner that the Youth Court would receive a reduction in funding of "\$183,446.64 in salaries and \$71,854.79 in fringes for four positions," in response to the federal court Amended Consent Decree's mandate to focus on mental health-care at Henley-Young. "The board is following a court order that was given to us by a higher judge, by a federal judge," District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said before pushing all questions to the board's attorney, Pieter Teeuwissen. "But he advised us to really not say anything."

At the moment, the board, as the representative body of the county, is under the constraints of several binding legal agreements. They include an Amended Consent Decree decided as the result of a federal 2012 lawsuit that Disability Rights Mississippi and the Southern Poverty Law Center brought to address conditions at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. Graham said that with a federal judge on one side and the circuit court youth judge on the other, he could not comment either way. "It is a delicate issue," Graham said, stating that any budget moves were the result of the federal court orders. "Even at that, it is a part of a court order, too."

And, after receiving recommendations from mental-health consultant Dr. Lisa Boesky as part of that agreement, the Board decided to allocate around \$190,000 to address deficiencies in mental health care at the facility. "We're excited that the board has allocated some funding to meet those needs. I don't know if it is enough," Hinds County Board of Supervisors' attorney Pieter Teeuwissen said during a Sept. 15 interview, the same day the board approved its budget. "I don't think any of us know, yet, because we are starting from a clean sheet. I do think that that is a significant commitment." Teeuwissen did not respond to calls about the new lawsuit by press time.

In the Sept. 16 letter to Judge Skinner, Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Y. Davis** informed the judge of the details of the move. "As a part of the consent decree terms and according to Section XIII, Mental Health Care, it has been ordered that the County reallocate the funding for counselor positions within the Youth Court budget to the Detention Facility to provide appropriate and accessible mental health counselors and case management counselors to the residents for the development of the individualized treatment plans," the letter states. "As a

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

mandate to comply with the terms of the amended consent decree," the letter continues, "the Hinds County Board of Supervisors reduced the Youth Court's salary with fringes budget. This reduction consists of \$183,446.64 in salaries and \$71,854.79 in fringes for four positions." This cut will bring the court's budget down to \$255,301.43 for the next fiscal year. Skinner argues in his complaint that moving these positions will inevitably render the Youth Court without "essential personnel necessary for a functioning court." "Furthermore, Judge Skinner will show that there is only one counselor position funded from the county budget vote and not the four counselor positions that they are proposing to cut, so in essence they are cutting salaries and positions of personnel vital and necessary for the functioning of the court," Skinner wrote in his complaint.

Skinner outlines the structure of his court in the document as well. The youth court, he states, is made up of one director, two operations coordinators, three clerks, four deputy clerks, five youth counselor trainees, six youth counselors, seven youth counselors who serve as restitution officers, eight "youth counselor II" positions, nine "youth counselor III" positions, and ten "youth counselor I" positions, in addition to clerical support staff. He states that all of those are needed to help his court address the "well near seven thousand cases a year, which include abuse and neglect (4,000 to 5,000) and delinquency (2,000) and an assortment of other matters brought before it or complained of by a parent or person with interest in the affairs of the minor."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Clarion Ledger
September 16, 2016

Almost \$4 million gap in Hinds County budget

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County supervisors approved a \$64.3 million general fund budget for the next fiscal year that will give the county's roughly 830 employees an across-the-board, \$100-a-month raise beginning Jan. 1. But the budget will spend about \$4 million more than the county is projected to collect in revenue, one supervisor says. The county will use reserve money to balance the budget for the 2016-17 budget year, which begins Oct. 1. "It is inevitable that we will have to make some tough decision," said District 4 Supervisor Mike Morgan, the lone Republican on the board and the only one of the five supervisors to vote against the budget, which takes effect Oct. 1.

Morgan said the county continues to spend down reserve money. He said a \$10 million reserve in the bank two years ago will be reduced to \$4 million in the budget approved this week. Last year, supervisors approved a budget with a nearly \$5 million gap in expected revenue versus department requests. District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said the county adopted a conservative budget, including one that increases the reserve fund by \$500,000, reduce debt services, provides a modest cost-of-living increase for employees, no tax increase and no layoffs or furloughs for employees.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said the county is at a turning point in its budget and is facing some challenges. Asked by District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham of plans to try to stabilize the county's budget situation, **Davis** said a vehicle replacement plan is under consideration to cut maintenance costs. She also said the county will determine whether some permit and zoning fees should be increased. One thing the county could be hit with in the new budget year is expenses to meet a federal consent decree for the Hinds County Detention Center in Raymond as well as the one in Jackson and the juvenile justice center.

The Department of Justice and Hinds County reached a settlement in June stemming from a federal investigation that found the Hinds County jail had violated inmates' constitutional rights. U.S. District Judge William Barbour has approved the settlement and hiring of a monitor to track the county's compliance with the agreement. Lillie Woods, the county's budget and finance coordinator, said \$120,000 was put in the budget for the jail monitor. Last year, a Justice Department investigation found the jail lacked adequate staffing and training and failed to protect prisoners from violence and excessive force. Because of a record-filing backlog, inmates also were imprisoned past their release dates, according to the investigation.

The settlement will require the county to improve staffing, supervision of inmates and the physical plant; to limit segregation; to increase access to treatment and services for special-needs prisoners; and to improve mental health and youth services. **Davis** and Woods said a highlight of the budget is no county tax hike. The raises will cost the county approximately \$787,000 for the upcoming fiscal year.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Clarion Ledger

July 7, 2016

Hinds County may give up park where naked men roamed

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

Hinds County may relinquish control of the notorious Parham Bridges Park South off of I-55 South where arrests were made in the 1980s amid complaints of naked men running through the woods and performing lewd acts in parked cars and restrooms. Parham Bridges Park South, not to be confused with the Parham Bridges Park in Northeast Jackson, has been closed on and off for regular use for decades but remains a park. Hinds County has done some maintenance there over the years. However, Pieter Teeuwissen, attorney for the county Board of Supervisors, said the needs at the park today outstrip the available resources.

In 1962, W.P. Parham Bridges Sr. donated the property to Hinds County with the stipulation that it be used as a public park. The deed said that if the property isn't used as a public park, the 35 acres will revert to the family. About 15 years ago, Bridges' son, W.P. Parham Bridges Jr., sought to reclaim the land, saying it had gone years without being used as a park. Parham Bridges Jr. said Friday he never wanted to get the land back. He said he would remove the restriction that the land be used as a park if the county could find a way to use it for the public good.

Hinds County increased its efforts to revive the park when the younger Bridges threatened to take the property back because it wasn't being used. The county constructed new restrooms and said the facility was open by request for family reunions and anniversary gatherings. Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said this week that the park hasn't been used in years. "It lends itself to those who want to do unsavory activity," **Davis** said.

Teeuwissen said county officials have been discussing over the last month what to do about the park. He said the county will have to identify funding to upgrade the park, which could be as much as six figures, or should relinquish rights to park and return the land to the Bridges family. "I don't think we need to let this linger," Teeuwissen said of a decision on the future of the park. Teeuwissen said the park is close to Jackson but the capital city has shown no interest in acquiring the park. He said Jackson already has about 65 parks and he doesn't think the city has any interest in adding another one. **Davis**, Teeuwissen and other county officials say a decision will be made during upcoming county budget hearings.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Clarion Ledger
November 19, 2015

Historic records in danger

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The court records from the original trial in 1964 of Byron De La Beckwith in the slaying of civil rights leader Medgar Evers are stored in paper files or binders somewhere in Hinds County. Officials just aren't sure exactly where. Deputy Clerk Lee Myers explains that a shortage of suitable storage areas means that court records are stored in any available space at the Hinds County Courthouse in Jackson, including this fourth-floor HVAC area. Water leaks from the roof and windows and mold and mildew have damaged many of the documents.

There are shelves and storage rooms full of old court records in the Hinds County Courthouse and other locations in the county. Some of those records can never be destroyed, according to state law. However, many are in danger from storage in leaky rooms, leading to mildew and mold. Beckwith was tried twice in 1964 in the June 12, 1963, shooting death of Evers, who was shot in the back after he got out of his car in the driveway of his Jackson home while his wife and three small children were inside the house. Each of the trials in 1964 ended in hung juries when an all-white jury couldn't reach a decision.

In 1994, 30 years after his original trials, Beckwith was convicted of killing Evers after the case was reopened. He was sentenced to life in prison. Beckwith died in prison in 2001 at the age of 80. Old court records, such as the Beckwith trial records from 1964, were kept in large binder books. Some records date back to the 1893. NaCola James of the Hinds County Human Capital Development Office said the county has files stacked from floor to ceiling in some storage areas, but water leaks from the roof and windows and mold and mildew have damaged many of the documents. "Stacking boxes upon top of each other is compromising our records," James said. "There is no protection for our historic records."

Longtime Hinds County Circuit Clerk Barbara Dunn, who is retiring in January, said once the county had a storage area infested with bats, but that storage facility is no longer used. James and Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said they would like the county to have an archive location to house historic records. "We need a storage facility," said Hinds County Supervisors' President Tony Greer. The county is considering a building on McRaven Road. Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun said the county won't be able to buy enough storage for records. Calhoun said the county should seek help from the Legislature to find a solution. "There needs to be better way," Calhoun said. "We have paper everywhere."

Davis said that is the reason the county should have its own archival system. James said the county approached the Mississippi Department of Archives and History about taking the historic county records but was told the department currently doesn't have enough storage space.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
September 15, 2015

Hinds County budget won't fill some positions

Author: Jimmie E. Gates

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors has approved a \$58.3 million general fund budget that doesn't increase taxes, but will leave about 51 vacant positions unfunded including 36 in the sheriff's department. Board of Supervisors President Tony Greer, who voted no on the budget, complains it doesn't go far enough to curb spending in the county. The county has a gap of about \$5 million in expected revenue versus department requests for the 2015-2016 budget year, which begins Oct. 1. The county will use reserve money to balance the budget.

Greer had proposed eliminating some vacant positions as a way to save money and balance the budget. The overall county budget is \$107 million, with \$58.3 of that for the general fund, which comes from tax revenue. "I feel like we are bloated when it comes to employees," Greer said. Greer voted no on the budget. He was joined by Supervisor Robert Graham in voting no, but they had different reasons for casting no votes. Graham said he was opposed to not funding the positions, especially in the sheriff's department, considering all the jail problems the county has had over the last couple years. About 12 of the positions are at the Jackson Detention Center.

Supervisors Peggy Hobson Calhoun, Darrel McQuirter and George Smith voted for the budget. Calhoun said if the sheriff comes to the board with a request to hire certain employees, there is money in the reserve funds to pay for the employees. Calhoun said the county's only two options were not to fill vacancies or to raise taxes, and she wasn't going to vote to raise property taxes. All five supervisors said they were opposed to raising taxes.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said the budget was a challenge with declining revenue. She said revenue has been on the decline over the last two years. Smith, who is interim District 5 supervisor, said adopting a balanced budget, one where revenue and expenditures are in line, could do more harm than good because the county is in the business of providing service to residents. The county is also concerned that it could be hit with additional expenditures in the future to satisfy requirements of consent decrees with the U.S. Department of Justice on the adult detention centers and the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Wjtv.com
May 4, 2015

Hinds County to fix broken windows inmates used to escape; 1 still at large

Author: Kristen Lambertsen

JACKSON, Miss. – Hinds County authorities are still searching for a teen after he and two others broke out of the Jackson Detention Center over the weekend. The Hinds County Sheriff's Department tells us they are looking for 17-year-old William Smith. Smith and two other inmates, 17-year-old Antwain Dukes and 18-year-old Gerome Moore escaped from the jail out of a broken window. Dukes and Moore are back in custody. Dukes and Moore were arrested in January in connection to dozens of crimes in Jackson, including multiple carjacking's and the shooting death of Carolyn Temple. One month ago, four teens escaped the downtown jail.

Carmen Davis, the County Administrator, said six broken windows could be fixed this week and the sheriff's department says that includes the window used in this weekend's jailbreak. In the meantime deputies are posted outside the jail to make sure no one escapes or brings contraband into the facility. The extra security is 24/7, Sheriff Tyrone Lewis said. The board approved \$100,000 for repairs on April 6. However, the sheriff says no repairs have been made since that time.

WJTV asked him why inmates are housed in cells with broken windows. "I want to make sure I'm very clear," he said. "Every window in that facility is deficient. Every window can be compromised and all the inmates know that so we're in a hurry up and wait situation, until we can get these windows fixed." Earlier this year 21 windows were repaired but **Davis** said 171 windows still need to be repaired.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

wjtv.com

April 29, 2015

Two Arrested for Trying to Sneak Drugs into Hinds County Jail Downtown

Author: Kristen Lambertsen

For the second straight week the Hinds County Sheriff's Department made a late-night bust outside of their downtown jail. Authorities stopped a group of people Tuesday around 9:30 p.m. who they say were trying to sneak drugs into the building. Sheriff Tyrone Lewis says his deputies recovered about an ounce of marijuana, some packages of spice, lighters, and cigarettes from a small rolled up package. A weapon and scale were also found in the vehicle used by the suspects.

Sheriff Lewis declined to go into detail about how the two men were arrested while trying to get the items behind bars. He only went as far to say the suspects were caught outside with the help of street-side surveillance. "But we're pretty proud of the measures we put in place and we're going to continue this effort until the county administrator decides she's going to move forward and fix the flaws of this building so we won't have to take these extra precautions," Sheriff Lewis said. He is criticizing Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** on the funding issue.

Two suspects were placed under arrest and will be charged with attempting to introduce contraband to a correctional facility. 24-year-old Joshua Ledbetter and 25-year-old Dominique Griffin are in the custody of authorities. Sheriff Lewis says one more person is on the run. That person's name is Kimandre Davis and authorities are currently working on making an arrest.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
February 25, 2015

Supervisor: No data compromised in Hinds cyber attack
Authors: Harold Gater, and Dawn Dugle

Hinds hacked

The Hinds County website was the victim of a cyber attack Wednesday morning, however Hinds County District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham says it does not appear at this time any data was compromised. For a few minutes, a strange image appeared in the middle of the Hinds website saying "Hacked by Hamzah Uygun. F*** Israel and Usa."

Graham says he discovered that the website had been hacked shortly after 8 a.m. He contacted Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis** and together they determined who needed to be notified. IT workers were called along with supervisors, the Hinds County Sheriff's Dept., FBI and other metro area governments. Graham says they take the attack "very seriously."

Hinds County District 3 Supervisor Peggy Calhoun says that most data on the website is public information and there is no reason for the attack which she described as "malicious." There were also claims of the attack being from AnonGhost - whose Facebook page lists it as a "Defacer and a Computer Hacking Crew" from "Worldwide Anonymous." In November, the self-proclaimed Pro-Palestine hackers defaced the website of the United Nations and 120 other government sites. The site provider, U.S. Next, took the site down and reposted it using a previous version of the website. Graham added that it appears that it was not a county server that was hacked.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press
November 3, 2014

Stokes, Graham Blast New Jail Planning Committee
Author: R.L. Nave

In response to the seemingly never-ending bad news out of the Raymond Detention Center, county officials this morning took an incremental first step toward finding a solution. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors voted today to form an ad hoc committee to assess the condition of the jail and to develop a plan for alleviating its lingering problems. In recent years, inmate uprisings, escapes, suspicious deaths and allegations of corruption have plagued the jail. The new committee will consist of District 4 Supervisor Tony Greer, who will chair the body, along with Board Attorney Pieter Teeuwissen, County Administrator **Carmen Davis**, Sheriff Tyrone Lewis and representatives from each of the county's five districts.

Even though it passed, the plan drew criticism. District 5 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes, who has long advocated for the construction of a new county jail, objected to forming the committee and its proposed makeup, as well as to having Greer as its chairman. Stokes said the county should hire professional engineers and architects to conduct planning for a new detention facility instead of political appointees. The jail has been embroiled in political controversy for many years. The controversy has grown more intense since Stokes joined the board after serving on the Jackson City Council. Stokes has often been publicly critical of Lewis, who oversees the jail's day-to-day functions. In the meantime, two Hinds County grand juries have delivered damning reports about the safety and security inside the jail. The U.S. Department of Justice is also looking into the conditions at county-run jails.

Most recently, Lewis and Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith locked horns over the alleged leak of erroneous grand jury indictment information to reporters. Lewis and members of his staff appeared on a local radio show to criticize the DA's office for putting together weak cases that failed to result in criminal indictments. Smith's contempt motion claimed that a list of unindicted cases provided to the media included the name of an individual who was indicted on another charge. In late October, Smith dropped the contempt citation after Lewis' office assured him that the release of the grand jury information was a mistake and that it would not happen again.

District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham seems to quibble with the idea that a new jail would solve the county's crime problems. "Do we just spend money on top of money on top of money in jail? When does it stop? We're just spinning our wheels," Graham said. No timeline was announced for when the new committee would commence its meetings.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press

October 3, 2014

DA Robert Smith Called Grand Jury That Criticizes Sheriff Tyrone Lewis

Author: R.L. Nave

Robert Shuler Smith, the Hinds County district attorney, empaneled the grand jury that delivered a damning report of Sheriff Tyrone Lewis's supervision of the Raymond Detention Center. Several media outlets, including the Jackson Free Press, reported that Hinds County Senior Circuit Judge Tomie Green—who called a grand jury together in 2013 after an uprising that left a housing pod unusable, the subsequent death of a prisoner named Larry David McLaurin and other incidents of unrest—empaneled the grand jury that delivered its findings yesterday, Oct. 3.

In an email to the Jackson Free Press this morning, Green clarified that it was a grand jury Smith empaneled in July 2014 that inspected the jail and delivered its findings to Green late yesterday afternoon. Calls to Smith's office as well as to Lewis' spokesman Othor Cain were not immediately returned this morning. The four-page grand jury report followed inspections of the jail as well as the Hinds County Courthouse and concluded that "after hearing from (Lewis) and his team, we are of the opinion that Sheriff Lewis is incompetent to oversee the jail or keep pretrial detainees or state inmates safe in a manner or to keep the public safe from inmates."

In their report, grand jurors note that during an inspection of the facility, they observed "the immediate after effects of arson" as well as a prisoner who exposed himself and another prisoner who possessed a cell phone, which they pointed out is a felony. In addition, the jail lacked an adequate number of jailers, and the guards on duty were frightened of the inmates. "The inmates seemed to be in control of the jail as a result of the shortage," grand jurors wrote.

The grand jury also noted other health and safety concerns, including mildewed tiles in the prisoner's shower area, cell doors stuffed with toilet paper to prevent them from locking, several cracked glass windows and areas where lights do not work properly. The control and booking room requires new cameras and monitors and has several areas that are moldy, jurors observed. The U.S. Department of Justice announced June 2 that the agency would open a "pattern or practice investigation" of both the Raymond Detention Center and the Jackson Detention Center downtown. A DOJ press release stated the investigation would focus "on whether Hinds County protects prisoners from harm at the hands of other prisoners and staff" and "improper use of force." Judge Green said the probe is ongoing.

Lewis has long complained that his difficulty maintaining the building stems from the Board of Supervisors and County Administrator **Carmen Davis** holding the purse strings to the jail and must approve all repairs. Judge Green empaneled a grand jury last year, she said, because a thorough inspection of the jail had not taken place since 2008. It found "a great deal of ongoing conflict in this 'arranged marriage' between the county and the sheriff." "The sheriff claims that the County has failed to adequately maintain the basic maintenance needs of the facility. When they need a repair, a work order is submitted, but the County is slow to make the needed repair.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The result is a facility that is in disarray in its basic electric, plumbing, smoke alarm, control boards, ventilation and security systems," they wrote. In the most recent report, grand jurors also inspected the Hinds County Courthouse and found that "it is in good and safe condition," except for its outdated cameras and poorly functioning elevators, which have been a frequent source of conversation among county supervisors. Grand jurors also observed several areas of water damage, including "a constant drip from the ceiling that is damaging the clerk's office." The JFP uncovered similar problems at the courthouse causing damage to thousands of files. Hinds County Circuit Clerk Barbara Dunn denies that any documents are at risk. Yesterday evening, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors called an emergency meeting, which Smith attended briefly, and went into executive session to discuss the report but announced no action.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Clarion Ledger
September 30, 2014

Hinds County budget includes layoffs

Hinds County's recently approved budget included elimination of seven administrative jobs. Employees received termination letters on September 15th, WLBT reported. Hinds County administrator, **Carmen Davis**, says the county could not continue to pay the salaries totaling about \$270,000 annually. "It was a 3-2 vote to accept the budget as it was and that did eliminate our positions," said Pamela Young, a laid off worker. Young was an administrative assistant at the Hinds County Department of Human Services.

"These are employees that work for the state but are funded by the county and it just come to a point that the county could no longer afford to fund the state operation. We definitely tried to get them a heads up," **Davis** said. Hinds County is operating with a general fund of \$54 million dollars but officials say they are always looking for ways to reduce costs. **Davis** says the state government is picking up some of the positions.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press
May 14, 2014

SPLC Blasts Henley-Young Plan
Author: R.L. Nave

After receiving a reprimand for its management of the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center, Hinds County officials have come up with a solution to the ongoing legal problems, one that has raised sharp criticism from youth advocates. In late April, U.S. District Judge Daniel P. Jordan found Hinds County in contempt of court for failure to comply with a 2012 settlement over abusive conditions and lack of access to educational services at the youth detention center.

At the time, a federal court ordered the county to improve in more than 70 "areas of deficiency" that ranged from basic cleanliness to expanding mental health and rehabilitative services at the 84-bed facility; a monitor was appointed to document the progress. However, those monitoring reports show—and attorneys for the plaintiffs agree—that little progress has been made. Jordan agreed as well. As a result, he not only extended the consent decree for two more years but also found that the county was in contempt of court.

In his order, Jordan wrote that while the initial two-year deadline was probably too little time to make all the needed fixes, "many of the 71 requirements should have been accomplished long before now." "(W)e are faced with a large task and possible incompetence. That said—and this needs to be clearly understood—the progress thus far is unacceptable," Jordan wrote. During a closed-door executive session held May 5, supervisors voted to transfer operation the county voted to turn Henley-Young's daily operation over to Hinds County Judge William Skinner, who supervises the county' youth court program.

Under that arrangement, which could take effect as soon as June 1, the county would maintain the physical building but the detention center's administrator would report directly to Skinner. Currently, Henley-Young Administrator Brenda Frelix reports to Hinds County Administrator **Carmen Davis**; **Davis** reports to the five-member board of supervisors.

Hinds officials have long complained that the involvement of several agencies—the county, the courts and Jackson Public Schools—in Henley-Young's operation creates a bureaucratic nightmare, making it hard to comply with court orders. "It's a house divided," District 2 Supervisor Darrel McQuirter told the Jackson Free Press in an interview last week. Jody Owens, managing attorney of the Mississippi Southern Poverty Law Center, which represented plaintiffs in the 2012 suit, called putting the youth detention center under Skinner's direction "crazy" and a "conflict of interest" because children require specialized care and mental-health treatment.

"There are people who specialize in youth detention, and Judge Skinner does not fit that mold," Owens said. Besides, Owens points out, Skinner was in charge of Henley-Young until 2009 when the Hinds County Board of Supervisors stripped him of that authority amid questions about his management of the facility. District 1 Supervisor Robert Graham said at the time the board

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"received information that we believe were federal violations regarding the operation of the center." The Mississippi State Supreme Court sanctioned Skinner in August 2013 for issuing a pair of bench warrants in a child-custody case that he'd recused himself from because a court employee was related to one of the litigants. The state's high court found Skinner had abused his power and suspended him for 30 days without pay and a \$1,000 fine.

Owens said SPLC attorneys could take Hinds County back to court in less than six months if they do not see substantial progress on the consent decree's benchmarks, which the county must still meet no matter who is running the detention center. "They can't pass their accountability to Judge Skinner," Owens said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

WAPT.com

July 19, 2013

**Sheriff says other county leaders accountable for jail problems
Inmates flood cells at Hinds County Detention Center**

JACKSON, Miss. — The Hinds County Administrator is firing back after the sheriff said other county leaders are accountable for problems at his jail. Inmates flooded a pod of cells with water Thursday. "It's an issue that we deal with every day, where inmates tend to flood our cells. It happens every day," Hinds County Sheriff Tyrone Lewis said. Dozens of Hinds County deputies rushed to the Detention Center in Raymond after an employee called for backup. "This particular employee overreacted and made an unnecessary call," Lewis said.

Lewis said inmates in Pod A broke out of their cells and flooded that area of the jail. He said no one was injured. "We're still dealing with the same old maintenance issues," Lewis said. Video shot by a jail guard showed maintenance problems in June. Inmates can be seen running freely through a pod after popping the locks on their cell doors. One month later, inmates in Pod C broke out of their cells and started a riot that lasted 10 hours. Lewis said maintenance at the jail is out of his power. He said his department must send maintenance requests to county leaders before anything so much as a light bulb is fixed. Lewis said these types of inmate problems will continue until the doors are fixed. "The maintenance director is not being held accountable to maintain this facility the way it should be maintained," Lewis said.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** oversees the maintenance director. **Davis** said in a statement released Friday that she is disturbed that the sheriff said his requests for repairs have been ignored. "All of the locks were repaired or replaced last summer as identified by the sheriff. The repairs have not been ignored," **Davis** said. **Davis** said the work orders presented to the Maintenance Department have been completed. "Our policy is that a Detention Center employee must sign off on the work order to confirm that the repairs have been completed. This policy ensures and affirms that work orders are not ignored," **Davis** said. "Work orders are handled on an ongoing basis primarily because inmates are constantly destroying county property."

Davis said she has work orders from Detention Center and maintenance staff that says inmates are damaging the facility. "More specifically, maintenance staff reported and recorded that the locks were not functioning properly due to inmates jamming the locks with everyday objects or materials," **Davis** said. The county made fixing door locks a priority. She said a vendor repaired the locks last summer and is still at the Detention Center working on other aspects of the doors. **Davis** said she has shared several of her concerns about inmates damaging county property with Lewis but has not received a response from him about how he plans to address the problem.

Lewis said his proposed budget for next year seeks \$500,000 to create a maintenance department withing the Sheriff's Office. He wants to hire, train and be in charge of getting things fixed around the jail. The Board of Supervisors will vote on the budget proposal in September.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Clarion Ledger
November 28, 2012

Investigation into Jackson courthouse bomb threat continues

Author: Ruth Ingram

Officials with the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security today are continuing an investigation into who called in a bomb threat Tuesday targeting the Hinds County Chancery Courthouse and why. Employees of the building in downtown Jackson were evacuated for about three hours after the call came in to Jackson police's dispatch. Hinds County Sheriff's Department deputies cleared and secured the building, paving the way for Homeland Security staff to search the building for anything pertaining to the threat. At least three Jackson Fire Department engines were on standby as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal and K9 units scanned the area. Nothing was found, and employees were allowed to return at about 3:30 p.m.

Jay Ledbetter, director of the Mississippi Homeland Security office, was not immediately available for comment this morning. That agency is taking the lead on the investigation; on Tuesday, multiple agencies including Jackson police and the Sheriff's Department were on hand to close down streets surrounding the courthouse, direct traffic and facilitate the search for explosives. Throughout the episode, Hinds County administrator **Carmen Davis** coordinated putting the county's evacuation plan into action and kept supervisors and others updated on law officers' actions in ensuring the Chancery Court building was safe. She could not immediately be reached for comment today.

It's still unknown if there is a connection to the threat in Jackson and bomb threats called in Tuesday affecting 30 courthouses across Tennessee. They also forced employees to evacuate and local law enforcement agencies to respond to what one Tennessee sheriff's department's deputy chief said amounted to domestic terrorism. Not just Tennessee, but states including Oregon, Nebraska and Washington also have received bomb threats this month targeting courthouses. Around 10 a.m. Tuesday, the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency received a phone call that a bomb had been placed in a local courthouse. By 3:30 p.m., 30 courthouses had received bomb threats, said agency spokesman Dean Flener. No arrests were made, and no bombs were found. "We take bomb threats very seriously," he said. "We get bomb threats throughout the year, sometimes at schools and sometimes courthouses."

Law officers in Jackson were investigating a report from a person giving possible information related to who made the call, but details weren't being released as part of the ongoing probe. Hinds County District 1 Supervisor and board president Robert Graham said Tuesday that law officers "have no indication that it was related to the matter in Tennessee ... Of course, you are always subject to having individuals who are copycats."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Mississippi Link

October 30, 2012

Hinds Co. workers get relief on insurance cost

Author: Monica Land

JACKSON – (AP) Hinds County supervisors have voted 3-2 to keep the contract approved earlier this month with United Healthcare and its local representative, Bottrell Insurance. The new contract lowers employees' health insurance deductible from a staggering \$5,000 to a low of \$500 but more than doubles their monthly premiums, from \$73 for a single employee to \$173. The board voted this month to absorb about \$44 of the cost per month per employee.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** told The Clarion-Ledger that's possible because the county budgeted for an 8 percent increase in its share of the health insurance cost, and that cost ended up not rising. The 8 percent would equal about \$44 per employee per month.

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Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Jackson Free Press
September 17, 2012

Calhoun Wants Action at Juvenile Center

Author: R.L. Nave

A Hinds County supervisor wants know what's being done to fix problems at the Henley-Young Juvenile Justice Center. District 3 Supervisor Peggy Hobson-Calhoun directed county administrator **Carmen Davis** to provide a list of corrective actions taken at the beleaguered youth jail. A complaint from the Southern Poverty Law Center and Disability Rights Mississippi alleged that the center's staff subjected the children to physical and verbal abuse. It resulted in a March 2012 settlement between the county and plaintiffs. Under the agreement, children entering the facility were to receive mental-health evaluations, counseling, better rehabilitation options, input from family and advocates, and more time outside their cells.

As of August, however, the county has not addressed many basic issues in the settlement, according to a report from court-appointed monitor and juvenile-justice expert Leonard B. Dixon. Dixon points to inadequate staffing that keeps the jail in "perpetual lock-down mode" and high leadership turnover at the facility as one explanation for the county's difficulty in maintaining a safe and secure environment. That the jail has had three directors in as many years, Dixon said, "creates instability, chaos and a lack of direction." The building--located on East McDowell Road in Jackson--is also in poor condition and is in need of extensive maintenance, Dixon wrote.

The Hinds County website displays a job announcement for entry-level juvenile-detention officers. The job description lists tasks varying from subduing violent prisoners and performing life-saving measures to serving snacks, washing walls and cleaning toilets. The job pays \$1,643.63 per month, less than \$20,000 annually. District 4 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes said he's heard stories of cooks and groundskeepers sometimes filling in to keep an eye on youth inmates. Stokes renewed his oft-repeated call to ask the city of Jackson, whose residents represent the majority of inmates housed in county facilities, to pitch in and help pay for the needed changes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press

July 2, 2012

Update: Jail Fixes Cost \$1.3 Mil

Author: JFP Staff

The Hinds County Detention Center at Raymond is getting a facelift, but it won't necessarily put an end to the security problems that have plagued the facility. With little discussion, Hinds County supervisors agreed to spend \$1.3 million from a 2007 bond issue to make repairs at the jail. In recent months, several escapes from the jail and media reports showing its shoddy condition put pressure on officials to make much-needed fixes. Among the "major repairs" **Davis** said the county plans to make are fixing doors in the housing pods, replacing a water tank at the health department's request, installing a new dishwasher and kitchen floors, fixing shower valves, installing razor wire, and installing and fixing cameras.

District 5 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes warned that making the improvements wouldn't mean that escapes would stop or that no future repairs would be needed. County Administrator **Carmen Davis** said her office would start looking into replacing the jail and talking to the city of Jackson about pitching in. Supervisors have complained that because the majority of detainees are Jackson residents, the city should pay more for housing its inmates there. She added that maintenance at the 24-hour-a-day operation has long been a challenge, in part because "the facility was not built to the proper standards in the first place." "That's the nature of the business," **Davis** said of corrections. "Inmates may not handle the facility like we would handle our homes.

Also, back in January, Hinds County Emergency Operations Center director Jimmie Lewis got fired and supervisors voted to rehire him a few minutes later. Today, he was fired again. Hinds County District 1 Supervisor and board president Robert Graham waited until the end of today's supervisors meeting to air several longstanding complaints against Lewis' management of the EOC. According to Graham, Lewis failed to apply for "millions" of dollars worth of grants for which the county is eligible and didn't satisfactorily respond to Graham's requests for information.

District 5 Supervisor Kenneth Stokes was the only board member who voted against Lewis' firing. District 3 Supervisor Peggy Calhoun did not attend, but did participate in portions of the meeting via a teleconferencing system. The board then voted to rehire Ricky Moore, who previously worked for the EOC, and sued the county in 2010 for racial discrimination when supervisors tapped Lewis, who is black, over Moore, who is white, to lead the department. Joey Perkins will serve as the EOC's interim director until Moore is formally hired.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Carmen Y. Davis
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Mississippi Link
June 27, 2012

Hinds sheriff criticizes county after jail escapes

Author: Monica Land

JACKSON – (AP) Hinds County Sheriff Tyrone Lewis is criticizing other county officials for not doing enough to repair the county’s troubled jail. Lewis says mounting maintenance problems aren’t being addressed, although administrators and county supervisors are aware there’s a crisis. The recently-elected sheriff led reporters on a tour of the Raymond Detention Center Friday, hours after another inmate escaped. That’s the third escape in three months. Lewis and Chief Deputy Chris Picou say that dozens of cell door locks are broken, meaning inmates can get out at will. They want county supervisors to hire a company that specializes in jail repairs to fix the problems.

Frederick Destache, the inmate who escaped early Friday, was captured about 30 minutes later at a nearby gas station after a struggle with deputies, the sheriff said. Supervisors, for their part, voted 3-2 Monday to close the Raymond facility and build a new one. But they set no timeline and it’s unclear how the county would pay for the \$30 million to \$45 million needed to replace the 1994 jail. “Until the maintenance department of Hinds County steps up to the plate and makes these corrections, we are going to continue to have inmates escaping and employees resigning and afraid to come to work,” Lewis said in the wake of Destache’s escape through a broken grate in his holding cell. He then walked through a maintenance room, then left via double doors that didn’t lock.

Supervisors and county administrators say they’re filling work requests given to them by Lewis. They say recent escapes should not be blamed on maintenance woes but on lack of vigilance by Lewis’ staff. “We want to make sure the public is aware that we’re taking full responsibility to fulfill our maintenance duties, and we have a process and are handling it with urgency,” said County Administrator **Carmen Davis**. “The concern he (Lewis) expressed today is news to me.” The department has a shortage of guards, and those on staff are poorly trained, Lewis said. The sheriff would not say how many more are needed, citing security concerns. According to records obtained by The Clarion-Ledger, 24 people identified as detention or correction officers left the department between Jan. 1 and May 31. Of those, 12 were fired, nine resigned and three retired.

On July 2, supervisors will vote on spending more than \$1.2 million in money from a 2007 bond issue on immediate jail repairs. “The items in the Power Point presentation are the ones being addressed,” **Davis** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

<https://www.therecycler.com/posts/us-county-audit-finds-surplus-cartridges-worth-35000/>

The Recycler.com

January 16, 2012

US county audit finds surplus cartridges worth \$35,000

Officials in Hinds County in Jackson, Mississippi, found over \$35,000 (€27,661) in surplus ink and toner cartridge supplies, according to the Clarion Ledger. Fisher stated: “It had been bought and just squirreled away. They’ve been sticking it in closets for years, and nobody’s said anything. It’s absurd for taxpayers to be paying for this. “It’s a small example of how the county refuses to do a performance audit and messes over the people who pay for government.”

A number of administrators stated that the stock was the result of a conversion to electronic scanning and emailing from copying and faxing in 2008. Robert Graham, Supervisor’s President of District 1 in the county, excused the stockpile, adding: “This is the expected result of when we changed to a new system. It’s like meat in the refrigerator. It doesn’t mean it wasn’t going to be eaten, but you got something better.”

The discovery came at a bad time for the county, which has been borrowing from emergency and bond funds to pay bills, and Fisher added that his original audit was to establish which printing and copying devices were needed in the county offices to save money. County Administrator **Carmen Davis** performed the audit, and noted that 22 printers had been removed, others were necessary, amounting to 10 percent of the county’s devices, and noted that 43 percent of the surplus was ordered before the county’s conversion, with a 55 percent reduction in consumables expenses since.

Davis added: “We’ve gone to departments and have conducted an evaluation, and we’ve relinquished some desktop printers. The whole point of that contract was to reduce the ink and toner cartridge use. We’ve cut our costs down substantially.” County Supervisor Peggy Hobson Calhoun added: “If it was after the conversion, it’s a lack of monitoring and management of the employees. “If these things were ordered prior to that, you could make some justification for having it. I’m pleased we are taking measures to sell the supplies.”

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press
September 19, 2011

Calhoun: Jails Becoming Mental Health Centers

Author: Valerie Wells

Hinds County wants help dealing with a rising population of incarcerated prisoners who suffer from substance abuse and mental health issues. The board of supervisors passed a resolution today formally asking legislators to support the development of a "behavioral health treatment court collaborative" in the 2012 session. "Jails are becoming mental-health crisis centers," Peggy Hobson Calhoun, supervisor for District 3, said at this morning's meeting. Jails are not equipped to provide necessary health care for drug abusers, alcoholics and the mentally ill, she said, but counties carry the burden of providing that care. "This is a good opportunity to request help," she said.

County Administrator **Carmen Davis** read the resolution, citing a backlog of cases plus overcrowding as serious issues. Financially, the county has seen an increase in medical costs for prisoners over the past two decades. The resolution also refers to an increase of prisoners who are HIV-positive. While more correctional facilities can help the overcrowding, that won't make up for the lack of proper medical and mental-health care, **Davis** said. Sen. David Blount of Hinds County told the JFP this morning the issue is definitely a concern, but it is too early for him to comment substantially. He has met with the county once about the collaborative concept and plans to look more into the subject before the next legislative session convenes in January.

Mississippi Rep. Credell Calhoun, D-District 68, who is Supervisor Calhoun's husband, said he had also attended a meeting on the idea. "I think it's appropriate. Hopefully, we can get something done," he said. "We are not just talking about Hinds County." Calhoun said he didn't know off hand how much money might be involved with developing the treatment collaborative, but he did say it would be significant. "It would be worth it," he said. Rep. Bill Denny, R-District 64, said he was too busy campaigning door-to-door, sun-up to sundown, to talk about the issue. "We are right in the middle of a campaign," he told the Jackson Free Press this morning. "I don't want to get in the middle of anything."

In a previous story, JFP reported that it is not easy for the mentally ill to get help immediately. Kathy Denton, public relations director at Mississippi State Hospital, said that residents must first go to a regional health facility before coming to the state hospital. In Hinds County, residents can seek treatment at Hinds Behavioral Health Services, and staff will then decide if the patient should seek long-term treatment at the state facility. It often takes a family member or friend to bring in someone they are concerned about and continue taking them to appointments.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press

July 27, 2011

A Fair Policy?

Author: Lacey McLaughlin

If you serve at the will and pleasure of an elected official in Hinds County or the state, you have signed on for a job without protection if you are fired. Rep. Ed Blackmon Jr., D-Madison, plans to introduce legislation next year that would require counties to choose a blanket personnel policy that would either give all county employees employment protections or none at all. Blackmon says the situation highlights a bigger issue in the state about employee rights in the private and public sectors. "People say Mississippi is a right-to-work state, but that's a misnomer because it's a right-to-be fired state," Blackmon said.

Mississippi is one of 22 states with right-to-work laws that prohibit agreements between employers and labor unions that require employees to join a union as a term of their employment. Blackmon argues that, historically, employers used the state's right-to-work statute to suppress the African American vote because employers could threaten to fire their black workers if they wanted to vote. Today, people who work for elected county officials may not have the same employment protections that other county public servants (such as public works, emergency services and the county attorney's office) have. State law gives county elected officials the authority to set their own personnel policies.

"This is now being used by the very people that the law was intended to intimidate," Blackmon said. "Right-to-work is a holy grail in Mississippi, and we are happy to tell prospective employers that you don't have to worry about unions or employee rights. You can fire anybody in Mississippi that works for you for any reason or no reason at all."

Speaking at a Hinds County Board of Supervisors meeting June 6, Jacquie Amos-Norris asked supervisors to consider changing the county's policy. In May, Hinds County Tax Collector Eddie Fair fired Norris. She doesn't think she should have been fired. Fair fired Amos-Norris May 13, citing her unwillingness to cross train. Norris, however, claims that Fair fired her after she disagreed with him about her pay. "Employees don't have rights," Amos-Norris said. "The only thing you are allowed to do is show up for work."

Fair denies the allegation that he fired Amos-Norris as an act of retaliation, but said he could not comment on a personnel issue. Fair maintains that he has merely adopted a personnel policy similar to his predecessors and believes that he is being unjustly singled out. "I think it's a fair policy," he said. "If you have the right to hire, why shouldn't you have the right to fire?" Fair's policy, like the majority of county elected officials, does not have a grievance and appeals process, and employees serve at the will and pleasure of the tax collector. County employees who work in departments not headed by an elected official can appeal to the county's human-resources department if they are fired or have workplace grievances. They then make their case to a human-resources committee, which makes a report to County Administrator **Carmen Davis**

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Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

on whether the employee was wrongfully terminated. **Davis** then has final authority on the person's employment status. Amos-Norris claims that Fair has too much authority and says his personnel policy creates a hostile environment and high employee turnover. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors adopted Fair's personnel policy in 2004. **Davis** said the board has no authority over Fair's policy or over that of any elected official. "It's required by state law that they place it in with minutes of the board," **Davis** said. "It's not an approval action; it's a receiving action." Hinds County Circuit Clerk Barbara Dunn and Hinds County Chancery Clerk Eddie Jean Carr can also terminate employees without a grievance or appeals process. Carr, who spent two years working as a human-resources manager, said that she has not fired anyone during her eight-year term in office. "I have an open-door policy with my staff," she said. "We don't have any issues or problems."

The Hinds County Sheriff's office does have an appeals process, but Sheriff Malcolm McMillin makes the final decision regarding employment. Brenda Scott, president of the Mississippi Alliance of State Employees, said that state employees serve at the will and pleasure of elected officials and did not think that county employees should be any different. "That's a non-protected job title," Scott said. "... If I was the head of a new administration and there were a bunch of employees from that old administration, I should have authority to put my people in place. Otherwise, there is no loyalty to me, and I can't succeed."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press

June 8, 2011

Did County Know of Abuse at Detention Center?

Author: Lacey McLaughlin

The proposed set of rules would include a bond schedule for suspects charged with crimes and outline arrest procedures. Juvenile-justice advocates filed a lawsuit last week that raises questions about how much the Hinds County Board of Supervisors knew about alleged abuses at the county's Henley-Young Detention Center. The Mississippi Youth Justice Project, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, filed a lawsuit last week claiming that youth detained in the detention center suffer various abuses and live in unsanitary and unsafe conditions. The advocacy organization says detention-center officials regularly isolate children in cells for 20 to 23 hours a day, deny them educational and counseling services, and verbally abuse the detainees.

The lawsuit states that Henley-Young staff routinely curse at detainees and issue threats of physical violence. Officers have even threatened to kill detainees, the lawsuit claims. One specific incident in the suit describes what happened when a 17-year-old, referred to as D.I., began cutting himself with a razor. "Instead of providing D.I. with the required care, Henley-Young staff taunted the youth and commented that if he succeeded in killing himself, there would be one less person officers would have to worry about," the lawsuit states.

Mississippi Youth Justice Project staff attorney Corrie Cockrell said her organization filed the lawsuit after attempts to work with the county on reforming the detention center's conditions failed. In 2009, the Hinds County Board of Supervisors approved a memorandum of understanding with the MYJP, which called for a series of detention-center reforms. The memorandum resulted in officers discontinuing the use of a restraining chair. But other requests, such as limiting the amount of time detainees are confined to their cells and ensuring that detainees receive educational and medical services, have not been resolved, Cockrell said.

"We were regularly meeting until a year ago to bring this to their attention, and progress was going well," Cockrell said. "... Then things became a standstill, and there was no movement in the right direction. From that point forward, we have been reaching out to the county, but felt like we had to bring the lawsuit forward because we have not been able to make any progress for a year now. " Some supervisors and County Administrator **Carmen Davis** claim that they were unaware of the specific allegations named in the lawsuit. Hinds County Supervisor Peggy Calhoun, who raised questions about the facility's staff and transparency in 2009, said she had not been notified of the allegations of abuse since the board passed the memorandum in 2009. She said that the weekly reports the MYJP provided to county officials contained mostly positive information about the detention center.

"I don't think the lawsuit is necessary to change any alleged conditions of prolonged isolation, verbal abuse and threats of physical harm, because if these matters come before board we will address the situation," Calhoun told the Jackson Free Press. "... I certainly would not tolerate or

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Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

allow any of the young people to be subjected to adverse conditions. "Regrettably, the Southern Poverty Law Center has not communicated to ^{[[1]]}_{[[SEP]]} me any of their concerns, nor has staff communicated to me any concerns. When I heard about the lawsuit, I was appalled by all the allegations."

Davis, who is conducting an informal investigation into the allegations, said she receives reports from the MYJP each week and reviews and distributes them to supervisors. She said that the extent of allegations mentioned in the lawsuit did not appear in the reports she has received. "The weekly reports were reviewed by myself and (Dale Knight), the director of Henley Young," **Davis** said. "We reviewed the issues that they raised in the weekly reports as best as we could because they were brought to us in a general manner."

Knight, who has served in his position since August 2010, denied the accusations. "I am confident that we have done all that we can for our detainees," he said. Cockrell, however, claims that the reports addressed the lawsuit's allegations, and her organization made several attempts to bring the allegations to officials' attention. In addition to ensuring that youth are treated properly, she said, MYJP wants the county to consider other juvenile reform programs. "There are several alternatives to detention centers," she said. "Community-based programs could be for children who pose little threat to society, and children who do not require secured detention. These are programs that are proven to reduce juvenile-crime rates." The Jackson Free Press has submitted a Freedom of Information Act request to Hinds County for MYJP's weekly reports.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press

February 2, 2011

Caring for Criminals

Author: Ward Schaefer

Inmate medical care is an unpopular business, at least in Hinds County. The Hinds County Board of Supervisors learned that lesson the hard way in January, when it found itself scrambling for a medical provider before its existing contract, with Jackson-based Reddix Medical Group, expired Jan. 31. Reddix informed the county Nov. 4 that it would not seek a renewal of its \$213,800 contract to provide medical care for inmates at the county detention center. By Jan. 25, when supervisors met to pick a new provider, County Administrator **Carmen Davis** had only found two other companies willing to submit proposals for the contract.

Supervisors postponed a vote on the contract, though. On Monday, Jan. 31, the board discovered at a special meeting that both proposals had fallen through. As Dan Gibson, the county's facilitator for its inmate medical costs, explained, prison work is not particularly desirable for most doctors. "It's hard to find doctors to work in a prison, and if they do, they're going to price it well above market (rates)," Gibson said.

An earlier proposal from Inmate Medical Care Services, which **Davis** had recommended, collapsed after the company's participating doctors dropped out. Insurance company owner Matt Thomas, who had presented the offer, told the Jackson Free Press that his group submitted its offer to the county around Jan. 14. By the time the county met on Jan. 25 and postponed its decision, too many doctors had found other jobs, Thomas said. Thomas said that Inmate Medical Care Services had no previous experience working with prisons, though individual doctors had worked with inmates before. The Jackson Medical Mall would have acted as the actual service provider for the group, he said.

Dr. David Williams, who submitted the second offer, rescinded his proposal without giving a reason, Gibson told supervisors. In place of the two older proposals, **Davis** presented a new, costlier offer from Reddix. For \$330,000, Reddix would offer a wider variety of services, including on-call access to a physician around the clock. **Davis** said that she was able to negotiate Reddix's original proposed cost down from \$363,000 to \$330,000 annually. Still, the new Reddix contract would cost the county \$116,200 more than its original \$213,800 contract.

The increased cost reflects an increase in services, with Reddix proposing to offer an on-call physician around the clock, increase the availability of a gynecologist and provide psychological care not included in the county's current agreement. Faced with the prospect of a gap in health care for prisoners, the board appeared bound to one choice. Sheriff Malcolm McMillin said that he needed more time to review Reddix's new offer, having not seen it before the meeting. "In this particular situation, I feel I've been backed up into a corner," McMillin said. "We didn't have this proposal when we had the other two." "Remember that budget you're talking about is yours, because the Sheriff's Department doesn't have any money for more (registered nurses),"

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Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

McMillin added. "I think this is an awfully big proposal here. It may be a good idea, but I'm certainly not going to agree to it without studying it." After a recess, the board voted to approve the Reddix contract. **Davis** asked Reddix to offer its recommendation for minimum medical staffing levels necessary at the jail. Reddix responded with a plan that would require the county to hire three new nurses but also cut six of the 11 medical officers on staff, and replace two bachelor's-level social workers with one master's-level social worker.

Neither she nor Reddix were officially recommending the staff reduction, **Davis** stressed to supervisors. The board voted to accept the company's suggestions for nurse positions and add one additional nursing position and create two more through attrition, when other medical officer positions become vacant. County Budget Director Lillie Woods said adding the nurses without also reducing the number of medical officers would cost the county an additional \$153,544 this year. Following Reddix's entire staffing recommendation, including cuts, would save the county \$89,554, making the total cost increase of the new agreement \$26,646.

Gibson, the county's facilitator for inmate medical costs, said the added staff and services could end up saving the county in the long term. Additional nurses would improve the detention center's initial health screenings of inmates, Gibson said. The new agreement also includes psychiatric services that the county previously contracted for separately. With greater control over psychiatric services, the county could also save money through closer regulation of psychiatric medicines.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Jackson Free Press
September 7, 2010

Hinds Hires New Administrator; Debates Voting Machines

Author: Ward Schaefer

The Hinds County Board of Supervisors voted today to hire **Carmen Davis** as its new county administrator. **Davis** replaces interim Administrator Ray Bryant, who had held the position since March. A native of Detroit, Mich., **Davis** received a bachelor's degree in urban planning and a master's degree in business administration from Wayne State University. For 10 years, she worked as a city planner for the Detroit City Planning Commission. In addition to managing development projects, she assisted in reviews of departmental budgets and monitored grants. **Davis** moved to Hinds County from Detroit, Mich., a year ago. Her husband, Al, is a math teacher in Jackson Public Schools.

The board set **Davis'** salary at \$82,500 a year. **Davis** is the county's third administrator in less than a year. Bryant took over in March after the board voted 3-2 during an executive session to fire Vern Gavin. Gavin himself had only held the position for roughly one year. "Hopefully, you can bring some longevity to the position," Supervisor Peggy Calhoun told **Davis** after the board voted 4-0 to hire her, effective immediately. "I hope so, too," **Davis** replied.

Supervisors also spent over half an hour discussing a request from the county Election Commission to purchase 300 used voting machines. Election Commissioners Lelia Rhodes and Marilyn Avery urged the board to approve buying the two-year-old machines, at a cost of \$350 per machine. New voting machines can cost \$3,000 each, Rhodes said. The machines would arrive by Dec. 1, after the November congressional elections but in time to be used for the 2011 statewide elections, she added. The purchase would come out of the \$1.722 million remaining in a federal grant for election equipment. Supervisors approved the purchase of scanners for the Election Commission earlier this summer. When Calhoun asked how the Election Commission planned to spend the remaining grant funds, Rhodes said that she needed more time. "I can't come before you abstractly," Rhodes said. "I like to do my research and come back to you with an idea of how we can effectively spend the money." Election Commissioner Jermal Clark spoke against the purchase, arguing that the machines were a model most states did not use, and that state-purchasing guidelines may require the county to submit a request for bids, which it has not done. "I don't know whether or not we're in compliance with bid laws," Clark said.

Purchasing Clerk Shirley Partee said that she also did not know immediately what state requirements applied to the elections equipment purchase. Supervisors agreed to delay voting on the purchase until they could determine whether a request for bids was necessary. The board went into executive session around 11 a.m. to discuss litigation concerning M3A Architects' work on a now-scrapped regional jail project in Raymond. Also on the agenda for executive session was discussion of bond funds for the Byram-Clinton Corridor project and the possible sale of the Mississippi Valley Title Building in downtown Jackson.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Carmen Y. Davis***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Detroit News
August 20, 1999

Site plan for Kmart stirs water worries

Author: Madison J. Gray

Residents of Detroit's far northwest corner fear that a potential retail development on the site of the Bonnie Brook Golf Course could upset the area's environmental balance. No agreement has been made on the development, but two meetings with community leaders have been held to show site plans for a new Super Kmart on the property, shrinking the golf course to nine holes from 18 holes. "What you're going to do is a displacement of water," said Tony Maclin, whose home is only a few hundred feet from the waterway. "It costs the residents because they are going to offset what was naturally here."

The site plan, Maclin said, called for the removal of trees and other vegetation, the moving of earth and construction on the river. He said upsetting the Rouge River's ecosystem would cause problems such as flooding in areas north and south of the golf course, higher heating and energy bills because of the removal of the natural canopy provided by trees and shrubbery, and accelerated soil erosion because of the redirection of water.

Marilyn Southern, president of the Berg-Lahser Community Association, said a change in the topography could mean a change in living conditions in the area. "This area has never been developed. The only thing we've ever had over there was Edgewater Park," she said. "My question is: What is the city of Detroit doing to ensure that environmental laws are not being overlooked -- or are they relying on community groups to discover this?"

Bonnie Brook Country Club officials did not respond to phone calls from The Detroit News, but Kmart spokesman Steve Pagnani said the company is "very interested" in the site. He said a decision to build there would depend on the Detroit City Council's approval. The community's concerns were heard, Pagnani said. "We wouldn't want to do anything to upset the current terrain there," he said. "We have to make sure that it is stable in the flood plain with the redesign of the golf course. Everything has to be done so that it works well with the course and the store."

But Detroit Planning Commission officials say that before work can begin, the plan must go through at least two tiers of approval. "The plan is before the city Planning Commission right now," said city Planner **Carmen Davis**. "There must also be public hearings scheduled before the City Council." The council would have to rezone the area for commercial development. It is now zoned for one- and two-family homes. In addition, the city's master plan would have to be changed to allow the "excess commercial frontage" that is prohibited now.

No date has been set for public hearings before City Council, nor have any proposals been made to amend the master plan, **Davis** said. Sandy Kanakis, president of Northwest Detroit Community Organization, said she wants to be sure that Kmart Corp., Bonnie Brook Golf Course officials, and community residents are all on the same page when a decision is made.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Carmen Y. Davis

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"We need to get everyone in the same room on this because this is not Seven Mile and Meyers," she said. "This is a high-flood area. It has always been a golf course. If we have all this construction, it will be a huge impact on the area."

Research Compiled by: Cara Slade and Tammie Browder
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 7

Willie A. Hopkins

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

Wahop2@live.com, (678) 266-7102
1513 Brunswig Lane, Emeryville, CA 94608

15 June 2021

Mr. Colin Baenziger:

I am interested in the position as City Manager of Lake Worth Beach. I have extensive municipal government experience as a senior executive who has worked as a visionary and collaborative leader in a diversity of military, private and public sectors.

As my resume reflects, I function as a Senior Leader in all sectors of my career. During these periods I also served, at the corporate level, reporting directly to the Chief Executive and/or the Board and also in an acting capacity as Chief Executive on occasions.

I have always been responsible for overseeing a diverse portfolio of administrative and operational functions. Organizationally-wide strategic influence including, Finance Administration, Facility Maintenance & Operations, Information Technology, Procurement & Supply Management, Risk Management, Public Works, Redevelopment and General Services to name a few.

As a key strategic partner to the Board and Chief Executive and the executive team, I was a vital participant in the development and implementation of policies and strategic initiatives, ensuring that the initiatives were both fiscally prudent and were aligned with the organization's overall mission, goals and objectives.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss further how my skills and professional experience are a good fit to work effectively with Lake Worth Beach Commission, management team, local officials and community stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.
678-266-7102
Wahop2@live.com

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

1513 Brunswick Ln • Emeryville, CA 94608 • (c) 678-266-7102 • wahop2@live.com

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

Strategic Leadership • Construction / Project Management / Operations • Economic Development

High-performance, results-driven senior executive with a solid career history of demonstrating visionary leadership and expertise in Logistical Operations, Capital Planning, Infrastructure Operations & Maintenance, and Fleet & Transportation Public and private sector operations experience. Strong Financial record of accomplishments with functional management experience in all disciplines of administration and operations. A catalyst for change, combining tactical execution of strategic initiatives with strong leadership of cross-functional staff and development of key alliances to capture and enhance overall quality, productivity and bottom-line financial performance and service delivery.

Career Highlights

- Successfully delivery of \$1billion in capital construction projects within budget and on time. [Alameda County Government]
- Manage the procurement and negotiation for the General Contractor to build the Atlanta Braves Stadium. [Cobb County Government]
- Successful restart of the city's home rehab program after the lost funding for policy violations. Completely obligated \$4.3 million of Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) to purchase foreclosed homes. [City of Pompano Beach]
- Produced two operating and capital budgets and continue to move steadily towards performance-based budgeting. [City of Pompano Beach]
- Saved \$9 million by optimizing resources and skillfully managing more than \$83 million of capital construction on time and under budget. [Fulton County Government]
- Shift of fleet procurement to a new municipal fleet lease program to save more than \$3.5 million per year. [Fulton County Government]
- Increase of multi-site profit margins from -4.8 percent to 23.0 percent in less than one year by streamlining operations and implementing cost-cutting initiatives. [Exel Inc.]
- Ending a five-year streak of unprofitable operations; generated record-setting profit improvement of 33 percent in less than 12 months. [Ashland Distribution Company]

Areas of Expertise

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • TIF/TAD Program Management | • Emergency Management | • Fiscal Responsibility |
| • Operations & Project Management | • Business Plans / Operating Budgets | • Economic Development |
| • Consolidation / Organization Improvement | • Board and Community Relations | • Government Compliance |
| • Labor Relations / Contract Negotiations | • Continuous Process Improvements | • Strategic Planning |

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

ALAMEDA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Oakland, California

A \$3.5 billion county government operation; over 9,000 employees.

Agency Director, General Services Agency

12/2015 - Present

Manage the General Services Agency (GSA) consisting of three major operational departments of Capital & Construction Programs, Facilities Maintenance, and Supply, Maintenance, & Transportation. Five administrative departments of Finance, Human Resources, County Procurement, Real Property, and Sustainability. The agency incorporates 13 functional areas with an authorized staff in excess of 425 employees and an annual operating budget of almost \$140 million, a capital program budget of nearly \$1.5 billion, and procurement administration of over \$1.6 billion in grants, and goods & services.

- Recruited by the County's Board of Supervisors to build a new stadium for the Oakland Raiders, finish the construction of a \$688 million Acute Care Tower, and begin \$160 million County Court House.
- Revamp of the Small Local and Emerging Business (SLEB) guidelines to increase procurement opportunity for local small business.

- Create a homeless encampment abatement team.
- Establish a Public-Private-Public-Partnership (P4) forging a commitment from existing and future county vendors to partner with community to drive local economic and social change.
- Ranking with National Fleet status of # 3 in Best 100 Fleets, and #8 Green Fleets.
- Secured State grant funding of nearly \$200 million to construct new facilities to support troubled juveniles, inmate health and transit parking.

COBB COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Marietta, Georgia

The fourth most populous county government operation; over 4500 employees.

Agency Director, Support Services Agency

07/2013 - 12/2015

Manage diverse operational departments of the Government Services Centers, Fleet Management, Information and Records Services, Procurement, Property Management, and Tax Assessor's Office. Lead Support Services departments in developing, coordinating and maintaining services that support the overall County's mission and business strategy. Plan and organize and provide management direction to assigned departments to increase their efficiency and effectiveness, direct the preparation of plans and annual work objectives, and accountable for a budget over \$40 million.

- Manage the \$670 million procurement and negotiations with General Contractor for the new Atlanta Braves stadium.
- Held diversity seminars attract DBE participation on the stadium project.
- Obtained 100% local vendors participation on the stadium construction.
- Enhance the "Keep It Cobb" program to attract more local business to do business with Cobb County, by adding the Cobb County School District and increasing the local opportunity base.
- Prepared a successful \$750M SPLOST to complete major capital projects to include new Public Safety Headquarters and Training facility, 400 additional Safety Vehicles, new libraries and many other County facilities and road projects.

CITY OF POMPANO BEACH

Pompano Beach, Florida

A local city government operation; over 1200 employees.

Assistant City Manager – Community Services

09/2008 - 07/2013

Serve on the City's executive team and manage the community service departments including: Airport Operations, Public Works, Fire, Building Maintenance, Fleet Operations & Maintenance, Utilities, Housing and Engineering departments. Manage \$100 million budget of a \$215 million General fund budget and the entire Enterprise fund budget.

- Introducing job order contracting to the city, increasing response time and efficiency while reducing expense.
- Establishment of key performance indicator (KPI) tracking program for all community service departments.
- Reorganization of city departments to reduce operating cost with consolidations and reduce redundancy.
- Lead and initiative to restore the integrity and public trust in the Parks and Recreation Department after loss equipment and illegal activities with community leaders.
- Aggressively sought Federal Stimulus funding and quickly expended those funds enhance city facilities with energy savings projects valued at \$15.5 million.
- One of the first cities in South Florida to completely obligate Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) funding for foreclosed homes in the city.
- Use Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) funding enhance streetscape redevelopment in Old Downtown Pompano Beach.
- Open the city's Home Rehab program and created new Façade Enhancement Grants programs.
- Establish a Revolving Loan Program to stimulate existing businesses that were not located in CRA.

FULTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Atlanta, Georgia

A \$1.2 billion county government operation; over 6,000 employees.

Director of General Services

08/2003 - 09/2008

Manage all logistical services operations including: Airport Operations, Capital Construction and Engineering, Land, Contract Administration, Customer Service, Reprographics & Mail/Courier Service, Fleet Management, Supply Warehousing and Distribution, Building Maintenance and Cleaning, and Transportation operations. Manage 400 employees: accountable for \$33 million annual operating budget.

- Consistently record an operating budget surplus: \$3.2 million (2003), \$3.5 million (2004) and \$2.7 million (2005).
- Spearheading a \$375 million Library Bond Referendum to construct 10 new libraries, 2 expansions and 25 renovations of existing library facilities.
- Increase of customer service by 30 percent – the highest percentage in the government – by consolidating operations, restructuring personnel and eliminating 69 positions.
- Elimination of the standard 120-day procurement delay by implementing a job order contractor program.
- Finding \$12 million in equipment not listed on the asset register by conducting a thorough audit of all inventory.
- Modification of fleet needs and reduced fleet size by 20 percent and generated an annual savings of \$5 million.

EXEL INC.

Westerville, OH

➤ *A \$12 billion logistics company specializing in warehousing and distribution; company operates in 120 countries.*

➤ **General Manager**

07/2001 - 08/2003

- Oversaw the daily operations of third-party logistics distribution centers supporting the consumer, automotive, and chemical sectors; managed a 1 million-square foot facility and 150 employees. Negotiated and administered contracts in accordance with service agreements.
- Significantly improved overall SKU throughput from 12 million pounds per month to 14.5 million pounds per month in less than five months; reduced total operating expense by \$500,000 within six months and secured renewal of a \$35 million contract.
- Successfully negotiation of labor contracts and defeated a second union campaign.
- Obtained and sustained 99.98 percent inventory accuracy, setting a first-time company record.

ASHLAND DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

(04/1996 – 07/2001)

Various Locations

➤ *A \$4 billion division of a \$9 billion specialty chemicals company; distributes chemicals, plastics and composites in North America and thermoplastic materials in Europe.*

Operations Process Manager, Corporate Office – Dublin, Ohio

2000 - 2001

- Recruited through Ashland's military officer recruiting program; managed entire scope of distribution operational strategic plan for distribution centers in North America. Spearheading the overhaul of the distribution network; realignment of the private fleet to increase distribution center capacity/fleet utilization. Managed SAP implementation for all distribution businesses. Developed policy and procedures to standardize the operating protocol for all distribution plants.
- Securing \$12 million in rebates from suppliers by developing purchasing agreements to leverage corporate spending.
- Consolidating operations and reduced the number of distribution locations by a total of 14.
- Improve overall inventory accuracy by implementing a cycle-counting program throughout the distribution centers.
- Improve operational efficiency by spearheading the SAP implementation for all distribution businesses.

Plant Manager, Distribution Operations – St. Louis, Missouri **1997 - 2000**

- Managed the day-to-day operations of a 300,000-square foot distribution center and 3.1 million gallon tank farm plant supported by unionized hourly and administrative associates. Directed fleet and transportation operations within a four-state area and facilities located throughout North America. Exercised full P&L responsibility for a \$40 million annual budget. Recruited, hired and mentored staff. Standardized all operational practices; created operations manual.
- Elevation labor efficiency from 68 percent to 92 percent by utilizing performance measures and process mapping.
- Save \$275,000 per year and improve customer delivery time by implementing a fleet maintenance program.
- The division Vice President Choice to join the companywide process improvement team.

Warehouse Manager – Little Rock, Arkansas **1996 - 1997**

- Manage a warehouse operation for a 40,000-square foot hazardous warehouse facility; exercised full P&L responsibility for a \$12 million annual budget. Implemented policies/procedures to improve operations and increase customer service.
- Improve total customer service quality by 35 percent.
- Achieve a 33 percent increase in profits in 1996 and a 46 percent jump in 1997 – the highest gains companywide.
- Recognized by management for ability revitalize several failing business units and consolidate into a larger operation; promoted to plant manager in less than one year.

UNITED STATES ARMY

Various Locations

Supply Distribution Officer, Quartermaster Corp.

1986 - 1996

- Manage entire scope of supply chain operations; oversaw the transition from manual to automated operations. Write logistic policies and procedures to increase inventory management for print and dissemination in multiple distribution operations, including hazardous and non-hazardous products.
- Increase operational efficiency by 48 percent by designing and implementing a traffic center for an automated high-velocity distribution center for repair parts.
- Improve inventory accuracy from 45 percent accountability to 98 percent accountability by streamlining the unit's requisitioning system and eliminating redundancy in the ordering process.
- Successfully manage the operations of five distribution centers and four maintenance facilities.
- Receiving coveted Distinguished Instructor accolade from colleagues.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Business Administration ♦ Alcorn State University ♦ Lorman, Mississippi
Distinguished Military Graduate ♦ United States Army Logistics Officer Basic and Advanced Course Graduate
Matriculated in the Top 5% of Class

Candidate Introduction

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS
Combine Arms and Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

EXPERIENCE

General Services Agency Director, Alameda County, CA	2015 – present
Support Services Agency Director, Cobb County, GA	2013 – 2015
Assistant City Manager, Pompano Beach, FL	2008 – 2013
General Services Director, Fulton County, GA	2003 – 2008
General Manager, Exel Incorporated, Buffalo, New York	2001 – 2003
Process Manager, Ashland Chemicals, Dublin OH	2000 – 2001
Plant Manager, Ashland Chemicals, St. Louis, MO	1997 – 2001
Warehouse Manager, Ashland Chemicals, Little Rock, AR	1996 – 1997
United States Army (later Army Reserve 1997 – 2005)	1985 – 1996

BACKGROUND

Alameda County is in the San Francisco Bay occupying most of the East Bay area. The 2020 census, place the population at approximately 1,800,000, making Alameda the 7th most populous county in California, and 20th most populous nationally. Alameda County is in the top 2% of most racially diverse populations in the United States.

Alameda County is part of the San Francisco–Oakland–Berkeley, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area, and the San Jose–San Francisco–Oakland, CA Combined Statistical Area. Alameda County is home to the 4th busiest port nationally, home to the University of California, Berkeley. I-80 runs the western boundary of the county and I-880, I-580, and I-680 runs East to West across the County. The East Bay is home for the corporate offices of Apple, Google, Facebook and many major technology companies. The continuing growth of corporations like the aforementioned supports the population growth and demand for housing that cannot currently be met. The County is home to Alameda Health System (AHS) a County funded health system and Kaiser Permanente which corporate offices are located in Alameda County. In recent years Alameda County and the City of Oakland lost two major sport teams. The ability to replace the teams has been overshadowed by need for affordable housing. Homelessness and a major need for mental health services continues to challenge the County in every way. Although unemployment is at an all-time low. Local minimum wage of \$15.00 is not sufficient to afford a one-bedroom apartment in the Bay Area.

Alameda County's General Fund budget comprised \$3.1 billion and the total budget was \$3.5 billion in 2021. This does not include Capital Improvement budget of \$1.2 billion of new and on-going major capital projects. Alameda County has approximately 10,000 employees. The majority of the workforce is unionized. There are 12 Labor Organizations and Bargaining Units within Alameda County's workforce. The Agency has nearly four hundred (400) employees and I directly supervise seven (7) employees.

The three most critical challenges facing Alameda County are:

- Revenue reductions/loss. Nearly Two Thirds of Alameda County's General Fund Revenue is program revenue (grant funds) from the Federal and State Governments. Changes in state law continues to reduce the amount discretionary revenue yearly. The state's Education Augmentation Revenue Fund has reduced the county's budget \$2.3 billion dollars since 1993. Revenue from Federal and State sources are constantly in jeopardy given the fluctuating political climates within those governments.
- Affordable Housing/Homelessness. Like many municipal governments in northern California. Alameda County is approximately 50 years behind in housing development. The gap in development of affordable housing is even wider. Over the last five (5) years 90 % of new housing development is market rate housing. Homelessness continues to increase rapidly without any significant effort locally or nationally prior to COVID -19 pandemic. The acquisition of hotel with CARES and state funding established a solid foundation to slow the homelessness increase. More funding and programs are needed to shelter the unsheltered with additional mental health services to provide the needed impact.
- Lack of Development/Redevelopment sites. To compound the issue of the shortage of affordable housing, is the shortage of developable land. California is the most difficult state to successfully develop. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Allows nearly any resident to delay if not successfully stop construction of new development. In addition, the Hayward Fault a major branch of the San Andreas Fault to the west, runs through the most populated parts of Alameda County, while the Calaveras Fault runs through the southeastern part of the county. Available land that appear buildable is typically not buildable because of soil suitability or proximity to a fault line. Property value is extremely high for uncontaminated buildable site which hinders the project pro forma from yielding a return on the investment if it is not a market rate project. California is the most difficult state to successfully develop or redevelop.

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

Alameda County is a leading and cutting edge government, setting the example in Sustainable practices and many other areas. We have been nationally recognized multiple times for our innovative energy savings, renewable energy initiatives and success with our green building.

I am trained and work collaboratively with the community. Transparently articulate all plans and actions in keep with the Board's mission, vision and values. California state laws requires a more direct control over construction, procurements, and labor when tax dollars are involved. I manage to create innovate procurements to minimize the time it takes to provide needed services. I created procurement programs across multiple governments leveraging the collective total spend for better pricing. I have also increase the use of local vendors to keep the local tax dollars at home. I have brought many programs forward for small local business of every type. I believe my overall success has been that I attend all community meetings to hear firsthand from the community. I follow up during the next meeting listing the subject and the action or plan to address the issue. Most important I think is shows the community that I am available and accessible.

I define my management style as situational/participative. I believe in creating an environment that is conducive to the employees wanting to come to work. I am committed to providing clear guidance to the leadership team so no one is guessing how I feel in any given circumstance. Leaders will experience two basic methods of doing things. The first is when Leaders are empowered to deal with the accomplishment of tasks as assigned. Provided both task and purpose are clearly defined, the Leader will have the freedom to execute operations in the way they see fit rather than being told how to do it (Policy Rules!). In some instances, given sensitive and complicated situations when a great deal of control is required to ensure synchronization, the Leader may be told what to do, when to do it, and sometimes how to do it. I will minimize the use of the second method unless forced to do. My core belief is to simply treat people the way I want to be treated.

The manner that I manage employees. I can say I have not had to deal with an adverse action that was a surprise to the employee. Employees terminate themselves, I only make it official. My mother often told me to learn from others mistakes. I have had the opportunity to work for and with very good managers at every level of my career and I have learned a great deal. I have also work for a couple that I learned a few things that I should not do for the sake of my career and the organization.

All current and former elected officials will say I get things done! I am proactive and in my planning and my decision making is all inclusive of the organization in total. Staff will first say that I always say, "please and thank you," with each assignment whether given verbally or in writing. They will say, they like that my door is always open for guidance or advice.

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

The most frequent comment is that I never get upset and calmly coach them through errors the first time. Often the other comment, is that I make the work environment fun. My visioning and forethought has been key in preventing infrastructure failure. I presented multiple alternative financing opportunities to address nearly \$500 million in deferred maintenance. Introduced Public Private Partnerships (3P) as means to keep the capital program on track while addressing other critical needs. Pursued performance based contracts resolve some unfunded maintenance needs. Lastly, all parties have great appreciation for my leadership.

My greatest strength is leadership and teambuilding. I work towards creating a fun competitive environment that not only forge collaborative consensus building internal but also externally. My approach is to finalize the internal team objective and approach before presenting it publicly or to other critical stakeholders. A recent project involved modification of existing jail space for medical and mental health services. I work with Health and Mental Health Services to show lack of and the need for inmate services. I then coordinated to the sheriff's office to show there was a reduction in beds not an increase. The activist understood and agreed halted protest of a jail expansion.

In terms of weaknesses, I am not confrontational at times when I should be. I remain silent publicly and choose to resolve issues without an audience. I have learned over time it sends the wrong message. If a public comment is not true, I should say so but, not engage in public debate.

The Alameda Health Systems Acute Care Tower is my biggest achievement. Although many will look at Atlanta Braves Stadium complex as a great success, and I agree. However, the service provided by Alameda Health healthcare service to thousands of uninsured citizens in the Bay Area. Is the reason I have a passion for public service. It was a costlier project and difficult to construct because the old tower was operational as the new tower was under construction. The old tower was demolished in pieces because we could not implode it sitting in the middle of a community. The hospital will service the community for another hundred years.

My biggest regret not being able to convince Fulton County Commissioners to build a new county jail. Although I was able to get the county out of the facility portion of a federal consent because of the jail conditions. The cost of a new jail was \$200 million dollars. The commission was against the idea of a new jail and outsourced inmates while the occupied jail was renovated. Every effort to convince the commission was rejected, and unfortunately \$220 million was spent outsourcing inmates.

The challenges I see facing the City of Lake Worth Beach are:

- Development/Redevelopment – Ensure the development is in keeping with the community desires.
- Infrastructure - Devise a plan to sustain existing infrastructure while making sure new development does not stress existing physical capabilities.

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

- Explore other financing options to delay major capital outlay until projected revenue is available.
- Growth Management – Ensure services planning matches the growth, so the community and public service capabilities are not overwhelmed. Consistent communication with all stakeholders to keep them informed. Quarterly review of all city plans for compliance.

During the first six months my efforts will involve:

- Meet the Commissioner individually to understand their vision, immediate needs and other areas of concern. Meeting with staff, other elected officials, citizen groups, and lobbyist.
- Evaluate the City’s financial and operational position. Explore possible changes to increase operational efficiency. I want to create a proactive, staff that increasing the trust and confidence in city staff.

I am taking the opportunity to train the entire leadership in media response to ensure there is a consistent message release to the public. The city’s Facebook and/or Twitter should be used to get good communicate positively with residents. I would create a score card for residence to see how we are performing operationally.

I do not anticipate anyone contacting the City with negative contacts about me with the possible exception of a community activist and grant recipient that did not want to be reimburse per city policy. The activist insisted on a lump sum disbursement. I denied the request because it was against city policy.

I like classic cars. I own 5 classic cars, so during my spare time, I tinker with one my cars. I am walk and bike daily for health reasons. I do spend a time with my adult children and with my family.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Creative
- Proactive
- Accessible
- Knowledgeable
- Highly Ethical
- Visionary

WILLIE A. HOPKINS, JR.

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

I was recruited to build a new stadium. I accepted my current position to gain further experience in very large redevelopment projects. Having experience with the Atlanta Braves stadium redevelopment, Alameda County Board of Supervisors wanted my negotiation and capital redevelopment experience for the Oakland Raiders negotiation and future stadium project. That project did not come to fruition as the Raiders decided to relocate before my arrival. I believe in keeping my word so I fulfilled my agreement. I have been looking for the right opportunity in South Florida for many years. I return to South Florida multiple times each year. I enjoy seeing the growth and redevelopment in Pompano Beach. It excites me because I laid the foundation many years ago convincing the City Manager to pursue a Section 108 Loan. The loan proceeds were used to make infrastructure enhance to entice developers to consider Old Downtown Pompano for development. Pompano has seen much redevelopment within and outside of its two CRA's. That is the kind of projects that drives my passion for this profession. I have fulfilled my contractual agreement with Alameda, and I have stayed longer to train an interim Director and allow for the recruitment of a new Agency Director. Lake Worth Beach is one the most attractive cities with the opportunity for the growth and redevelopment capacity to become a rival destination to work, live and play in Palm Beach County. Furthermore, Lake Worth is the perfect size to embrace the community and work with the Commission to build and nurture personal and professional relationship for the greater good of the city long term.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My compensation at Alameda County is \$238,965, excluding vehicle allowance.

Section 7

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIE A. HOPKINS**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search No Records Found

County

Alameda County, CA	No Records Found
Cobb County, GA	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Record Found
Fulton County, GA	No Record Found

State

California	<i>Records Maintained by County. See Above.</i>
Georgia	No Records Found
Florida	No Record Found

Civil Records Checks:

County

Alameda County, CA	No Records Found
Cobb County, GA	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Fulton County, GA	November 2008 – Lawsuit Filed against Mr. Hopkins.

**See next page for candidate Explanation for records found.*

Federal

California	No Records Found
Georgia	No Records Found
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Georgia	No Records Found
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Credit

Poor
**See next page for candidate Explanation for records found.*

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIE A. HOPKINS**

Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed except for Alameda County (2015 – Present)

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

From: w hopkins [mailto:wahop2@live.com]
To: Lynelle Klein
Subject: RE: Background Checks Records Found that Require an Explanation

Ms. Klein:

The Crooked Creek Homeowners Association (HOA) civil case was created by my ex wife. Attached are the legal actions I have taken to resolve the issue and the claim I have filed against my ex wife. I have also attached a copy of the settlement offer, indicating this will be closed by 30 November.

Explanation: My ex wife did not pay the HOA assessment, nor did she notify me of any pending legal actions. Also she did not pay the mortgage payments on the home as required which has negatively impacted my credit. I am in the final stage of both legal cases.

The attached documents offer a better explanation and the settlement I have reached. If required I can provide a copy of the motion against my ex-wife to recapture my legal and settlement costs.

If you need more information faster please call me @ 678-266-7102.

Have a great weekend.

WA

**Background Check Summary for
WILLIE A. HOPKINS
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

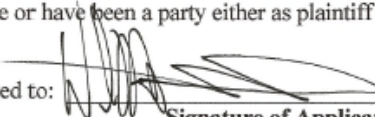
Name of Applicant: Willie A Hopkins, Jr.

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one.
Facebook: Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to:


Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins**

Dr. Jackie McMorris – Former Director Public Services, Cobb County, GA 770-528-2610

Ms. McMorris worked with Mr. Hopkins from 2013 to 2015 as counterparts for Cobb County services departments. Although Mr. Hopkins is very knowledgeable in all aspects of support services, Ms. McMorris found him equally as knowledgeable in public works. As an adept leader, Mr. Hopkins possessed vast experience in working with several large County departments. He was an excellent manager: believing in team building and encouraging employee growth.

Mr. Hopkins believed in maintaining an approachable atmosphere. He encouraged his employees and department heads to come to him at any time. Willing to listen intently while keeping a calm demeanor was one of Mr. Hopkins's excellent interpersonal skills. Upon first beginning his tenure as agency director, a former colleague expressed her concern in approaching Mr. Hopkins as the new director about a possible wage discrepancy. She later expressed her confidence in Mr. Hopkins's ability to value her concerns and address them, resulting in a satisfactory solution. His capability to balance leadership with management resulted in good working relationships amongst the staff and directors of the different county agencies. He brought all together as a smoothly functioning team. He possessed the talent to express his ideas in a clear and concise manner while respecting the elected leadership's position.

Mr. Hopkins did not micromanage. Rather, he trusted in individual responsibility and accountability. Yet, he was willing to maintaining supervision where necessary. Mr. Hopkins was an innovative person who thrived on bringing change where change was due. He played an integral part in the procurement of a new library, bringing valuable ideas to the forefront while keeping in mind the legal issues involved for such a project to come to fruition.

One of the biggest projects Mr. Hopkins spearheaded was the acquisition in relocating the Atlanta Braves team to Cobb County. His expertise and innovative nature proved very valuable in the planning and implementation of those plans in building the necessary infrastructure needed to support this new acquisition. As a talented public speaker able to address any audience, Mr. Hopkins articulates information clearly while addressing concerns and questions in a manner all may understand. Ms. McMorris witnessed this talent on multiple occasions during frequent Town Hall meetings where the public openly addressed their concerns and ideas. He was a customer service oriented person: valuing input from a variety of sources. Before making decisions of any kind, he believed strongly in gathering facts and information to make the best decision possible.

Ms. McMorris valued Mr. Hopkins's talent and experience. He had been an asset to the County bringing his excellent managerial style creating a smooth functioning multi departmental team, which brought valuable change to Cobb County. As a man of integrity he was well respected by all who had the pleasure of working for him and with him. Ms. McMorris was confident he will be of equal value in any city or government setting willing to learn and work hard.

**Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins**

Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:

- Detailed oriented,
- Professional,
- Compassionate,
- Great communicator,
- Good leader, and
- Manager.

Strengths: Good listener with an approachable nature, looks at all aspects before making a decision, and well rounded leader with excellent managerial skills.

Weaknesses: Although not necessarily a weakness, but could push a viewpoint hard when he felt strongly about it.

Scott Transou – Former Assistant Director of Logistics, Fulton County, GA 404-376-4721

Mr. Transou has known Mr. Hopkins for a number of years extending as far back as 1996. From about 2003 until 2008 they worked together for the Fulton County Government. Mr. Hopkins was the Director of General Services to whom Mr. Transou reported until Mr. Hopkins resigned his position. Mr. Hopkins had extensive knowledge of facilities management and maintenance. His responsibility extended to the management of the county's fleet as well showing outstanding skill and judgment in all areas. He was an excellent leader: able to easily supervise large numbers of employees.

Mr. Transou had great respect for Mr. Hopkins's managerial style. He was an excellent communicator: clearly articulating information to any audience. His willingness to learn all he could before presenting this information demonstrated his commitment to those he served for and with. He was well liked by his peers and employees. Mr. Hopkins believed in delegating responsibilities to allow individual growth while increasing their knowledge base. This style proved successful in encouraging employee self motivation and building a smooth functioning county team which encompassed various departments. He was a hard worker and was willing to lead by example. As an approachable individual with a calm demeanor, he believed in an open door policy, which only added to employee confidence in his leadership.

As an innovative thinker with the ability to view future ramifications, Mr. Hopkins took on the extensive project of renovating the Fulton County Jail facility. It was in dire need of repair and modernizing to bring it within federal standards. His knowledge of all general services and legal issues involved gave credence to his concerns and plans when presenting the information to the county commission. It was a \$55 million dollar project entailing procurement of bids and contracts, which Mr. Hopkins handled with ease.

Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

Mr. Transou also worked with Mr. Hopkins at the Ashland Distribution Company in various capacities from about 1996 until about 2001. As a creative thinker, Mr. Hopkins successfully modernized the methods the company had been using to track their inventory. He skillfully began the challenge of converting 92 of the facilities, which provided increased inventory accountability.

Mr. Hopkins believed in customer service. He put great value in listening to the community's needs and was willing to entertain ideas presented to him by the taxpayer. As a talented communicator with an approachable nature, he showed great skill in bringing the individual's ideas or concerns to the attention of elected officials. He was an excellent mediator. Mr. Hopkins is a man of integrity: bringing vast knowledge and experience to the various positions he has held. Mr. Transou is confident Mr. Hopkins will continue to be an asset to any city or county he is employed with.

Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:

- Good manager,
- Results driven individual,
- High performance,
- Strategic thinker,
- Good leadership skills, and
- Good overall person.

Strengths: Good communicator, very disciplined, learns quickly.

Weaknesses: Good delegator, but could occasionally release responsibility more.

Eugene Martin –Fleet Manager, Fulton County Government, GA 630-605-8577

Mr. Martin served with Mr. Hopkins in the military from 1986 until 1996 as part of the division support command unit. Later (from 2007 until 2009) Mr. Martin worked for Mr. Hopkins with the Fulton County Government. Mr. Hopkins was an excellent manager with vast knowledge and experience in various general service areas. He was a people-oriented person with good interpersonal skills. Between his military background and previous leadership positions, he displayed an organized and calm demeanor in any environment.

When beginning his tenure for Fulton County, Mr. Hopkins immediately recognized the need to renovate the fleet department. As an innovative thinker, he implemented an automated system to standardize areas such as asset inventory. His willingness to research the best methods, learn them, and then clearly articulate this knowledge to his employees allowed a successful and more efficient transition to occur. Mr. Hopkins's idea to streamline the brand of fleet vehicles permitted a negotiation with Ford Motor Company to include vehicle maintenance as part of the

Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

purchase agreement. This alleviated additional stress from the fleet department. In turn, this led to a more standardized and accountable county division.

Another valuable talent of Mr. Hopkins was his ability to see the future ramifications of an undertaking. When maintaining the facilities of the county, he showed an aptitude for deciding what the best long-term solutions were, rather than utilizing quick and unsuccessful fixes. As a result of Mr. Hopkins excellent communication skills, he successfully encouraged Fulton County to increase their efforts in maintaining Fulton County Jail while remaining within a strict budget. He clearly articulated the need to follow federal mandates and presented plans to implement the changes necessary.

Mr. Hopkins had an excellent managerial style. His approachable nature allowed employees to seek his expertise and advice when needed. He believed in delegation of responsibilities while holding those involved accountable. Mr. Martin was confident Mr. Hopkins had been a mentor to many and was well respected by all who worked with him. He was compassionate: willing to listen intently to those who sought him. As a professional, he was a man of integrity who held himself and his employees to a high standard of performance, thus creating a smooth functioning entity of various departments.

Another example of Mr. Hopkins leadership and organizational ability occurred during his military service. Supervising large groups of personnel in administering relief to the Hurricane Katrina victims proved to be a challenge. Yet, Mr. Hopkins performed it with ease. He brought his teams together quickly to work as a unit in organizing all necessary assets. As a customer service oriented person, he valued input from all. This allowed greater success in his endeavors. Mr. Martin admired Mr. Hopkins past service with the Veteran's Administration in listening to and addressing veterans needs.

Mr. Hopkins led by example in every aspect of his life. He was well respected by Mr. Martin who was confident Mr. Hopkins was an asset wherever he serves. His skill and extensive experience will be of great value to any city or county.

Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:

- Good communicator,
- Experienced,
- Driven,
- Compassionate,
- Great manager, and
- Trustworthy.

Strengths: Excellent interpersonal skills and logistical knowledge.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins**

Woodrow Poitier - Commissioner, City of Pompano Beach, FL 954-464-5160

Mr. Poitier worked closely with Mr. Hopkins from 2008 until 2013. Mr. Hopkins was an excellent manager possessing a broad knowledge of public works and services. His pleasant personality and open door policy promoted good working relationships with those he interacted with. Mr. Poitier was confident in Mr. Hopkins ability to efficiently handle any project or assignment given.

Mr. Hopkins chief responsibilities encompassed all utility and public works departments for the city. His extensive experience proved beneficial in keeping the daily functions running smoothly. As an innovative thinker, Mr. Hopkins brought fresh ideas with well-thought plans to council meetings. He was always willing to research and gather information beforehand. His presentations were clear and concise, displaying an aptitude for simplifying technical information to be easily understood by all. The city leadership appreciated this talent, finding Mr. Hopkins interesting and informative. He was well-respected by the Commission for his ability to be honest, even if the data given proved contrary to the desires of the city leadership resulting in the need to change a plan or project. Mr. Hopkins input proved valuable in moving the city forward in a positive direction.

Mr. Hopkins was an innovative thinker: able to see the future ramifications of a project. His talents proved valuable in renovating the old original high school building into a historic museum. He adeptly negotiated with many agencies and individuals and gained their support for the plan. It is now a valuable piece of city history.

Mr. Hopkins possessed excellent interpersonal skills. When one of his directors in the housing and urban development department experienced continual frustration with her language barrier, he stepped in and smoothly assisted. His capacity to motivate employees and encourage personal growth created high-performance departments. As a customer service oriented person, he was always willing to give of his time to anyone seeking his attention. Those under his leadership gained respect and appreciation for his ability to direct. He remained firm, yet approachable.

Due to a change in the city manager, Mr. Poitier was confident Mr. Hopkins resignation was not for any performance issues. He was a valuable commodity for the city: bringing fresh ideas and talents to the city leadership. His knowledge and extensive experience will benefit any city or county services department. In addition, Mr. Hopkins excellent leadership and managerial talents make him a perfect candidate for leadership positions.

**Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins**

Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:

- Trustworthy,
- Honest,
- Timely,
- Truthful,
- Good communicator, and
- Good with people.

Strengths: Excellent foresight, honest and quick on his feet.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Joe Tommie – Purchasing Director, Cobb County, GA 770-528-8435

Mr. Tommie was part of the interview team that hired Mr. Hopkins in 2013. The team was very impressed at the time of the interview with Mr. Hopkins's extensive knowledge in facilities maintenance and management, fleet management, and various additional County services. Mr. Tommie had great respect for Mr. Hopkins's managerial style and leadership abilities.

Mr. Hopkins oversaw the various general service departments for Cobb County consisting of more than 300 personnel. He displayed a calm and caring nature to his employees, encouraging approachability. Believing in mentoring and motivating an individual to greater success allowed respect from both peers and subordinates. His managerial style with an additional belief in team building established excellent relations between departments. Mr. Hopkins did not believe in micromanaging, but rather delegated responsibilities efficiently while putting trust in his directors and employees. As a director, Mr. Tommie appreciated this opportunity to grow through Mr. Hopkins's leadership.

As an innovative individual, Mr. Hopkins identified the need for a capital improvement budget to allow for improvement of operations within facilities. While working with the fleet, one such change identified was the need to standardize the purchasing of the vehicles to include vehicle maintenance (thus alleviating internal drain). His talent in viewing future needs and potential ramifications was of great value in streamlining operations of the various departments. His excellent communication skills was also of value when presenting information to the areas involved with a potential change. He was articulate, clear spoken, and always well prepared.

Mr. Hopkins was a humble individual willing to research and seek input from knowledgeable individuals before making a decision. As part of an interviewing team, Mr. Tommie witnessed the successful hire of an Information Technology Director. He was confident in Mr. Hopkins thorough job with the interview process, gathering all opinions from those involved before

**Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins**

making the best possible choice. This resulted in the hiring of a knowledgeable and talented individual.

Mr. Tommie respected and appreciated Mr. Hopkins's vast knowledge. His extensive leadership experience and innovative nature brought positive change to the County agencies. Mr. Hopkins is a man of integrity: leading by example in all aspects of his life. His calm and humble demeanor encouraged approachability from all. He was an asset to Cobb County and Mr. Tommie is confident Mr. Hopkins will be of great value to any city or county he is employed by.

Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:

- Team player,
- Organized,
- Good communicator,
- Articulate,
- Good leader, and
- Excellent manager.

Strengths: Good communication and interpersonal skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Steve White – Tax Assessor, Cobb County, GA 770-528-3106

Mr. White met Mr. Hopkins in 2013 and enjoyed working with him. As the County tax assessor, Mr. White interacted with Mr. Hopkins about once a week and then again in the monthly status meeting held by the County leadership. Mr. Hopkins was a professional in all aspects: making an outstanding representative for the county. He was an excellent communicator, able to articulate clearly in front of a variety of groups. His experience and knowledge base of general services was extensive.

Mr. Hopkins was excellent with people. He was approachable and always willing to listen to all ideas and input from his employees and directors. Mr. White appreciated Mr. Hopkins ability to humbly gather all information and then diligently work with those involved to come to an agreeable decision. He was calm and fair in his dealings. His outgoing demeanor allowed him to smoothly intermingle with all types of people.

As an innovative individual, Mr. Hopkins brought fresh ideas to the County. His vast knowledge and experience made him an asset. He gained respect from the public and elected officials. For example, laws pertaining to firearms were of great concern for Mr. White as the County Tax Assessor. When these concerns were brought to the attention of Mr. Hopkins he showed excellent understanding and skill in analyzing the possible consequences for County facilities.

**Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins**

He proficiently presented the issue to the County Manager along with a plan. This resulted in the implementation of key card access to at risk facilities and security measures for government parking structures.

Although Mr. White did not have the privilege of daily interactions with Mr. Hopkins, he respected his professionalism and knowledge. Mr. Hopkins was a man with integrity with excellent interpersonal skills. He was a benefit to Cobb County and will be an asset to any city or county position he holds.

Words or phrases used to describe Willie Hopkins:

- Professional,
- Good guy,
- Willing to work hard for anyone,
- Approachable,
- Calm, and
- Understanding.

Strengths: Professional in all aspects of his life, outgoing and approachable.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Donna Zigler – Legal Counsel, Alameda County, CA 510-272-6706

Ms. Zigler met Mr. Hopkins when the County hired him in 2015. They work together as colleagues.

Mr. Hopkins is very committed to his job. He has a take-charge attitude that helps him accomplish tasks. For example, during the initial outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, he was available at any hour of the day or night. He led his team in a mass sanitizing effort. He was able to execute without becoming bogged down in the bureaucracy.

When Mr. Hopkins was hired to work for the County, he was placed in charge of a department without consistent leadership. Many people resigned. Yet, Mr. Hopkins was able to stabilize the workforce. Despite the difficulties, he has been unflappable in delivering good service. He keeps his team together and keeps them moving. In general, he makes good decisions.

Mr. Hopkins focuses heavily on customer service. He is effective and professional in building relationships with individual board members. Additionally, he seems to enjoy being in the community. The public trusts him.

Reference Notes Willie Hopkins

Although Mr. Hopkins can be a very direct communicator, he can also accept the direction he receives. In stressful situations, he does not lose his cool. When the Board creates stressful environments, he communicates clearly with the Board and does not allow himself to become bogged down.

Ms. Zigler is unaware of anything that might be deemed controversial or embarrassing involving Mr. Hopkins. Although Mr. Hopkins has a broad skillset, Ms. Zigler is unaware of his budget skills. For this reason, she hesitates to say if he would be a good Municipal Manager. However, based on all his other skills, she would give him a great endorsement. Mr. Hopkins operates from a leadership point of view. He is able to effectively manage various teams and divisions in numerous areas.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Cullen:

- Achiever,
- Effective,
- Direct,
- Hard worker, and
- Listener.

Strengths: Does not get bogged down in bureaucracy and politics, and moves to execute decisions.

Weaknesses: There is a great deal of politics and bureaucracy to navigate in the County. The size and extent of the bureaucracy can become frustrating to Mr. Hopkins because he is a man of action. When he does become frustrated, he does not manifest anger or rude behavior. Rather, he uses Ms. Zigler as a sounding board.

Vincente Thrower – Community Activist, Pompano Beach, FL 954-601-7788

Mr. Thrower met Mr. Hopkins in 2009 when Mr. Hopkins was the Assistant City Manager. Mr. Hopkins was an excellent administrator who cared about the community. Working to resolve community issues was part of his leadership style. When making decisions, he tried to always do what was best for the City and the community. Due to that, he generally made good choices.

When it comes to hiring personnel, Mr. Hopkins drew on his military background to hire competent people. He did not believe in nepotism or doing favors for a friend. Rather, he sought to hire the best candidate.

When facing stressful situations, Mr. Hopkins was cool, calm, and collected. He never raised his voice and was very disciplined. For example, at one point Mr. Hopkins's boss left employment. Although Mr. Hopkins applied for the open position, he was not selected to fill the vacancy. Nevertheless, he still gave full effort to his work.

Reference Notes
Willie Hopkins

Mr. Hopkins's calm demeanor helped him earn the trust of the black and white communities in the City. He gave all his energy to building bridges and helping the black community trust the system. Determination to build consensus is one of his strongest traits.

Mr. Thrower is unaware of anything in Mr. Hopkins's past or current behavior that might cause a reasonable person concern. Furthermore, Mr. Thrower is unaware of anything in Mr. Hopkins's past that might cause a future employer embarrassment. He is a good family man who is a good role model for his children. If given the opportunity, Mr. Thrower would hire Mr. Hopkins because he is a good leader who loves his country.

Words or phrases used to describe Glenn Cullen:

- Committed,
- Loyal,
- Responsible,
- Cares for others, and
- Is a great leader.

Strengths: He is able to build consensus between the community and the City.

Weaknesses: Although this is not always a weakness, Mr. Hopkins does not know how to say "no." This is mainly due to his desire to make changes for the better in a community.

Prepared by: Beth Nestman and Emily Dayton
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Berkeley Voice (CA)
May 8, 2020

OFFICIALS AXE PLAN TO HOUSE HOMELESS IN BERKELEY HOTEL
Project unravels amid dramatic accusations

Author: Marisa Kendall

A plan to turn 113 Berkeley hotel rooms into much-needed homeless housing during the coronavirus pandemic has fallen apart in a dramatic fashion just one day before dozens of people were set to move in. With most of the hotel rooms Alameda County had reserved for the homeless under "Project Roomkey" already filled, officials last month announced they would turn La Quinta Inn on University Avenue into additional pandemic housing for people who are vulnerable to COVID-19 and have nowhere to self-isolate. The contract, worth between \$1 million and \$1.2 million, was approved unanimously April 28 by Alameda County supervisors. But two days later, officials pulled the plug on the deal, citing problems with the hotel owner. "The city of Berkeley and Alameda County decided together to terminate the contract because the property owner could not comply with the terms of Project Roomkey," county spokeswoman Jerri Applegate Randrup wrote in an email. The deal imploded the day before 48 residents of a homeless shelter operated by the Berkeley Food and Housing Project were scheduled to move in, according to city of Berkeley spokesman Matthai Chakko.

Willie Hopkins Jr., director of the county's General Services Agency, terminated the agreement Thursday in a letter that accused the hotel owner of everything from renegeing on his end of the deal, to behaving in a sexist manner to female county and city of Berkeley employees. But the owner, Pradeep Khatri, who also goes by Peter Khatri, denies all those allegations and has said he and his staff have already done the work needed to get his hotel ready to help, including asking other guests to move out. "I am still able and willing to offer you the Hotel immediately or as soon as the County is ready to take it over," he wrote Monday in a letter to **Hopkins** that he provided to this news organization. "The County needs this hotel to house the homeless and others." Khatri has said he will get his lawyer involved if county officials won't work with him to get the deal back on track.

Through Gov. Gavin Newsom's Project Roomkey initiative, counties around the state - including in the Bay Area - have secured thousands of hotel rooms to use as quarantine housing for homeless residents infected by or exposed to COVID-19, or at high risk of developing serious symptoms if infected. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse 75% of the cost of rooms.

As of last week, the 393 rooms leased by Alameda County at the Comfort Inn and Radisson Hotel in Oakland were at maximum capacity, Colleen Chawla, director of the county's Health Care Services Agency told county supervisors. The Board of Supervisors approved leases with two other hotels in addition to La Quinta - the Quality Inn in Oakland (98 rooms), and the Marina Village Inn in Alameda (51 rooms). But Chawla said she expects the county will need about 1,200 rooms. The failure to add La Quinta's rooms highlights the difficulties officials

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

around the region are facing as they rush to try and get thousands of hotel rooms ready for vulnerable unhoused residents to move in. "It is unfortunate that the County is unable to use your Hotel as part of its COVID-19 response, but it cannot waste time, money and precious resources dealing with your behavior and repeated breaches of the Agreement during this time of emergency," **Hopkins** wrote in the letter to Khatri.

Points of tension included Khatri's worry that residents wouldn't leave the hotel at the end of the agreed-upon lease term, and his refusal to allow use of his hotel's breakfast area and second-floor ballroom, according to the letter. **Hopkins'** letter claims Khatri attempted to back out of the agreement multiple times, telling officials "I will NOT have the facility ready for you," and "I do not wish to engage with you anymore please have your legal department contact me." But Khatri says those disagreements have been cleared up. He suggested the problems stemmed from the hurried nature of the negotiations - he was allowed just 30 minutes to review the initial contract before signing, he wrote in his letter to **Hopkins**.

Khatri also cited the large amount of work he had to do to get the hotel ready to participate. He and his staff turned each room into a single-occupancy room by removing the second bed, stopped all online reservations and asked current guests to move out by April 30 - including one who had lived at the hotel for several years.

But in an allegation that the county seems to view as insurmountable, **Hopkins** accused Khatri of displaying sexism during his interactions with city and county staff. When a group of five female city and county employees visited the hotel last week, **Hopkins** alleges Khatri's behavior - which included taking one of the women alone into a separate room to negotiate terms of the contract - made them uncomfortable and afraid for their safety. After that, Khatri asserted he would speak only with male county employees, according to **Hopkins**. Khatri denies those claims. "To the extent anyone believed that I was being sexist, that was not my intent," he wrote in his reply to **Hopkins**, "and I have already apologized if any comment I made was perceived in that manner."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

San Francisco Chronicle: Web Edition Articles (CA)
September 29, 2019

Alameda County jail is empty, but the air conditioning is on — at \$83,00 a month

Author: Phil Matier

Taxpayers are shelling out \$83,000 a month to keep the heat and air conditioning running at a downtown Oakland jail that has no inmates and has been closed for months. "That's the bill we are getting every month from the county," said Alameda County Sheriff Greg Ahern. And taxpayers will probably keep paying the \$1 million-a-year utility bill for the 20-story Glenn Dyer Detention Facility for some time to come as Alameda County officials decide what to do with the empty jail. Here's the story. Opened in 1984, the 800-bed facility was mothballed in June as a cost-cutting measure amid rising expenses and a county inmate count that had dropped to 400. Earlier this year the last of the Dyer inmates, most of whom were on federal detention, were transferred to Santa Rita Jail in Dublin. But when the jail, which is located at Sixth and Clay streets, was closed the heating and air conditioning stayed on.

"Providing adequate ventilation to the interior is critical to maintaining the facility regardless of occupancy," said Alameda County General Services Agency Director **Willie A. Hopkins Jr.** "The lack of ventilation will expedite mold and mildew growth," Hopkins said of the nearly windowless high-rise. Plus, mechanical systems like air conditioners can fail if not operated," **Hopkins** said. Another complication is that the jail's utility system is linked to the adjacent Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse, which is in use. "Unfortunately, the design of the aforementioned facilities prevents deactivation of the central plant," said **Hopkins**, who also noted that "by definition, mothballing is the deactivation and preservation of equipment or a facility for possible future use."

In July, mayors from 14 cities in Alameda County, including Oakland and Berkeley, floated the idea of repurposing the jail as a homeless center. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors agreed and offered to lease the jail, which has a own laundry, and food service and medical facilities, to Oakland for \$1 a year. "The thought was that people could have their own rooms and live with dignity," Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty said. The mayors were given a tour, but the homeless shelter idea died quickly when homeless advocates said housing people in a former jail would be inhuman. "It was seen as being too traumatic," Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley said. The supervisors said they were never told about the high price of keeping the lights on. "But I have budgeted \$1 million for the year," Ahern said. The supervisors are now trying to decide what to do with the empty building. "I'm for tearing it down. It's never going to be used as a jail again, and we are never going to use it again," Haggerty said. "We can't go on with this situation indefinitely," Miley said. "It's going to cost too much, and that money could be used for other services."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

South Metro Neighbor (Forest Park, GA)
June 1, 2018

Stockbridge Main Street program gets third accreditation

Author: Neighbor Staff

The 3-year-old Stockbridge Main Street program recently received its third annual designation as an accredited Main Street America program. According to a news release, it had to meet 10 performance standards set by the National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Main Street programs receive accreditation for commitment to preservation-based economic development and community revitalization.

"The Stockbridge Main Street Program has remained laser-focused on its mission of designing an identifiable downtown historic district that promotes economic vitality, encourages cultural enrichment and nurtures community spirit," program Manager Kira Harris-Braggs said in a statement. "With the assistance of our Main Street advisory board and dedicated staff, we have maintained our status as a national Main Street accredited program and have garnered support for our work on both a local and statewide basis. It is truly an exciting time for our downtown."

Its advisory board is, **Willie Hopkins,**

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Oakland Tribune, The (CA)
May 25, 2018

RAISING SALES TAX ON ALAMEDA COUNTY BALLOT

Author: Peter Hegarty

A June ballot measure would raise the sales tax in Alameda County by a half-cent, with the money going to assist low-income families with child care and preschool costs. Measure A, which will appear on the June 5 ballot, would impose a 30-year, half-cent jump in local sales tax, an increase that would fund scholarships for families to get early education for their kids. If approved, the measure would mean that shoppers in some cities — Hayward, San Leandro, Union City and Albany — would pay a sales tax of 10.25 cents for every dollar. Those in other cities in the county would see the sales tax go up from 9.25 percent to 9.75 percent. The ballot measure also would raise pay to at least \$15 an hour for those employed at organizations that work with the county to provide such services. The measure is projected to generate about \$140 million annually. It needs a two-thirds majority to pass.

Among those who signed the ballot in support of Measure A are Clarrisa Doutherd, executive director of Parent Voices Oakland, and Scott Moore, executive director of Fremont-based Kidango, which offers preschool, behavioral health and other services. "Many families cannot afford childcare or spend years on waiting lists," the argument on the ballot that supports the measure says. "Parents are forced to work two jobs to make ends meet. Mothers are more likely to leave the workforce to care for children, contributing to gaps in their income and careers." The argument notes that a child's brain develops most dramatically during the first five years of life. Just Marcus Crowley, described on the ballot as a citizen and voter, is listed as an opponent. "A special tax must state a few specific purposes," the opposition argument says. "The listed benefits of this childcare measure are so vague that the new sales tax could be spent in practically anything, making accountability impossible."

If voters approve raising the tax, the funds would be administered by First 5 Alameda County or a similar organization, according to county officials. A citizen's oversight committee and a planning and advisory council are also proposed. Proceeds from the proposed tax cannot be used for kindergarten through 12 grade programs, except for expanding transitional kindergarten eligibility for 4-year-olds. County supervisors voted unanimously in February to place Measure A on the ballot after holding eight community meetings. In addition, an advisory panel of 48 child care and early education providers met on three occasions to provide feedback.

Two telephone surveys of 600 likely voters also showed that 73 percent of them would support it, **Willie A. Hopkins Jr.**, director of the county's General Services Agency, told the board Feb. 27, when he urged supervisors to place it on the ballot. "The proposed measure will help to mitigate the scarcity and cost of child care and early education within Alameda County, especially for low- and middle-income families and vulnerable populations," **Hopkins** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAALAME/bulletins/1e8595f?reqfrom=share>

Alameda County GSA, Vendor Forum District 3

April 17, 2018

Alameda County sent this bulletin at 04/09/2018 11:49 AM PDT

Dear Vendor,

You are invited to the following event: VENDOR FORUM District 3 Presented by the Alameda County General Services Agency

Please join us for this FREE networking event! Maximize your business with Alameda County and take this opportunity to meet with County agencies and departments. Learn about contracting opportunities, meet and network with other vendors and become familiar with the County's Small Local Emerging Business (SLEB) Program. **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.**, Director, Alameda County GSA, will be the Speaker.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Review, The (Hayward, CA)
December 29, 2017

SHERIFF'S SUBSTATION OLD BUT SAFE, COUNTY SAYS

Author: Darin Moriki

There is no denying that the Alameda County Sheriff's Office substation for Eden Township above Interstate 580 could use a little work, although county administrators estimate it could cost at least \$21.4 million to upgrade the facility.

The two-story, 64-year-old substation, at 15001 Foothill Blvd., does not meet current building or seismic codes and is on the county's list of buildings that need to be upgraded, replaced or relocated in the near future, General Services Agency Director **Willie Hopkins Jr.** said. He insisted, however, that the building does not pose a safety threat to Alameda County Sheriff's Office personnel. "The building is in an acceptable physical condition for its age, but it is outdated and constrained in its space," **Hopkins** said at the Dec. 6 Unincorporated Services Committee meeting, where the issue was discussed. "The building structure does not meet current seismic code; however, an upgrade to current code to complement it is voluntary unless the building is deemed essential to services," he said.

Cherryland resident Mike Baratta disagreed, saying that the Eden Township substation's age and close proximity to the Hayward fault puts it at risk of being damaged or destroyed in an earthquake. Instead, the Eden Township substation should be relocated to a 2.6-acre lot at the corner of Mission Boulevard and Maddox Road in Cherryland, he said. "They're going to be impacted by sitting on that precipice; it's negligent to not even consider that," Baratta said.

Buildings that can provide essential services after a disaster are required under state law to be designed and constructed "to minimize fire hazards" and resist, to a practical extent, "the forces generated by earthquakes, gravity and winds." These requirements apply to fire stations, police stations, emergency operations centers, California Highway Patrol offices, sheriff's offices and emergency communication dispatch centers, along with any buildings that can have those uses.

The substation is close to the Hayward fault but has not sustained any structural damage, **Hopkins** said. Alameda County facilities are exempt from local building and zoning codes but "must work with local fire departments to comply with fire safety codes associated with upgrades and changes," **Hopkins** said.

Overall building improvements and retrofitting the Eden Township substation's second floor could cost Alameda County taxpayers up to \$21.4 million, based on 2016 estimates, Hopkins said. Those projected costs are expected to rise by a little more than \$1 million annually to account for inflation rates. The problem, however, is that no funding has been set aside to pay for upgrades or improvements to the Eden Township substation, Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley said. "I think the sheriff's office would like to have a new facility, but at the moment, there has been neither land nor location chosen for a new Eden Township substation," Miley said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"Should that site be located, then there's the question of funding associated with building a new Eden Township substation. The bottom line at this point of time is all of that is ideal, but the existing facility is OK for the Sheriff's Office to occupy," he said. The 26,000-square-foot substation was built in 1953 to accommodate medical and health services but was significantly remodeled in 1977 for the Sheriff's Office.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Daily Review, The (Hayward, CA)
August 4, 2017

VETERANS TO TURN OLD LIBRARY INTO CENTER
CASTRO VALLEY BUILDING HAS BEEN VACANT SINCE 2009

Author: Darin Moriki

A pair of veterans groups with no solid place to put down roots soon may have a new home inside the old Castro Valley Library building on Redwood Road. The Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council, by a unanimous 7-0 vote, designated the old Castro Valley Library building as a Veterans Memorial Hall at its July 24 meeting. The advisory board also recommended Alameda County forge lease agreements with American Legion Post 649 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9601, naming them as the facility's main tenants. "Honestly, this is huge for this community; this is a big, big deal," Castro Valley MAC Chair Marc Crawford said at the meeting. "What to do with this building has been a concern for a long time, along with figuring out how to pay for it. I can't think of a better use," he said.

Though details have not been hammered out, Alameda County owns the old library building and could lease it to the veterans groups for at least 20 years, county General Services Agency Director **Willie Hopkins** said. The lease must be brought back to the Castro Valley MAC to review and approve, although the county board of supervisors will have final say. Plans for the 10,239-square-foot library building at 20055 Redwood Road include creating a permanent headquarters for American Legion Post 649 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9601, along with office space for both organizations. The two veterans service groups currently hold many of their events and meetings at the Hayward-Castro Valley Moose Lodge on Rutledge Road in Castro Valley.

"Our main purpose is just to have a meeting place where veterans can meet, set up some other things for veterans to do and all of that," American Legion Post 649 Commander Larry Ames told the Castro Valley MAC. The Veterans Memorial Hall also would serve as a meeting place for the Golden Gate Young Marines and USS Hancock Sea Cadet unit, both based in Hayward, along with various Boy Scout, Cub Scout and Girl Scout troops.

Some space also would be set aside for Friends of the Castro Valley Library, which has used the building to store books that are brought out during three annual weekend book sales at the current library on Norbridge Avenue.

Apart from its use as storage space, the old library building has sat vacant since 2009, when it closed and the current library opened near the Castro Valley BART station. The selection process for a new tenant began in June, when a Castro Valley MAC subcommittee started vetting proposals for the building. Those included one from the Castro Valley Unified School District to expand the Castro Valley Virtual Academy, a college prep high school program; add more career and technical education classrooms at Castro Valley High; expand the school district's preschool program; or create a child development center focused on technical and career education. The

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

school district proposed the plan to the Castro Valley MAC in April but withdrew it shortly afterward, said Candi Clark, assistant superintendent of businesses services.

That left the Veterans Memorial Hall proposal as the only one on the table, Castro Valley MAC member Linda Tangren, a subcommittee member, said at the meeting. "In the proposal that was submitted by the two veterans organizations, you will see that their intent is to use this building as a meeting and conference area, which is much needed in Castro Valley, so we really felt that we were moving in the right direction," Tangren said.

The old library building will likely require Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant upgrades and the removal of hazardous materials, although county supervisors could allocate money to pay some of those expenses, **Hopkins** said. The cost of those fixes, however, has not been determined. "Once they fully understand the scope of what you're trying to do, I feel somewhat confident they will allocate the funding for me to take care of the (Americans with Disabilities Act) issues, and that way it will mitigate the liability for the organizations going forward," **Hopkins** said at the meeting. "From a county perspective, I don't see any limitations that will limit the ability to go forward in utilizing a veterans nonprofit organization," he said.

Castro Valley resident Sylvia Griggs said she and her husband, Steve, live near the old library and support plans for a Veterans Memorial Hall but worry about possible noise impacts, along with the facility's hours of operations. "It's a wonderful cause, and Steve and I both agree that, of all the things to go in there, this is the most worthy," Griggs said at the meeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

East Bay Times (CA)
August 4, 2016

COUNTY EYES NEW JAIL MEDICAL PROVIDER
SUPERVISORS SCHEDULE VOTE ON A NEW THREE-YEAR HEALTH CARE
CONTRACT

Author: David DeBolt

Alameda County appears close to cutting ties with Corizon Health, a company that has provided health care services at county jails for about two decades but has been criticized for its handling of medically vulnerable inmates. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday scheduled a special meeting at 10:30 a.m. Friday to vote on a new contract with California Forensics Medical Group, a company favored by the National Union of Healthcare Workers. The new, three-year contract is estimated to be worth at least \$90 million. The shift in the lucrative contract comes amid outcry over Corizon's handling of medical services at Santa Rita Jail in Dublin. The company was sued this year by the family of Mario Martinez, 29, of Hayward, who died of an asthma attack while in custody last year. Also last year, Corizon, along with the county, settled a \$8.3 million lawsuit over the death six years ago of Martin Harrison, 50, of Oakland, while he was in custody at the jail. As part of the record-setting settlement, only registered nurses and not licensed vocational nurses are allowed to conduct assessment screenings. Corizon has since been criticized for firing 49 licensed vocational nurses in January and 16 more in February, who together represent nearly 50 percent cut in the county jail system's nursing staff.

The supervisors on Tuesday rejected a recommendation from Sheriff Gregory Ahern **and Willie A. Hopkins Jr.**, director of the county's General Services Agency, to extend Corizon's contract another six months while the contract is rebid. California Forensics Medical Group was selected as the top bidder for the new contract, but that decision was appealed by Corizon.

County Auditor-Controller Steve Manning, who reviewed Corizon's appeal, requested the bidding do-over after finding flaws in the process related to cost proposals and a preference for hiring local companies. Manning, however, noted that Corizon's chances of winning the contract were not hurt as a result of the process. Sal Rosselli, president of the National Union of Healthcare Workers, opposed extending Corizon's contract and threw his support to California Forensics Medical Group, which has agreed to hire more nurses. The medical group offers health care for correctional facilities in 27 counties and has also faced lawsuits over substandard care. "Extending Corizon's contract is unfathomable," Rosselli said in a statement. "The company's record of inmate deaths, expensive lawsuits, and mass layoffs of nursing staff has clearly demonstrated the company's incompetence and recklessness." Corizon spokeswoman Martha Harbin said the company is reviewing its options. "We care deeply about this community, believe we're best suited to continue this hard work, and are committed to maintaining the continuity of care on which our patients depend," she said in a statement. The county has about 2,300 inmates at Santa Rita Jail and 300 at Glenn E. Dyer Detention Facility in downtown Oakland.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

https://www.independentnews.com/news/valley_roundup/new-department-heads/article_263cb19e-7e42-11e5-b5fd-e311fe1331a4.html

The Independent
October 29, 2015

New Department Heads

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors announced the appointment of two new department heads.

Willie A. Hopkins, Jr. will lead the General Services Agency (GSA) as its Director, effective December 7, 2015. He is currently the Director of the Support Services Agency for Cobb County, Georgia. He recently served as the Assistant City Manager of Pompano Beach, Florida, and, prior to that, as Director of General Services in Fulton County (Atlanta), Georgia.

“We are pleased to announce the appointments of **Willie Hopkins** as our GSA Director and Phyllis Nance as Director of Child Support Services. Both are experienced local government leaders with a commitment to customer service and innovative programs,” said Scott Haggerty, President of the Board of Supervisors.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)
May 4, 2013

COUNTY BEAT:

Willie Hopkins Jr. will assume the duties of Cobb support services director as of July 22, reports Commission Chair Tim Lee. **Hopkins'** hiring had been halted after he was unable to produce a copy of his college diploma in time for his originally planned April 15 start date. But the county obtained a copy from **Hopkins'** alma mater, Alcorn State University, where he had obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration, Lee said.

The July 22 start date also will allow **Hopkins** to take care of his son for the first 90 days after his son's recent heart surgery, as doctors had recommended, Lee said. "We think he will be a strong asset to the team, so we were willing to extend his start date," Lee said. "We feel real strongly about him."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Marietta Daily Journal (GA)
April 27, 2013

Diploma difficulties have Lee, county ...Waiting on Willie

COBB COMMISSION Chairman Tim Lee announced last month that the county was hiring Pompano Beach assistant city manager **Willie Hopkins Jr.** to succeed Virgil Moon as the county's new support services director. His expected start date was April 15. But that date is now two weeks in the rearview mirror and Moon's old desk is still empty. So what's up? "He's having a hard time finding a copy of his college diploma," Lee explained on Friday.

Hopkins, a retired Army major, reportedly has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Alcorn State University in Mississippi, according to the MDJ story about his hiring. Lee said he doesn't think there's anything amiss. "He has given us permission to get it directly from the college, which we're doing," the chairman said. "Why would you sign a release for me to get your college certificate if you didn't have one?" If he fails to produce the document, **Hopkins** won't be allowed to start, Lee said. "But we have no reason to believe it can't be produced," Lee said. **Hopkins**, 49, didn't start on time because he is taking care of his son, who is undergoing open-heart surgery, Lee said.

The support services director manages a staff of 320 and is in charge of property management, information services, purchasing and government service centers. He also is the liaison with the tax assessor's office. The job has a salary range of \$96,800 to \$157,000. Moon, who retired in September to become the chief financial officer at Cobb and Douglas Public Health, was earning \$146,700. **Hopkins** is expected to notify the county on Monday as to what his plans are, Lee said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

MDJ Online
March 26, 2013

Cobb plans to hire new support services director

Author: Jon Gilloly

The Cobb Board of Commissioners is expected to hire **Willie A. Hopkins Jr.**, the assistant city manager of Pompano Beach, Fla., as the county's new support services director during tonight's meeting. Virgil Moon held the position until he retired in September to become the chief financial officer at Cobb and Douglas Public Health.

The support services director oversees a staff of 320 people who manage the property management, information services, purchasing and government service centers. He also serves as the liaison to the tax assessor's office.

County spokesman Robert Quigley said 104 people applied for the job, which comes with a salary range of \$96,803 to \$157,809. Moon received a salary of \$146,702.

Hopkins, 49, was born in Chicago and raised in Mississippi. He holds a bachelor of business administration degree from Alcorn State University in Mississippi, and served in the U.S. Army from 1986 to 1996, where he was a supply distribution officer before retiring as a major.

Prior to his job in Pompano Beach, **Hopkins** was director of general services for Fulton County.

"If you assess metro Atlanta, I would have to say that Cobb is the premier county," **Hopkins** said. "There were a lot of practices and procedures utilizing Cobb County that I borrowed in my previous role at Fulton County because I just see what we used to say in the military — it's a lean, efficient government, and that's what I come from, that's what I want to be a part of."

Another plus about working for the Cobb government is the tenure of David Hankerson, who has been county manager since 1993, **Hopkins** said. "For me, that's a good thing because it speaks to the stability of the county as well as the competency of the manager, and that's something I want to learn from," he said.

County Chairman Tim Lee explained why he believes **Hopkins** is the right person for the job. "He comes with an extraordinary amount of experience and expertise in the area of which he's going to be managing," Lee said. "He's seasoned. He seems to have some visioning capabilities in terms of looking beyond the future and how to better improve things."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)
February 8, 2013

Abandoned homes being saved with HUD funds amounting to \$4.4 million; so far, 58 homes have been rehabbed or rebuilt

Author: Judy Wilson

Pompano Beach - Using \$5.9 million in Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] funds, this city has "rescued" and sold 58 homes, a notable step in removing the urban blight caused by foreclosures. The money is administered by the city through HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program [NSP], initiated to get abandoned homes off the streets. The first grant, \$4.4 million, has all been allocated, Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins** said. NSP 3, \$1.5 million, is 60 percent committed and unlike the first grant where homes could only be rehabbed, use of this money is more flexible: houses can be torn down and rebuilt.

So far, 19 families are enjoying completely rebuilt homes. One on Northeast 18 Avenue was dedicated last week. Built for around \$100, 000, the two bedroom, two bath home is the next generation of a new construction technique using poured concrete. According to **Hopkins**, it is a less expensive way to build and is more energy efficient.

Dist 2 Commissioner Charlotte Burrie was at the ribbon-cutting for The Highlands home and was impressed. "I am so glad NSP money is available and working for us eliminate slum and blight. It is has made a noticeable impact on our community." NSP 3 funds can only be spent in Cresthaven, The Highlands and Kendall Green, areas that came to the top by using a complicated formula. This restriction will make these neighborhoods about equal to the number of homes rehabbed in the northwest part of the city where, previously, all NSP funds were spent.

Not long ago the city commission recognized a dozen residents who had bought rehabbed or new housing. **Hopkins** said the projected sale price on 18 Avenue was \$115, 000. This week he did not have the exact selling figure, but said the city likely made a small profit which goes back into the program. Over the years, this profit has generated "significant" income, he added, extending the life of the federal grants. "We can make a profit. I think so far it is about \$1.5 million," **Hopkins** said. Selling the homes is no problem. "Once we acquire a house, we have a buyer," he said. When the HUD funds were first released, cities had a hard time bidding against investment buyers, but banks are now giving the cities the upper hand, **Hopkins** said. To his knowledge, none of the 58 homes have gone into default.

In 2010, HUD allocated \$40 million to Broward County. Pompano Beach is one of four cities, out of the 13 that received NSP funds, to fulfill its obligation by allocating all its funds. Fort Lauderdale, the recipient of \$2.1 million, has performed the most poorly, allocating none of its NSP dollars according to HUD figures. In Deerfield Beach, where \$1.1 million was granted, only \$297, 812 has been obligated and only \$19, 000 has been spent. The city is playing catch-up according to Donna DeFranzo who took over the community development division in 2010 after the department was re-organized By March, 50 percent of the NSP 3 funds have to be obligated

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

and DeFranzo believes she will meet this goal. "We are trying our best," she said this week. "We are moving ahead to extend funds, closing on properties and selling them. And we are looking for buyers." Community Redevelopment Associates has been contracted to help with the process. In January, the city commission approved an amended plan for NSP 3 which now includes \$770,000 in purchase assistance money and \$850,000 to acquire and rehab seven homes.

Previously, NSP money could only be spent in neighborhoods bordering the Dixie Highway corridor. Now, DeFranzo said, the target areas have been expanded to include the entire city. Also available come Feb. 19 are funds for home repair projects. Anyone wishing to apply for this funding should call 1-877-648-3321.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Willie A. Hopkins, Jr.** is listed below.]

Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)
January 4, 2013

Plaques give local history a boost

Author: Judy Vik

Five structures were recently added to the city's Local Register of Historic Places. At a recent city commission meeting, Mayor Lamar Fisher presented bronze plaques recognizing the historic designation to be placed at The Blanche Ely House, Pioneer Monument, Kester Cottages #1 and #2 and the Sample McDougald House.

Fisher thanked members of the volunteer Historic Preservation Committee for their efforts, noting, "Because of the success of the committee you made the local registry a reality. We're truly saving our history and saving these community structures that have gone through the process to be [declared] historic."

Blanche Ely House

Willie Hopkins, assistant city manager, accepted the plaque for The Blanche Ely House at 1500 NW Sixth Ave. The building was the home of Blanche and Joseph Ely, educational and civic pioneers in Pompano Beach's black community. The building houses the Ely Educational Museum featuring artifacts and documents relating to the Elys and education in the black community.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
January 31, 2011

EX-STAFFER FIGHTS FIRING AT EMBATTLED DEPARTMENT

Author: Larry Barszewski

A former employee challenging his firing from the city's troubled Office of Housing and Urban Improvement is finding himself being blamed for many of the problems that have surfaced in the department. The office, which oversees housing programs that receive state and federal grant money, has been under intense scrutiny since its last director, Richard Bowman, was forced to resign in July 2009. The office is the subject of a critical forensic audit released in October, which was requested by the city because of continuing complaints.

The city has forwarded the audit to the Broward State Attorney's Office and federal housing officials to investigate whether any criminal wrongdoing has occurred by staff, grant recipients or others. Against that background, Alex Medina, the office's former administrative coordinator, is appealing his August termination. As the city makes its case before the Employee Board of Appeals in an ongoing hearing, testimony has linked Medina to many controversies in the department.

Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins Jr.** testified this month that he would have fired Medina at the same time he forced out Bowman, but said he was concerned about reducing the office's already limited staff. The office's interim director, Miriam Carillo, testified that she hoped Medina's work and attitude toward her would improve but said that didn't happen in the year after she took over for Bowman.

Witnesses testified that Medina didn't enter federal loans disbursed by the office into the city's database in a timely manner, with dozens not recorded six months or more after their closing. Witnesses also said Medina failed to conduct the required monitoring of nonprofit groups that were sub-grantees of federal money.

Officials said Medina also deleted documents from city computers and sat for six months on a check to the city for \$5,942 that was then returned due to insufficient funds. Last week, the president of the firm hired by the city to do the forensic audit testified that Medina was prying and "trying to steer me down different roads than what I was looking at." Auditor Michael Kessler, head of Kessler International, also testified that Medina's program files were a mess. "The record-keeping was shoddy, to say the least," Kessler said. "That was a recurrent pattern I saw across files."

Medina said witnesses he plans to call in the hearing will rebut what has been alleged and put perspective on how he approached the job, trying to prioritize items when there were so many fires that needed putting out. Medina isn't the only fired employee from the Office of Housing and Urban Improvement to challenge his or her termination. In November, former office

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

assistant Jennifer Johnson won her case against the city - even though she admitted awarding two scholarships using federal grant money to ineligible recipients. The scholarships were supposed to be awarded by the Broward Education Foundation based on a committee's recommendations.

Johnson skipped over other scholarship candidates ranked by the committee, officials said. However, the arbitrator said Bowman, the office's former director, bore some responsibility. "It was his department, it was under his watch that the scholarships were given to persons who did not meet the basic requirements," arbitrator Lawrence Hammer wrote in his opinion in November. Hammer ordered the city to rehire Johnson, with back pay and benefits. She now works for the Public Works Department.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)**

Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)
January 21, 2011

City's case against Medina focuses on negligence in handling funds

Author: Judy Wilson

Pompano Beach – Testimony that portrayed Dr. Alex Medina as either an incompetent or an unwilling city employee was heard Monday night by the city's Employees Appeals Board. Medina was fired in August from his job as administrative coordinator for the Office of Housing and Urban Improvement, or OHUI. He had worked there for eight years. In presenting the city's case, labor attorney Paul Ryder Jr., told the appeals board, "A lot of money is involved here."

OHUI manages \$9 million annually in state and federal housing grants awarded to provide services for low- income families. Medina was in charge of accounting for that grant money and documenting expenditures. Medina's questionable work record came to light in 2009 according to Assistant City manager **Willie Hopkins** when the Director of OHUI, Richard Bowman, was asked to resign. Although "his incompetence was revealed then," **Hopkins** said Medina was retained because of his knowledge of several programs and because the department had only three employees.

Interim OHUI Director Miriam Carillo said in order to bring Medina along she gave him a good performance review in the fall of 2009, but by March of 2010 she had a different opinion. "Essentially, Medina wanted to do what he wanted to do when he wanted to do it," she testified. "The mistakes he was making overflowed into other departments." Carillo said when she came to the department, it had "staff issues, monetary issues and no policies... Money wasn't being properly spent." Nor was it being properly handled. A \$1 million reimbursement due the city from the government had not been processed, nor had about 300 loan documents Medina was supposed to enter into OHUI's accounting system. Carillo said she had to hire people to do this work. There was also the matter of a \$6,000 check Medina failed to deposit until the bank account it was written on was closed.

Hopkins said Medina's excuse was that he was too busy. Another of Medina's duties was to monitor the department's sub-grantees, nonprofit organizations that provide community programs. According to Carillo, Medina did not perform the once- a -year site visits to assure compliance as required. At one point, Medina promised he would change, but after two weeks, "He became Alex again," Carillo said. "He never came in on time. He was smoking outside all day long." Carillo also spoke of Medina changing reports without proper approval and of erasing his "H" drive which contained a master list of the department's financial information. By February 2010, Medina had "Boxes and boxes of files waiting to be entered into the department's system," Carillo said. It was at the end of that month that his "H" [hard] drive was erased. In March 2010, Medina received a poor performance evaluation which he refused to sign and he took a personal leave. When he came back in June, his work became an issue again, Carillo said. In a memo written August 2, 2010, Carillo sent Medina the notice of his discharge, citing eight infractions. Under the city code, Medina has the right to appeal. The Appeals Board hearing continues Monday, January 24, 5 p.m. in city commission chambers.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pelican, The (Pompano Beach, FL)
December 10, 2010

Homeless due to foreclosure? Help could be on the way

Author: Judy Wilson

Pompano Beach – The city has \$500,000 in federal stimulus money to relocate people living in foreclosed properties, but to date has spent only about \$150,000. In order to get full use of the funds, \$15,000 has to be given away each month for the next two years, Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins** said this week. Failure to spend the money means it goes back to the federal government. So far, **Hopkins** said, he has sent about 2,000 people to the county for assistance, but only a few have received the financial aid which is administered through the Broward Regional Health Planning Council. Applicants often don't follow through because they don't want to provide the required documentation, **Hopkins** said.

Now, because all cities are having trouble dispensing the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program, or HPRP, funds, the federal government is easing some of the restrictions which may make it easier to be a successful applicant, he said. A successful case involved six families, one a mother and her newborn, living in a foreclosed property. With the help of the HPRP, all of them were relocated, "I am sorry we couldn't administer the grant from here," **Hopkins** said, "But we just don't have the staff to do that." **Hopkins** said the application process "Is fairly easy" but a phone call to 211, Broward's helpline and the number applicants must first call, did not go quickly. When someone did answer, the call was forwarded to someone else who referred this reporter to someone else - who was unavailable.

HUD funds can help buyers of rehabbed homes

The city also received stimulus money from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to rehab homes in the target areas of Cresthaven and the Highlands. Some \$4.3 million was granted for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) and to date 26 homes have been renovated. Sixteen of them are under contract. The city's website shows a listing of available properties which go at bargain prices because HUD does not allow the city to make a profit on the resales.

The homes are offered to individuals with low to moderate incomes. For instance, a family of four with an income of \$91,800 would be eligible for a NSP home and could receive up to \$55,000 to help them make the purchase. As with any financial transaction, the paperwork can be daunting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel: Web Edition Articles [TCA] (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
November, 21, 2010

Pompano Beach to repossess computers from program it says violated grant rules

Author: Larry Barszewski

The city awarded the Small Biz Community & Economic Development Corp. \$56,000 last year through a federal economic development grant program, but the city has not reimbursed any of the group's expenses so far and has only provided it with \$10,000 in computers and other equipment. Now the city wants those computers and equipment back, and the nonprofit organization has threatened to lock its doors rather than let the city take away the equipment it says it needs to continue serving minority businesses in the city.

The showdown comes as the city tries to resolve problems within its Office of Housing and Urban Improvement, some of which were included in a critical audit released last month. Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins** said the Small Biz group violated numerous grant rules, the most serious being that Mary Phillips wrote the grant and was president of the board of directors at the same time she was a paid employee of the organization. More than \$36,000 of the grant money was slated to go to her in the form of salary and benefits. "Had the city disbursed funds to pay her salary, she would be in a much worse position at this point, because then it's a federal situation and it's against the law," **Hopkins** said.

Phillips, wife of former City Commissioner Ed Phillips, said she withdrew as president of the board in May when informed about the conflict and filed the appropriate paperwork with the state. But **Hopkins** said the only way to resolve the conflict would be for Phillips not to receive any salary because of her involvement in setting up the grant.

A forensic audit completed for the city last month was rife with instances where rules weren't followed, or grant awards seemed to show favoritism. The Small Biz center was one of the programs targeted by auditor Michael Kessler. Phillips said if her group was out of compliance, it was partly the city's fault. She said the Small Biz center did not hide any information from the city and has tried to correct violations brought to its attention. While the city's response to the audit admitted that previous Office of Housing and Urban Improvement managers "failed to properly administer the technical requirements" of the programs, Phillips said it was those same managers that organizations like hers relied on for guidance. "The city staff is not taking any responsibility for anything," Phillips said. "Did the staff instruct us on the regulations? They had all of our documents. They knew who was in charge."

Hopkins said the conflict-of-interest rules were clear and listed in the contract signed by Phillips. **Hopkins**, who terminated the agreement with the Small Biz center earlier this month, said the computers and equipment will be given to another grant program when recovered by the city. He also said if the city had disbursed money to the Small Biz center, federal officials would have required the city to reimburse the federal government because of the violations.

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Florida Sun - Sentinel - Fort Lauderdale, Fla.
June 24, 2010

POMPANO BEACH TO CONDUCT AUDIT OF HOUSING, DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM; RATIONALIZING THESE PRICEY E-GADGETS

Author: Linda Trischitta

Pompano Beach hired the same auditor that Deerfield Beach is using to review its housing and development programs.

Consultant and auditor Michael Kessler was awarded a \$40,000 contract plus \$5,000 in expenses Tuesday night by the Pompano City Commission to review its Office of Housing and Urban Improvement.

Several annual audits by the city and its external auditors found that different programs within the city agency did not conform with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations and guidelines, City Manager Dennis Beach said Tuesday before the commission vote. "There were problems with documentation and record keeping that HUD needs to determine if you've been doing it properly," Beach said. "This predates existing staff."

The city had to return approximately \$600,000 to HUD in 2007 after the state attorney investigated the department in 2006 for mismanagement of state and federal housing programs, according to backup documents for the proposed Kessler contract.

Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins Jr.** wrote that the reasons for the forensic audit include, "... to identify oddities, irregularities and possible corruption ..." in federal and state funded programs.

Kessler is also under contract with Deerfield Beach for up to \$100,000. His firm has examined the operations of Deerfield's Community Development Division, where two employees were put on paid administrative leave after Kessler issued his report, as well as the Deerfield Beach Housing Authority.

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
May 6, 2010

FUNDING STOPS FOR YOUTH JOB TRAINING PROGRAM

Author: Rebecca Dellagloria

Under the hot morning sun, Jessica Haygood thinks she might have trapped a tilapia in her net. However, this time it was a false alarm after catching two earlier in the morning. Haygood, 19, has been working every day since February at the Collier City Aquaculture/Hydroponics Complex in Pompano Beach. She arrives each morning at 8 a.m. at the first job she has ever had. Before that, she was homeless. "I wake up in the morning, ready to come here," said Haygood, smiling. "I was sleeping at the park, so I called my sister and she said I could stay with her if I stay in this program. This program paid for my GED, my Social Security card, my iPod."

At this urban fish farm off Powerline Road, once-unemployed young adults like Haygood have been learning basic job skills while helping to build a sustainable environment to raise tilapia and hydroponic vegetables. In addition to the farm work, the trainees receive assistance in creating resumes, going on job interviews, discipline and team building.

This week, the group of young adults was scheduled to transition from job training to working full-time at the farm, which is run by 77-year-old Dorothy Jones. Jones has made it her mission to find employment for young adults in the city. She was awarded a \$146,000 grant through the Office of Community and Economic Development in February. The city has temporarily stopped funding the program until Jones submits a new budget to city, according to Pompano Beach Assistant City Manager **Willie Hopkins**. **Hopkins** said Jones is legally prohibited from paying salaries to trainees but can pay full-time employees. Full-time employees must earn at least \$35,000 annually.

The grant money comes from funding allocated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the regulations on how the money can be spent are strict, **Hopkins** said. According to **Hopkins**, Jones must submit a revised budget to the city indicating how she will allocate the money.

For Jose Lugo, a formerly unemployed worker from Boston, finding work has been difficult. With a background in the technology field, Lugo said he has been told by prospective employers that he was overqualified. "[Dorothy Jones] didn't tell me I was overqualified," Lugo said. "This is a wonderful program where people are given the opportunity to learn skills beyond just working in the field."

The farm was created in 2000 by Nova Southeastern University as a research project for graduate students. Jones and her late husband, Sid, were hired by the university to help operate the facility. Since 2002, Jones has been running the farm. Jones' grandson, Michael Adderly, the site manager, said the farm also provides workers with the opportunity to learn how to grow

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

hydroponic vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, mustard greens and cabbage. "We grow all this stuff from scratch," Adderly said.

In addition to submitting a revised budget, **Hopkins** said, Jones is not allowed to pay a salary to her grandson after HUD found it would be a conflict of interest. "We think [the farm] is a good idea. It's what the community wanted to see based on the advisory committee," **Hopkins** said. "It's just that we are required after the fact to monitor the program. These things popped up, and they have to be corrected."

So far, Jones has received \$11,714 of the \$146,000 grant from the city. "I love the kids, I love helping people," said Jones, who says she has paid her workers with some of her own money. "But if there's no money to pay the kids, I can't dig in my pockets."

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)
October 1, 2008

Clayton avoids crisis; fuel found

Author: Megan Matteucci

Clayton County narrowly escaped a public safety crisis and will be able to respond to every emergency call after all, thanks to a delivery of 9,000 gallons of fuel expected this morning. The state tracked down gas for Clayton from Mansfield Oil on Tuesday afternoon. "I called and begged," said Jill Stuckey, director of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority's Energy Innovation Center. Stuckey has helped locate gas for several local governments and schools systems, but none were as extreme as Clayton's situation, she said Tuesday.

Most metro counties reported having sufficient supplies at midweek. But several school systems have run into fuel supply trouble, according to Bert Brantley, spokesman for Gov. Sonny Perdue. At one point Tuesday, rumors ran through some school systems that Perdue would cancel classes around Georgia on Thursday and Friday to save fuel -- but Brantley denied that. On Friday, 18 Georgia school systems sought state help. Clayton school officials said they have plenty of gas to run the district's 727 buses and support vehicles.

As of late Monday, the Clayton County government had only enough gas to last throughout the weekend, County Commission Chairman Eldrin Bell said. But if it didn't get this delivery, Bell said, the county was facing the need to make serious cuts in services. "Public safety will be our last restriction," Bell said. Clayton officials said they will continue to conserve to make sure every 911 call is answered. Last week, Bell ordered police to stop using county vehicles for off-duty jobs, except for patrols at school sporting events and other after-school activities. He also ordered county workers to stop mowing grass.

Governments throughout the metro area have also implemented conservation plans, although none seem to be as stringent as Clayton's.

- Cobb County's municipal fleet gas supplies are at 75 percent, with fuel shipments coming in as scheduled. County spokesman Robert J. Quigley said employees are being encouraged to conserve as much fuel as possible on county business.
- Gwinnett County has had a slight decline in operations, but is not near a crisis stage, said Michael Lindsey, fleet management director. "There's been a slowdown, but there hasn't been a shortage," he said. "We've had enough fuel to do what we need to do."
- Fulton County is in "very good shape" with more than 50 percent capacity, said **Willie Hopkins**, Fulton's general services director. The county has an emergency reserve locked away in the event that the gas shortage drags on several more weeks, he said.
- Fayette County has about a three-week fuel reserve, said Capt. Pete Nelms, Fayette's emergency management coordinator.
- Henry County is in good shape as of Tuesday, said spokeswoman Julie Hoover-Ernst, with another gas shipment expected today.

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)
September 10, 2005

Panel: Security still lax in courts

Author: Rhonda Cook, Beth Warren

Six months after the March 11 killings, there are still not enough sheriff's deputies at the Fulton County Courthouse and needed repairs haven't been made, a commission looking into security lapses said Friday. "Here we are, months later, and we're still talking about the same thing," State Court Judge Penny Brown Reynolds told members of the Fulton County Courthouse Security Commission. "We can't even get a definitive answer about whether cameras are working," Reynolds said, raising her voice. "We have a dead judge. How much more of a squeaky wheel do we need?"

Atlanta police Chief Richard Pennington, another member of the task force, said the safety of the building was compromised by bureaucratic power struggles, communication problems and the failure of any one person -- including Sheriff Myron Freeman -- or any agency to take the lead in improving conditions. "The things we need for security aren't getting done," Pennington said. Cameras and distress buttons in some courtrooms don't work and a secure door has yet to be installed in a key hallway leading to judges' chambers.

The commission, created by Freeman a month after the courthouse killings, had expected to complete its work Friday. But several loose ends remained, and so it will have at least one more meeting, Oct. 7. The group was created because of allegations that apathy and security failings allowed rape suspect Brian Nichols to overpower a sheriff's deputy and kill Judge Rowland Barnes, court stenographer Julie Ann Brandau and sheriff's Sgt. Hoyt Teasley. Nichols is also accused of killing U.S. Customs agent David Wilhelm before surrendering March 12. Nichols, who would face the death penalty if convicted, has pleaded not guilty.

Friday's hourlong meeting was heated and spirited at times as task force members complained it was taking too long to improve security at the downtown courthouse. They also expressed concern about conflicting information from the Fulton County Sheriff's Department and the county's General Services Department, which is responsible for repairs and maintenance of county buildings. "The difficulty is it's a 'he said, she said,' " said U.S. Marshal Richard Mecum, chairman of the commission.

Pennington, chairman of a commission subcommittee focusing on security issues, reported in July that a majority of the Sheriff's Department's repair requests to General Services had been ignored. In an interview, General Services Director **Willie Hopkins** disagreed with that contention. "I don't know what he's talking about," **Hopkins** said Friday. He said all requests for repairs had been completed and "90 percent" of \$750,000 in improvements recently approved were "in the works." He said some of that work involved courtroom cameras and scanners to unlock doors with key cards. "Everything on their priority list has been completed," **Hopkins** said. Pennington, however, said he has asked General Services for the documents showing the

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

work had been done, but that agency officials "have not got back with us. We stand by our report." **Hopkins** said he had responded.

Mecum said he recently counted four courtroom cameras that were not operating. "They [General Services] said they put it on priority, but that was at least four months ago," he said. Fulton County Superior Court Judge T. Jackson Bedford Jr. said he's not sure who is responsible for not improving security before March 11, but "a fire needs to be built under somebody." Neither Freeman nor his chief of staff, John Croslan, could be reached for comment.

The commission planned to report on four areas by Friday: security deficiencies, staffing at the courthouse, deputies' performance on March 11 and the sheriff's policies and procedures. A fifth area, focusing on deputy training, was added at the end of the meeting. So far, only two reports have been completed: one Friday dealing with staffing and another earlier in the summer on deputies' performance. The commission said there were not enough sheriff's employees at the courthouse and those assigned to the complex, and the jail, were not properly deployed. Staffing also is hindered by the county's employment practices, which the commission said were cumbersome and time-consuming.

While the commission was charged with reviewing courthouse staffing, the jail was also included in its analysis because both sites sometime share the same employees. The commission found that the Freeman needs at least 200 more deputies to provide security at both sites. "A 30 percent increase in personnel to perform the same functions as now -- that's a significant percentage to be without," said Monroe County Sheriff John Carey Bittick. The department already is trying to fill 50 vacancies that are not included in the larger figure.

The commission suggested the county change its hiring requirements to give the sheriff the ability to hire deputies directly rather than waiting for the county's personnel office to screen applicants. "The money is allocated, and it's taken away [by the county] because of the bureaucracy," said DeKalb Sheriff Thomas Brown, a commission member. Fulton, however, contends Freeman has complete authority to hire when he needs to and make other staffing changes.

In an interview, Commission Chairwoman Karen Handel said the sheriff had the authority to reclassify positions to convert high-ranking positions to deputies. "The sheriff's office is top heavy and they need to redeploy individuals," Handel said. "We've all been requesting a staffing strategy from the Sheriff's Department, and that has yet to come."

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)
July 9, 2005

Courthouse review cites lying, apathy
Investigators find security was lax, warnings ignored

Author: Rhonda Cook, Ty Tagami

Sheriff's deputies at the Fulton County Courthouse ignored specific warnings that a prisoner was dangerous, failed to turn on a key security monitor, and lied to investigators looking into security breaches after a fatal shooting spree in March, a special commission has found. A detailed report on the March 11 shootings at the courthouse in downtown Atlanta show that mistakes made by deputies were much worse than previously reported.

Several deputies interviewed during an internal affairs investigation lied about some aspect of their activities on the day Brian Nichols allegedly beat up a deputy, took her gun, killed a judge and his court reporter and another deputy, then fled, later killing another man. The report by a committee of the Fulton County Courthouse Security Commission, which was empaneled to investigate how the courthouse shooting spree occurred, paints a picture of sloppy record-keeping, bumbling security procedures, and high-ranking officers failing to do their duty. The investigators document a pattern of incompetence, lying, absenteeism, lax security and failed leadership in the Sheriff's Department. The long-awaited report shows that the deaths, or at least the suspect's escape, might have been prevented had different decisions been made.

Fulton Sheriff Myron Freeman, who appointed the investigative commission, said he would review the findings over the weekend and make a decision within a few days about any changes needed. He said he would pay close attention to his officers's actions as outlined in the report, which was issued Friday. "If I do need to get rid of them, they will be gone," Freeman said.

Among the findings:

- Inmates brought into the courthouse from the jail were routinely asked to raise their shirts and pants legs to be "visually searched," not patted down, in direct violation of policy. That was how Brian Nichols entered the courthouse with heavy pieces of metal fashioned into weapons and hidden in his shoes two days before the shooting spree.
- High-ranking courthouse security officers failed to take any follow-up action after the weapons were found on Nichols. Nor did they act on information that his mother had warned a deputy her son might try to overpower his guards if the verdict in his rape trial did not go his way.
- The deputy who was supposed to be watching monitors from the holding cells, including the one where Deputy Cynthia Hall's gun was taken after she was beaten, left the central control room during several critical minutes, then lied about his whereabouts.
- At the same time, the cameras in the holding cells were not transmitting to monitors in the control room anyway.
- The judgment of some deputies was clouded by personal relationships with Nichols or opinions they had concerning the suspect, who was on trial at the time for allegedly raping his former girlfriend.

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- At least one ranking deputy knew Nichols had told his mother he planned to take a deputy's gun but did not pass along a specific warning. The sergeant instead told colleagues that Nichols might "act up." Sgt. Jerome Dowdell used his position as a deputy to gain access to Nichols so they could pray together, investigators reported. "His conduct was in direct conflict with his duties," said DeKalb County Sheriff Thomas Brown, chairman of the internal affairs subcommittee that prepared the report.

Investigation continuing

The report showed that a number of deputies failed to use standard procedures and at least five lied when they were first interviewed. Several failed lie detector tests and later admitted to failing to tell the truth, investigators said. Most law enforcement agencies consider it a firing offense to lie in the course of an internal investigation. Investigators said apathy that had apparently infected the Sheriff's Department allowed the events of March 11 to unfold as they did. "These are good people, but somewhere along the line they lost interest," said U.S. Marshal Richard Mecum, chairman of the Courthouse Security Commission. "There's a culture that's being fostered. It's very lackadaisical and security isn't the No. 1 issue."

The commission has not completed its work. Three other subcommittees are looking into the department's policies, procedures and staffing, and what security changes are needed. But the internal affairs committee findings had been eagerly awaited by people shocked that Judge Rowland Barnes and court reporter Julie Ann Brandau were gunned down in their courtroom and that sheriff's Sgt. Hoyt Teasley was shot dead on the street just outside the courthouse. Nichols disappeared into the metro area, surfacing several hours later in Buckhead after he allegedly killed Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent David Wilhelm. He was captured in Gwinnett County the next morning after holding a woman hostage in her apartment for several hours.

Security fixes found tardy

The sheriffs of DeKalb, Monroe and Cherokee counties and the chief deputy of Cobb made up the internal affairs committee. Virtually all the interviews in the investigation were conducted by seven internal affairs investigators from various law enforcement agencies. The commission was highly critical of the Fulton County government's lack of response since January 2004 to requests from the Sheriff's Department for security-related repairs or upgrades. Atlanta Police Chief Richard Pennington, who led that part of the commission's review, found that the majority of requests to the county's General Services Administration were ignored. For example, Pennington said the county did not respond to 22 of 34 requests to fix alarm problems, to 34 of 50 requests to fix broken doors, and to 19 of 25 requests to fix broken locks. Mother warned of trouble

GSA Director **Willie Hopkins Jr.** said the requests were not made properly. "They don't understand the system," he said. He characterized requests from the Sheriff's Department as upgrades and not repairs, and said upgrades have to be approved as a budget item.

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The internal investigation spread a wide net. Investigators reviewed a series of e-mails from Nichols' mother, Caritha Nichols, who was in Africa at the time of the shootings, and examined Deputy Hall's firearms training. They created a detailed timeline stretching back to August, when Nichols was arrested and charged with rape. They probed absenteeism in the Sheriff's Department and security problems in Barnes' courtroom. By far the most damning portions of the report concerned the actions of sheriff's deputies.

For example, Sgt. Dowdell, who was assigned to training for the department, got a phone call in late February from Otis White, minister at Shiloh Baptist Church, where Dowdell and Nichols' mother were members. The pastor told Dowdell that Caritha Nichols had sent him an e-mail warning that her son "had made statements leading her to believe that if his trial verdict did not go well he would overpower a deputy and take the officer's weapon." Dowdell told a detention officer that Nichols might "act up," but he made no mention of the possibility he might try to get a deputy's gun, the report said.

Dowdell arranged to see Nichols when the suspect was brought to the courthouse. "He told Nichols that he had parents who loved him and a church that supported him and asked him not to do anything foolish," the report said. "Sgt. Dowdell then had prayer with inmate Nichols. Sgt. Dowdell stated that he was meeting with Nichols in his capacity as a deacon of the church although he utilized his position with the sheriff's office to gain access to the inmate," the report said.

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Willie Hopkins, Jr.
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Atlanta Journal-Constitution, The (GA)
January 5, 2004

City flushes out old debtors. Untapped fortune? Atlanta records show about \$50 million in uncollected water and sewer bills.

Author: Ty Tagami

As Atlanta City Council weighs whether to triple base water and sewer rates today, the city has yet to tap one possible source of revenue for a massive sewer project: customers who don't pay. City officials say their records show as much as \$50 million in uncollected water and sewer bills from several thousand accounts, but they also acknowledge the records are shoddy and likely inaccurate. No. 1 on Atlanta's delinquency list is the Fulton County Jail, which owes nearly \$1.5 million, according to the city's computerized billing database. But Jack Ravan, the man who runs the city's water and sewer operation, says there are too many questions about the jail's account to compel payment. For one thing, the county complained that the meter was broken.

Atlanta is hiring a contractor to overhaul high-volume meters and then monitor them to establish a typical consumption rate. The old bills will be adjusted based on that rate. But many of the alleged debtors are smaller residential users and businesses that racked up tens of thousands of dollars in unpaid bills. The city will have to sift through those accounts to determine who owes what. That will be difficult because in many cases the bills are inaccurate, owing to a broken meter and a billing system that was based on estimating water usage instead of actually reading meters. Then comes the nettlesome task of collection. Ravan, who is commissioner of the Watershed Management Department, said the city has brought in a private collection company and has begun a water turnoff policy for people who don't pay. The estimated millions have gone uncollected even as city officials are asking paying customers to dig deeper for a massive upgrade of the city's pipes and treatment plants. Mayor Shirley Franklin also wants to spend more money hiring and training staff.

Franklin has asked for a tripling of the base water and sewer rates. Even some Wall Street bond analysts wonder whether that much is collectable given the city's poverty rate: 24 percent among individuals and 21 percent among families. The higher rates would cover the debt on more than \$2 billion in construction and provide money for Watershed Management operations. The debt accumulated because the water contractor, United Water Services Unlimited Atlanta, was unwilling to shut off service when it knew people didn't pay, said Melinda Langston, director of customer and government relations at Watershed Management. United Water averaged a collection rate of 94 percent, Langston said. That compares with the 98.5 percent Atlanta maintained before handing control to United Water in 1999, she said. Langston acknowledged that the city could have a hard time collecting from customers who have canceled service and moved away -- and no longer fear a shutoff. "It's not realistic to think we can collect all of that," Langston said. "We're not even at a point where I can guess how much we can get, or even collect, out of that 50 [million dollars]. But we're going after every bit of it." To succeed, the city will have to squeeze money from debtors such as financially strapped Morris Brown College, which lost its accreditation last year. City billing records show the college started falling behind

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on payments four years ago, yet its water service was never shut off. As of Dec. 31, it owed \$121,694. Unlike many large accounts, the records for Morris Brown show no evidence of a billing dispute. But so many large accounts are disputed that Atlanta officials can't say how much of the paper debt is real. Fulton County officials say they are paid up in full and that they have the records to prove it. "We really want to resolve this with the city, but at this particular point we don't have a whole lot of confidence in the reports that they send us," said Rod Cantrell, financial systems manager in the county's General Services Department.

The county sends a lump payment for its water and sewer bills, and the city has misapplied the money, said **Willie Hopkins**, the county General Services director. The city overpaid some accounts and underpaid others, he said. One county property that uses an average of \$17,000 a month in water showed a credit of \$29,000 on the most recent bill, **Hopkins** said. Another property, an undeveloped piece of land near Charlie Brown Airport, owes \$30,000, though it doesn't use water, he said.

The city allowed a reporter to inspect a handful of accounts at a city computer terminal. A review of five selected at random from a list of the 200 biggest debtors showed mistaken or disputed bills with three. There were notations showing broken meters on two accounts. In a residential account that showed an \$80,309 debt as of Dec. 2, there is a notation indicating that an inspector recently realized the property no longer exists. The bill was for a house on Longleaf Drive in Buckhead. Not only is the house gone, the whole block has been redeveloped into a subdivision. The meter hadn't been read since Dec. 15, 1999, and all the bills since then were estimated by the computer. Water officials recently adjusted the bill back to the \$7,581 balance that had accrued by that date, and sent a message to the city finance department to file a lien against the property. It's unclear whether the customer can ever be made to pay, since the city apparently doesn't know who the person was. The name field in the account was blank. Ravan said he and his staff can't vouch for the data because, "No. 1, we weren't here when it was created."

United Water left more than eight months ago, and at some point city officials will have to take responsibility for the system's problems, said Councilman Derrick Boazman. He is among the eight council members who oppose Franklin's water and sewer rate increases. The councilman said he recently got a call from a constituent who hadn't received a bill in five months. "I have not seen any changes. We still have brown water running into people's houses. We still have meters that take months to install. And we still have a collection rate that I understand hasn't improved," the councilman said. Atlanta officials say they are making improvements, but say it'll be difficult to make much progress without money for new computer equipment. That is why the rate increases must take place, they say. Langston said the city recently hired staffers to turn off water service for delinquent accounts. "We have a fairly aggressive termination policy in place," Langston said. "We're terminating water service every day."

Research Compiled by: Cara Slade and Shannon Farr
 Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 8

Thomas “Tom” J. Hutka

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Section 8

Thomas J. Hutka

1300 S. Ocean Blvd, #704
Pompano Beach, FL. 33062
954-501-3626
tjhutka@yahoo.co

June 18, 2021

City Commission
City of Lake Worth Beach

Dear Mayor Resch and Commissioners,

After seeing your listing on the ICMA and Colin Baenziger & Associates websites, I am very interested in the position of City Manager. The challenges described fit extremely well with the skills I've built over many years in community leadership roles — right here in Florida.

I have worked in literally all aspects of community government, and developed a track record of proven management skills based on participatory leadership and professional innovation. Having worked my way up through the ranks, I also have hands-on experience in the day-to-day operations of the very best local governments, especially in support of neighborhood preservation, stable growth management and sustainable economic investment.

My portfolio of successful management initiatives has relied on fostering excellent working relationships with elected officials, citizens, employees, the news media, private companies and other government agencies. Communication and consensus building are the keys to my implementing many diverse initiatives. Under my watch, complex government operations are run like efficient profitable businesses, but with respect for each individual employee and citizen. In all cases, my results-oriented successes are marked by strict but reasonable financial decisions, operational efficiency, and emphasis on quality customer service.

As you can see, I am excited about the position, and working for you and with the citizens of Lake Worth Beach. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,



Tom Hutka

THOMAS J. HUTKA

(954) 501-3626

tjhutka@yahoo.com

1300 South Ocean Blvd. #704, Pompano Beach, FL 33062

EDUCATION:

Harvard University, Master Public Administration (land planning, public finance).
Princeton University, BSE Civil Engineering (structural, water/wastewater).
Florida State University, Certified Public Manager program.

EXPERIENCE:

City Manager: Port Huron, MI

Championed dynamic public-private partnerships to fully re-energize a great, but recently stagnant community, honored with All America City award. Implemented "Downtown Action Plan" to rebuild streetscapes, attract new investment, and reduce downtown vacancy from 40% to 8%. Greenhouse gas emissions reduced through active energy conversions and wastewater treatment process improvements. Completed — with minimal neighborhood disruption — reconstruction of city's water, sewer, stormwater and street infrastructure (US-EPA's nation-wide excellence award). Enlisted the collaborative efforts of regional governments, corporate sponsors and citizen volunteers as recognized with Municipal League's Greatest Innovations award. Led management team to Thomas Edison Business Award for creating exceptional work environment. 2001 to 2006.

"Hutka Helped Port Huron to Become Better. Hutka is a leader. There is no question Hutka made a difference. He reached out to a variety of community leaders and set a standard of cooperation. The City's progress was substantial enough to win state and national recognition. On Hutka's watch . . . he did much to help the city achieve. That type of leadership is hard to find . . . outstanding city manager."

— Port Huron Times Herald

Director of Public Works: Broward County, FL

Led Capital Projects, Solid Waste & Recycling, Facilities Management, Streets & Bridges, Traffic Engineering, and Water & Wastewater Operations and Finance. Served on Climate Change Task Force, Complete Streets Team, Fort Lauderdale International Airport Expansion Committee, and Convention Center/Hotel Team. Nationally recognized energy reduction program. All projects LEED Gold, including one of AIA's Best Ten Buildings in State. Greatly increased efficiencies and service quality, even while implementing ERP and reducing expenditures. 2009 to 2020.

Director of Municipal Program Management: HNTB Corporation, Indianapolis

Consultant to local governments, managing capital improvement programs and enhancing funding sources. Clients included South Bend, IN (Notre Dame University), Town of Speedway, IN (Indy 500 racetrack), City of Dallas, Hillsborough County, FL and other municipalities. 2006 to 2009.

Deputy County Manager: Osceola County, FL

Directed all elements of growth management: development review, land use planning, public works, capital program, engineering, solid waste, and code enforcement for this high-growth area which includes Walt Disney World. Implemented green initiatives, concurrency planning and smart growth measures for Disney's Town of Celebration and other nationally-recognized sustainable developments. Many first-time initiatives: energy savings, personnel management training, one-stop permitting, land development code, long-term financial planning, capital project cost/schedule controls, management information systems, parks/recreation master plan, and inaugural solid waste collection service. Extensive construction program included major league baseball park renovation, rodeo/fair complex, jail, courthouses, offices, libraries, parks and highways. 1997 to 2001.

Associate County Administrator: Hennepin County (Minneapolis)

Directed IT, purchasing, finance, accounting, investments, budget, facilities and public works programs for one of the county's largest governments. As member of the County's Executive Team, led one of the nation's most advanced social service and health care systems. Developed County-

Section 8

wide strategic planning initiatives: performance measurement, employee evaluation and total quality management (NACO Excellence Award winners). Implemented comprehensive cost/benefit priority analysis for all capital expenditures-producing \$50 million in cost savings. Maintained one of the few public AAA bond ratings. 1994 to 1996.

Commissioner of Engineering and Construction: City of Cleveland, OH

Led capital re-development improvements, public works maintenance, and development review for America's premier economic renaissance. Successfully completed – on time and on budget – City's largest infrastructure program in support of major league sports facilities, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, State Aquarium, light rail line, waterfront parks, and neighborhood revitalization. Established City's reputation for professionalism and honesty with local private industry. Nationally recognized successes based on award-winning public/private partnerships, regional government partnerships, large state and federal grants, and innovative privatization. 1992 to 1994.

Bond Rating Specialist: Standard and Poor's, New York, NY

Expert analysis of municipalities' management, budgeting and financial planning. Specialized in operation and management of public water, sewer and solid waste utilities. Experienced with entire range of public finance options. This training has helped increase bond ratings for every agency I led.

LEADERSHIP POSITIONS:

Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County, Executive Board Member.
Downtown Development Authority of Port Huron, Board Member.
Blue Water Habitat for Humanity, Jimmy Carter Work Project, Board Chair.
Port Huron Neighborhood Housing Corporation, Board Member.
Volunteer of the Year Award, MainStreet Port Huron.
Rotary Club, Board of Directors, President Elect.
United Way of Broward County, Broward County (agency) Chair.

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS:

"Mechanics of Coastal Sand Erosion," Senior Thesis.

"Local Government Public-Private Partnerships," National Council Public-Private Partnerships Annual Conference.

"How to Improve Your Capital Bond Rating," Training session for State of Colorado employees.

"Rebuilding Infrastructure with Public/Private Partnerships," American Public Works Association International Exposition.

"Cost Requirements of the Safe Water Act for Cities," Credit Week magazine.

"Neighborhood Conservation Policy Alternatives," for Landmarks Commission, City of Boston.

"Marketing Your Downtown for Development Opportunities," International Council of Shopping Centers Conference.

"Fundamentals of Public-Private Partnerships," American Water Works Association Annual Conference.

"Finding Funds for New Construction," American Public Works Association International Exposition.

"Twenty-One Tips for Successful Capital Projects," Public Management magazine, International City/County Management Association.

"Checking for Quality," "Advanced Customer Service Skills," "How to Interview and Hire the Best People," In-house training.

Candidate Introduction

EDUCATION

Harvard University, Master of Public Administration — Finance, Planning
Princeton University, Bachelor of Science — Civil Engineering
Florida State University, Certified Public Manager program.

EXPERIENCE

Director of Public Works, Broward County	2009 — 2020
City Manager, City of Port Huron	2001 — 2006
Deputy County Manager, Osceola County	1997 — 2001
Associate County Administrator, Hennepin County	1994 — 1996
Bond Rating Specialist, Standard & Poor's	1987 — 1988

BACKGROUND

My career in community government has been primarily in Florida, providing city services in communities very similar to Lake Worth Beach. I know Florida's laws, diverse cultures, tourist-based economy, climate demands, and citizen expectations.

Most relevant to the position of Lake Worth Beach's City Manager, I was City Manager in Port Huron, a water-front city with 35,000 residents and a population of 70,000 in the daytime, with 400 employees and a \$300 million operating budget. When I started, the City had never set policy goals, established long term budgets, properly explained their operating budget to Council Members or citizens, nor properly adjusted taxes and fees to meet expenses.

I am extremely proud of my work in this community. Not only did I help heal the many deep rifts in our team, but helped Council start positive, productive discussions of the important issues facing the City while arriving at virtually all unanimous votes.

More important are the accomplishments of this great organization's efforts. I helped to lead significant, measurable improvements to the local economy even under difficult state-wide financial conditions. We implemented the "Downtown Port Huron Action Plan" to rebuild streetscapes, attract new residential reinvestment for the first time in 30 years, and reduce downtown commercial vacancy from 40% to 8%. An innovative economic development program resulted in reducing vacancies in our City-owned industrial park from 30% to 5%. As result, regional unemployment was measurably reduced in several job categories. We also completed — with minimal neighborhood disruption — reconstruction of city's entire water, sewer, stormwater and street infrastructure.

Thomas Hutka, PE

Across my diverse career in local government, and particularly as City Manager, I have overseen all services typically provided by community governments including yours. I have directly supervised — and achieved successes in — all the departments typically found in full-service local government:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Police | Economic Development |
| Fire | Downtown Development |
| Emergency Medical | Parks & Recreation |
| Disaster Response | Facilities Management |
| Social Services | Real Estate |
| Housing | Fleet |
| Planning | Parking |
| Zoning | Finance |
| Code Enforcement | Purchasing |
| Rental Inspection | Accounting |
| Building Inspection | Treasury |
| Engineering | Assessor |
| Capital Projects | Information Technology |
| Highway, Street and Bridge | Public Information |
| Environmental Protection | Clerk |
| Water/Wastewater | Attorney |
| Solid Waste | Human Resources |

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

As you can see from my resume, my entire career has been dedicated to public service. I spent the first part of my career learning professional skills with the goal of bringing advanced, in-depth technical knowledge into government. The rest of my career has been devoted to protect communities and serve the public.

I was excited to see that you are looking for a new City Manager. I consider the position one of the best opportunities in my profession, since I know from my visits that Lake Worth Beach is one of the very best places in the country to live and work. At this point in my career, I am interested in putting my management skills to work directly for a professional, reputable and forward-thinking organization. I would very much like to apply my nationally-recognized experience to cultivate community partnerships and lead City staff to lasting results for your great community.

Simply put, my management philosophy is based on the “Golden Rule.” Having worked my way up through the ranks, I’ve worked for many different leaders, and developed a strong sense of how I like to be treated, challenged and appreciated on the job. Our on-the-job practice of

“participatory leadership” promotes working concepts of teamwork, as well as a sense of professional accountability on a personal level.

Regarding strengths and weaknesses, in my last two government leadership positions, I rebuilt the reputation, the professional expectations, and the performance of our teams at all levels by hiring, retaining, training and supporting some of the best people I’ve ever met. The lasting legacy of these excellent and diverse teams will bring experience, integrity and quality services to the public for many years into the future. While every effort was made to find the right assignment for every staff member, exercise progressive discipline to ensure fairness, and train and retrain all staff members as necessary, it is sometimes a difficult — but necessary — task to remove a person from his or her job.

I measure performance — and more importantly ensure success — by:

- 1.) Working closely with the Mayor and Commissioners to develop and detail Commission policies and strategic priority plans,
- 2.) Developing and assigning staff targets, goals and specific action items in line with each individual employee performance appraisal,
- 3.) Implementing cost, quality and schedule tracking controls,
- 4.) Conducting regular staff meetings to discover and resolve any difficulties through the strength of the team’s diverse knowledge and collective skills,
- 5.) Locking in, reporting and rewarding accomplished goals, and of course
- 6.) Regularly reporting program and project progress to the City Commission.

Starting with my analyzing local government multi-year budgets and long-range finance plans on Wall Street, and continuing with my teaching financial planning classes at national conferences, I have developed an advanced set of skills that I’ve applied on the job to raise bond ratings, improve service, and lower taxes and fees. In every one of my professional positions, I have led the design and implementation of cost/benefit analysis and cost/schedule controls for every multi-year project and program. Within a short time, managers were properly trained to enforce cost, schedule and quality controls for every project and program, large and small, for the current budget year and into the future.

But computer-based systems do not give the entire picture. As a manager — and especially during my first six months on the job — I have always spent most of my day, every day, visiting crews and service providers at the front lines of our work for the public. To fulfill my leadership philosophies, I have always spent many hours asking staff how I can help them do a better job.

Thomas Hutka, PE

In several executive positions, I implemented organizations' first customer service training, first use of social media to communicate with citizens, first quality improvement workshops, first project management classes, in addition to many other leadership initiatives. My early training as a construction project manager taught me well the principles of professional accountability and management by exception — in short, how to get team and personal results — even while creating an enjoyable and professional work environment. In short, I have almost forty years of significant tangible results in government.

Look for experience in your next City Manager, but also look for a record of success. Under my leadership, the Strategic Plan gets done.

All of the successes summarized on my resume (and many, many others) have been achieved by cultivating close partnerships between all stakeholders. I have built close professional and personal relationships based on a shared desire to serve the public with:

- Citizens and civic groups,
- News media,
- Local and national businesses,
- State governments,
- County governments,
- Regional governments,
- Environmental organizations,
- Hospitals,
- School districts,
- Colleges and Universities, and
- Not-for-profit community service organizations.

I have devoted my career — my life — to the idea that city government can do much, much more for our citizens than simply providing basic services, and have fulfilled that endeavor many times for several communities. I look forward to joining the Lake Worth Beach team to help maintain the best of your great community and help make improvements where needed.

Thomas Hutka, PE

In every management position I've held, I've built a high-performance organization. For example, the Port Huron Times Herald printed the editorial "Hutka Helped Port Huron to Become Better":

"Hutka is a leader. There is no question Hutka made a difference. He reached out to a variety of community leaders and set a standard of cooperation. The City's progress was substantial enough to win state and national recognition. On Hutka's watch . . . he did much to help the city achieve. That type of leadership is hard to find . . . outstanding city manager."

No one could contact the City with negative contacts about me. Nor are there any negative media stories in existence. I've worked very hard to build bridges with the news media and, in fact, every stakeholder regardless of their opinion or point of view.

When not working, I bike, swim and in general enjoy the great outdoors.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Experienced
- Results oriented
- Respectful
- Customer service oriented
- Environmentally conscious
- Ethical

REASON FOR DEPARTING RECENT POSITION

Having created and trained the best department serving the community *anywhere*, I am looking to take on new challenges in public service. With ten years remaining in my career, I am looking to bring my skills in local government to the City of Lake Worth Beach.

MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation at Broward County was \$205,000 plus excellent benefits.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
St. Clair County, MI	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Hillsborough County, FL	No Records Found
St. Clair County, MI	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found
Michigan	August 2002 , Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Port Huron including Mr. Hutka in his role as City Manager. Disposition: February 2003 , Terminated
	March 2003 , Civil Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Port Huron including Mr. Hutka in his role as City Manager. Disposition: January 2004 , Terminated
	<i>* See next page for Candidate Explanation for Records Found</i>

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

**Background Check Summary for
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA**

Education	Confirmed
Employment	Confirmed
Social Media	Nothing of Concern Found

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

From: Thomas Hutka <tjhutka@yahoo.com>
To: Lynelle Klein <lynelle@cb-asso.com>
Subject: Re: Background Check Records Found that Require an Explanation

Hello Lynelle,

The report is self explanatory: it was a nuisance suit for \$10,000 brought against the City, all City Commissioners (then and former), City staff members, City consultants, local judges, former City Manager, recent interim City Manager, and me as the then City Manager. It was quickly thrown out of court as without merit.

Thanks,
Tom

**Background Check Summary for
THOMAS "TOM" J. HUTKA
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Thomas J. Hutka

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. LinkedIn, Twitter (Note that the "Thomas Hutka" in Texas with political content on his social media accounts is not me.)
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.
I was listed as both plaintiff (without my knowledge or consent) *and* defendant on a 1994 lawsuit against the City of Cleveland's civil service system. The suit was quickly dismissed by the Judge as without merit.

Attested to:


Signature of Applicant

CB&A Reference Notes

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Marty Kiar – Property Appraiser, Broward County, FL 954-205-7735

Mr. Kiar worked with Mr. Hutka during Mr. Kiar’s tenure as both Mayor and Commissioner for Broward County. They worked together starting in 2012 until 2016 Mr. Kiar became the County Property Appraiser. Mr. Hutka was impressive.

Though the County covers a small geographic area, it is highly populated. With approximately two million people in the area, traffic flow weighs heavily for the Public Works Director. As Director, Mr. Hutka handled the County and its needs responsibly. He rose to the position. He worked with others to decongest traffic and move people as smoothly as possible from one end of the County to the other.

Mr. Hutka was a hardworking, excellent employee. He worked on several capital projects, including a massive courthouse, proposals on a convention center, and traffic light synchronization. He overcame several obstacles, including light coordination and water management. He understood utility operations intimately and passed on that information to others. For example, Mr. Hutka took Mr. Kiar on a tour of all the facilities when Mr. Kiar became Commissioner in 2012.

Mr. Hutka was a respectable leader and usually made good decisions to maintain the organization at high performance levels. He hired highly qualified staff and trusted them to do their jobs. When issues arose, he accepted responsibility of any blame. His staff greatly respected him and worked hard. When Mr. Kiar was Mayor, he rarely received concerns from constituents about utilities and payments, both of which Mr. Hutka oversaw. Additionally, Mr. Hutka thoroughly understood business aspects behind operations. During budget reviews, he effectively explained the Public Works Department’s needs and proved the Department properly used the funds to benefit the County.

As an innovative change agent, Mr. Hutka kept others well informed. At a minimum, he held weekly meetings with Mr. Kiar. If Mr. Kiar ever had a problem or wanted Mr. Hutka’s viewpoint, Mr. Hutka explained issues clearly and in a way Mr. Kiar easily understood.

Mr. Hutka was close to both the public and local government agencies. The County contains 31 individual cities with their own Mayors, a large school board, and various other local government agencies. Mr. Hutka acted as a gentleman with all these groups and was easy to work with. He was customer service oriented, often fulfilling the public’s needs. He consistently completed projects in a timely fashion.

Mr. Kiar is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka’s background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Kiar would absolutely hire Mr. Hutka if given the opportunity and has the highest regard for him. Mr. Hutka is an exceptionally good worker and typically overcomes adversity. He is a great leader for both public and private groups. He will be a good Manager.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Personable,
- Hardworking,
- Innovative,
- Excellent employee,
- Gentleman, and
- Leader.

Strengths: Interpersonal skills, management abilities, communication skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Ron Thomas – Finance Director of Water and Wastewater, Broward County, FL
956-931-0585**

Mr. Thomas began working with Mr. Hutka in 2015. At the beginning of 2020 Mr. Hutka put in a two-month resignation notice. Mr. Thomas was disappointed to hear of Mr. Hutka's resignation. Mr. Hutka was a respectable worker who had several good ideas. He academically understood utility operations and knew how to apply that knowledge.

Mr. Hutka performed excellently. He generally made good decisions and hired acceptable directors. He kept staff and directors informed via regular meetings and emails. He also invested in his personnel. He held in-person staff meetings to learn what issues employees had and to answer their questions. He welcomed complete honesty from his employees, and he maintained a straightforward attitude with them. If an employee struggled, Mr. Hutka stepped in to help. He was customer service oriented and even held customer service seminars to ensure employees knew how to help their customers.

Mr. Hutka changed certain cultures within the organization to ensure greater accountability. For example, he changed the budget transfer process between departments. Previously, if a department wanted more budget, that department filled out a paper and acquired a signature to attain the desired amount from a different department. Such budget transfers often occurred unbeknownst to the other department. Mr. Hutka overturned this quick process. The department desiring a budget transfer needed to contact Mr. Hutka and the other department's director. Mr. Hutka required proper justification with complete details in order to enact the transfer. Although Mr. Hutka's process implementations were not unique to other counties, such a change was radical for Broward County. He brought in necessary change and fixed the courthouse project that previously had been woefully behind schedule.

Sometimes a person advocated for a certain position and tried to have Mr. Hutka sign off without providing explicit details. However, Mr. Hutka required everyone to provide ample justification, which caused some irritation and discomfort for those unable to provide decent explanations.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka encouraged his staff to provide straightforward information. Mr. Thomas had worked on a graph regarding the County's solid waste in 2019. Typically, his graphs involved only two axes. However, Mr. Hutka asked for three axes involving the amount of construction tonnage, the price per ton, and future costs if the County had to suddenly expand the landfill. Mr. Thomas initially felt overwhelmed while making the graph. Once he completed the graph, though, he noticed how easily he interpreted the information. He then understood Mr. Hutka's intentions. Mr. Hutka wanted others to grasp the information right away after reading the graph.

Mr. Hutka understood utility operations, both from technical and business standpoints. He used his experience and knowledge to help others know the County's circumstances when people had complaints. He worked well with other state and local government agencies to effectively solve problems. For example, Mr. Hutka worked under a legislative mandate that did not allow the County to discharge inflow water within the County. As such, Mr. Hutka worked with a neighboring County that needed more effluent water to irrigate golf courses and both counties benefited. This agreement saved Broward County almost \$500 million by negating the need for drilling deep injection wells for the copious amounts of inflow water.

Mr. Thomas is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Thomas enjoyed working for Mr. Hutka and would absolutely hire him if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka will be a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Knowledgeable,
- Open-minded,
- Customer service oriented,
- Straightforward,
- Approachable, and
- Change agent.

Strengths: Problem solving abilities, communication skills, management skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Chip LaMarca –Representative, State House, FL 954-444-3200

Mr. LaMarca worked with Mr. Hutka between November 2010 and November 2018 when Mr. LaMarca was a commissioner for Broward County. As Broward County Director of Public Works, Mr. Hutka reported to the County Commissioner Board. He provided updates on various projects and was upfront on issues that arose. Even when difficult and sometimes emotional problems arose, he provided steady information.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Despite the slowness of government processes, Mr. Hutka strove to accomplish tasks. He effectively solved problems and completed assignments in a timely fashion. He was strategic and planned thoroughly. He followed through excellently. Even with limited mobility in his position due to commissioner dictations, he performed well.

Mr. Hutka oversaw numerous large capital projects in the Public Works Department. Some of these multimillion-dollar developments involved wastewater reconstruction and animal care. He even worked on a \$2.1 billion airport project where he oversaw the building inspection and processes. During this massive project, he coordinated the private and public working environment to ensure the large public sector worked effectively with contractors.

In general, Mr. Hutka made good decisions. For example, he dealt with a water reuse issue. Essentially, some communities needed to get rid of excess water, and other communities needed extra water for other community projects. His department worked with local municipalities in order to provide the appropriate resources and revenue to both sides of the issue.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka maintained the organization at high performance levels. He strongly understood both processes and business side of operations. When constituents dealt with utility issues, he worked effectively. He regularly set a day aside to meet with Mr. LaMarca to discuss project details and which assignments needed additional funding. Mr. Hutka gave direct and detailed communication. When deeper questions arose, he provided ample information.

Mr. LaMarca is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. Mr. LaMarca would strongly consider hiring Mr. Hutka for a director position. He is highly educated and experienced. He possesses both good managerial skills and the ability to apply his knowledge to real world situations. He capably handles problems and tasks. He can apply his experiences to be a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Intelligent,
- Strategic,
- Adaptive,
- Good planner,
- Capable, and
- Effective problem solver.

Strengths: Excellent follow-through, managerial skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Lamar Fisher – Board Commissioner, Broward County, FL 954-931-0585

Mr. Fisher worked with Mr. Hutka between 2018 and 2020. At the time, Mr. Fisher was a Broward County Commissioner until he retired in 2020.

Mr. Hutka was well-versed and professionally handled his position. He completed tasks in a timely manner. He was dedicated and loyal. Though he performed admirably, he sometimes placed too much responsibility on himself.

During the year-and-a-half they worked together, Mr. Hutka greatly impressed Mr. Fisher. They met weekly to discuss project details and issues, typically via telephone. Whenever Mr. Fisher had a question or needed a solution, Mr. Hutka quickly responded. On multiple occasions, he corrected problems within 24 hours. He was accessible and quite informative. If asked a question, he usually had an answer ready. He also had good foresight, such as whenever he alerted Mr. Fisher of any potential problems his constituents might face.

Mr. Hutka greatly understood the finite details behind utility operations. He managed hundreds of people, leading with a wealth of experience and maturity. He also understood the business side of operations. He maintained the organization at a high performance level. Mr. Fisher received no complaints regarding Mr. Hutka.

As Director, Mr. Hutka oversaw multiple capital projects. Several included road mechanisms, such as light synchronization and construction. He worked daily with state and federal government agencies, as well as local government organizations to effectively solve problems.

Mr. Fisher is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Fisher would hire Mr. Hutka if given the chance. Whoever hires Mr. Hutka will be pleased with his services. He will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Detail-oriented,
- Knowledgeable,
- Responsive,
- Dedicated,
- Loyal, and
- Informative.

Strengths: Accessibility, experience, organizational skills.

Weaknesses: Sometimes puts too much on himself without asking for additional help.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

**Ilene Lieberman Michelson – Attorney, The Law Office of Stuart R. Michelson, FL
954-463-6100**

Ms. Michelson has known Mr. Hutka since 2010. They worked together when she was a Broward County Commissioner and Mayor. Presently, she is now an attorney and no longer works directly with Mr. Hutka.

Mr. Hutka was a pleasure to work with. He completed tasks in a timely fashion. He was quite reliable and dependable. On multiple occasions, Ms. Michelson received calls from constituents on the weekends. If she had questions, she then contacted Mr. Hutka, who usually responded within an hour. Even if he did not have an answer, he quickly responded that he was looking into the issue. Regardless of the time or day of the week, he replied promptly.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka was a great manager. He remained calm when working with others. He generally made good decisions. He knew how to interview potential personnel, and he motivated his staff. He was a leader who excellently dealt with the big picture and left day-to-day operations to subordinates.

A good administrator, Mr. Hutka understood the Public Works Department well. He needed little direction in his position and intimately knew utility operations. Because Broward County is one of the most populous counties in the country, the Department handled an enormous workload. Mr. Hutka supervised numerous capital projects, such as a courthouse renovation and road construction. He also oversaw work at the airport.

Though a different department handled billing, Mr. Hutka comprehended the business side of utility operations. He knew the requirements to build a road or enact a plan. He had respectable project management skills. He collaborated effectively with some state agencies, such as when the county experienced state road issues.

Mr. Hutka worked well with the public. If anyone approached him with a problem, he listened. He researched available information before providing a variety of options. He understood public works well enough to know some issues had several different answers. If he was unsure of an immediate solution, he contacted the affected people to alert them as to how the problem might be corrected and what was currently being enacted.

Ms. Michelson is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. He is a highly qualified individual and a good Director. If given the opportunity, she would hire Mr. Hutka. Because of his great management style and ability to accomplish tasks effectively, he will make a good Manager.

Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Responsive,
- Calm,
- Reliable,
- Dependable,
- Leader, and
- Customer service oriented.

Strengths: Managerial skills, project management abilities, communication skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Mark Darmanin – Operations Director of Water and Wastewater, Broward County, FL
954-914-4575**

Mr. Darmanin worked for Mr. Hutka for approximately 6 years since December 2013. Mr. Hutka has performed excellently. He communicates regularly via email and telephone. If issues arise between divisions, he discusses matters with divisional leaders. He keeps others informed.

Mr. Hutka typically makes good decisions. He thoroughly investigates concerns by researching the problem and observing both sides to the issue. He makes suitable selection judgments regarding staff. He places the right people in the right place and trusts their decisions. He supports his staff when needed and prepares employees so they can accomplish their jobs. He is quite thorough and follows up well.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka understands the procedural points behind utility operations well enough to discuss what action must be taken with plant operations. While he is generally more comfortable guiding the Department to the big picture for a project, Mr. Hutka pays significant attention to details. He knows the big picture is only accomplished by watching the little details. He also understands the business behind utility operations, having overseen much of that in Broward County.

Some of the large capital projects Mr. Hutka has managed include multimillion-dollar developments. He has supervised the construction of a new courthouse. He has overseen the full renovation of the wastewater plant, costing around \$40 million. He has also managed significant highway construction and wastewater improvements.

Mr. Hutka comfortably works as a change agent in order to maintain the organization at a high performance level. He oversees his staff, providing guidance and support. Once he trusts his staff to follow through properly, he focuses on maintaining good performance. For example, Mr.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Hutka established procedures for all divisions to follow. Such procedures provided consistent means of communication and set common expectations for all divisions.

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka is customer service oriented. He has good public relations. When he works with the media, he typically understands the media's intentions, whether those intentions are to just ask a question or to make a point. During quarterly meetings, he often pairs up the divisions that typically interact with each other. This way, he has helped improve divisional relationships and facilitate better communication.

Mr. Hutka effectively solves problems through a holistic approach. He researches the problem and possible solutions before analyzing each solution's outcome. Using this approach, he makes informed decisions.

Mr. Darmanin is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. Mr. Darmanin would hire Mr. Hutka if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka accomplishes tasks promptly, often ahead of schedule. He is organized and meticulous. He supports his staff. He will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Organized,
- Meticulous,
- Thorough,
- Fair,
- Literate, and
- Customer service oriented.

Strengths: Attention to detail, management abilities, communication skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Roberto Hernandez – Deputy City Manager, City of Fort Lauderdale, FL 954-828-5003

Mr. Hernandez knew of Mr. Hutka between 2006 and 2008. Later, Mr. Hernandez worked with Mr. Hutka between 2013 and 2016 when Mr. Hernandez was the Broward County Deputy Administrator who supervised Mr. Hutka. Mr. Hernandez left the position to become the Fort Lauderdale Deputy City Manager.

Mr. Hutka was an effective leader. He respectfully responded to the County Manager's needs. He planned appropriately and strategically. He remained organized and analytical. He was a polished professional who possessed articulate public speaking skills. He was disciplined, focused, and timely.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Mr. Hernandez saw few crises during Mr. Hutka's leadership. Mr. Hutka capably handled his position. He focused on the big picture and comfortably left everyday operations to subordinates. He used his previous experiences as a city manager and deputy city administrator to confidently stick with the department's goals. While some said Mr. Hutka was tough on his employees, Mr. Hernandez did not notice such behavior.

Mr. Hutka supervised numerous capital projects due to the County's large population. He oversaw major expansion plans for the wastewater treatment plant. He also undertook seaport planning and construction until that project was reworked to a different department.

Additionally, Mr. Hutka generally made good decisions. He brought in many acceptable personnel. He also maintained exacting and demanding standards to keep the organization at high performance levels. When issues arose, he analyzed the situation to determine the strengths and weaknesses of each area. He methodically looked at problems before making a decision.

Mr. Hutka understood the business side of utility operations. He also understood utility operation technicalities. He was quite intelligent and academic. However, because of his strong intellectuality and the immense size of the Public Works Department, Mr. Hutka may not have related well with blue-collar workers.

With his superiors, Mr. Hutka communicated effectively. He met on a regular basis as issues unfolded and brought issues to Mr. Hernandez's attention when necessary. Mr. Hutka communicated credibly and with legitimacy when speaking with elected officials. He worked well with the public. He also dealt efficiently with state and local government agencies.

Mr. Hernandez is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's conduct or background that will concern a future employer. If Mr. Hernandez had a position available, he would hire Mr. Hutka. Mr. Hutka capably handles long-term planning and strategies. He will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Intelligent,
- Disciplined,
- Responsive,
- Polished,
- Professional,
- Focused, and
- Capable.

Strengths: Organizational skills, analytical abilities, public speaking.

Weaknesses: May not have related well with blue-collar workers.

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

Rita Durocher – Assistant to Department Director, Broward County, FL 954-357-6410

Ms. Durocher has worked with Mr. Hutka since approximately 2009. He is a reasonable supervisor who is willing to do whatever is necessary to help employees do their jobs. Even though Mr. Hutka has been short staffed due to financial circumstances, he has performed well. He is often a comedian, telling good jokes to keep up office morale. He is a patient and fair boss.

Mr. Hutka is a knowledgeable teacher. He considers employees' input to facilitate an easier workflow. In fact, he eagerly desires employee feedback. He also points out areas that require improvement. For example, he advocated for classes specifically designed to help employees complete their jobs well. He implemented both a customer service training program and a quality assurance program for staff members.

Mr. Hutka is a well-rounded individual. He comprehends both the technical and business aspects behind utility operations. He has vast experience with wastewater treatment operations and construction. He also has ample involvement with public work streets and construction. He confidently discusses finite details with plant operators and observes the big picture. He comfortably leaves day-to-day operations to subordinates, allowing them to see how their jobs fit in the master plan.

Furthermore, Mr. Hutka has overseen numerous capital projects. A major development involved renovating street intersections and working with traffic signals. He also worked on new wastewater plants and a new convention center. The largest project he recently completed was the 20-story downtown courthouse in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Generally, Mr. Hutka makes good decisions. He meets and exceeds deadlines. He is an excellent judge of character and has made sound decisions when hiring personnel. He judges an employee's potential well and has been a sound ear for division directors when they have hired staff. He effectively solves problems. When issues arise, he talks directly to involved divisions and listens to different sides. He often asks for input from deputy directors and is unafraid to elevate the issue to a commissioner when necessary.

Mr. Hutka communicates effectively with everyone, from property owners to county commissioners to state representatives. He works well with the public. He also handles intergovernmental and media relations well. He has commendably worked with non-profit organizations, Florida State departments, and the 31 municipalities within the county. When handling his staff, Mr. Hutka is an excellent communicator. He has great command of the English language. He has even instituted classes for employees to deal with internal and external customers to improve their communication skills.

Mr. Hutka is an innovative change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level. When Mr. Hutka first started with Broward County, the Public Works Department had several personnel issues. One issue was the office culture, where some people only worked when needed or only worked within the division. However, Mr. Hutka has changed

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

that culture. Now, employees willingly complete their assignments and enjoy what they do. They enjoy helping one another, even across different divisions.

Ms. Durocher is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's background that will concern a future employer. If given the opportunity, she would absolutely hire him. Mr. Hutka will make a good Manager. He works hard and expects his staff to do the same. He works with his team to figure out solutions and ensures his staff members have the resources they need.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Knowledgeable,
- Fair,
- Teacher,
- Facilitator,
- Coordinated, and
- Well spoken.

Strengths: Fairness, sense of humor.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Brittany Wallman – Reporter, Sun Sentinel Newspaper, FL 954-356-4541

Ms. Wallman knew Mr. Hutka approximately between 2010 and 2017 when she wrote for the South Florida Sun Sentinel, the main Broward County newspaper. They no longer remain in contact.

Ms. Wallman respected her interactions with Mr. Hutka. He behaved professionally and was easily accessible. If Ms. Wallman had questions on county issues, Mr. Hutka answered her questions directly. Rather than sending her through a communications person, he either personally provided details or sent her to the correct person if he was unsure. If that individual was unavailable, he sent her a brief email covering a few important points.

Whether Mr. Hutka worked on traffic light synchronization or the courthouse project, all communications were thorough and transparent. Whenever Ms. Wallman had concerns on county issues, he provided her the same material he gave commissioners.

Mr. Hutka was smart, friendly, and a nice person in general. He rarely experienced friction with others. He treated Ms. Wallman respectfully, even during the times she was highly critical.

Ms. Wallman had only positive exchanges with him, which was a rarity among other individuals in her media career over the past 25 years. For example, Ms. Wallman asked him about the

**Reference Notes
Thomas Hutka**

county's response to the Zika virus because one of her colleagues handled health issues. Mr. Hutka sent an email back to Ms. Wallman telling her to have the colleague contact him directly. He also included a PowerPoint discussing the virus and the email address of the staff member who knew the issue better.

Mr. Hutka effectively solved problems. Though government processes were sometimes slow or controversial, he performed well. He handled the media and media inquiries professionally and transparently.

Ms. Wallman is unaware of anything in Mr. Hutka's personal or professional background that will concern a future employer. She would hire him if given the opportunity. Mr. Hutka is a high-caliber leader. He will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thomas Hutka:

- Respectful,
- Friendly,
- Responsive,
- Professional,
- Thorough, and
- Even-tempered.

Strengths: Media handling, management abilities, communication skills.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Danielle Dayton
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Section 8

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.local10.com/consumer/2018/07/17/mysterious-nighttime-humming-leaves-hollywood-neighbors-restless/>

July 17, 2018

Mysterious Nighttime Humming Leaves Hollywood Neighbors Restless

Author: Layron Livingston

Nosey neighbors aren't Bea Mazzrillo's problem. It's the noisy one across the street. "Absolutely wretched," is how Mazzrillo described the racket. "It's very loud, and it never goes away." Mazzrillo reached out to the Leave it to Layron team for help silencing the not-so-soothing sound. Imagine a very mechanical hum, constantly humming, at the same pitch, 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Mazzrillo said the droning is worse at night and early in the morning. One morning, she recorded the sound on her cellphone from inside her apartment, sealed with hurricane impact windows.

In the video, she notes the time -- just before 5 a.m. --and you can hear the hum, humming away. Seconds later, the video shows Mazzrillo opening her front door, allowing the listener to get the full effect. "Somebody should be able to do something," she said. Mazzrillo and her husband moved into their Harrison Street condo eight years ago. It's right across the street from Broward County's South Regional Courthouse in Hollywood. Mazzrillo and her neighbors tell the LITL team the noise became increasingly unbearable within the past year. They've contacted the city's code enforcement department, and have even made contact with workers in the courthouse building to get the humming to stop.

The LITL team's search for silence stopped with **Tom Hutka**, public works director with Broward County. After we called, **Hutka** stopped by the South Regional Courthouse. "I heard the noise, and I have to agree, we can do better and make everybody in the neighborhood happier," he said. **Hutka** said the constant noise is caused by chillers, part of the cooling system for the courthouse. While many county buildings' cooling equipment is located on the roof, the chillers at the South Regional Courthouse are located inside utility rooms, at the back of the building. He said the building's air conditioning system can function properly without the chillers running during the evening and overnight hours. The plan, now, is to shut the chillers down at the end of the day to make things quiet when no one's using the building.

Mazzrillo immediately noticed the change, Sunday night. She recorded another video on her cellphone, this time from outside of her condo. In the video, the noise was gone and she thanks the LITL team. She also thanked **Hutka**. "Heavenly," is how she described the silence. **Hutka** also said there are plans in the works to minimize the noise during the day. The design and permitting process will take some time, but a fence with hedges is slated to be installed behind the courthouse to help buffer the noise from the utility room. **Hutka** said the county is also now looking into ways to buffer the sound inside the utility rooms. "We will be good neighbors, and we'll take care of business for them," **Hutka** said.

Fort Lauderdale Magazine (FL)

June 1, 2018

Wasted Broward**Insufficient Facilities, Lack of Oversight, Changing Economics – There are Plenty of Reasons Why – But When it Comes to Recycling in Broward, Mount Trashmore Isn't the Only Thing That Stinks**

Robin Merrill is the type of person who chases a napkin caught in the wind. If she finds a plastic water bottle, she'll lug it around in her purse or car until she spots a recycling bin. At her condo, where she lives with her husband and two sons, she led the charge to start the building's recycling program more than a decade ago, and remains draconian in keeping her cardboard, plastic and cans separate from the trash. For a time, she even collected plastic spoons from sticky-fingered European tourists who strolled past her art gallery from a nearby ice cream shop and made sure they wound up in the proper bin.

- For Robin, recycling isn't just an ethical or moral issue—it's a spiritual one. It's the cornerstone of her relationship with the earth, a recurring motif in her work as an artist and gallerist in Fort Lauderdale. "I'm tired of being the shrill voice or the loud mom but this is deeply personal to me," Merrill says. "It's completely selfish to throw something away that shouldn't be."
-
- For the most part, it's hard to rile people up about garbage. It smells. It's easy to pretend no one saw you free-throw your soup can into the trash, or wing it when you question if a plastic shopping bag can be recycled (it can't!). And yet every day it seems that Mount Trashmore looms higher and higher over the Turnpike and the prospect of meeting the state's goal of a 75 percent recycling rate by 2020 becomes more and more unlikely—especially now that reports from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection reveal that Broward's recycling rate has taken a nosedive: plummeting from its high of 60 percent in 2012 to 48 percent in 2016, the lowest recorded number in almost a decade and 24 percent lower than the 72 percent rate in Palm Beach County (the numbers for 2017 aren't out yet).
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- Why is Broward so bad at recycling? It's a tangle of bureaucratic and economic issues: dips in the market's demand for recyclables, a shuttered waste-to-energy plant in Pompano, a disbanded regional recycling board five years ago, a confusing tangle of public utility and private enterprise and a lack of accountability and oversight over the county's municipalities. Unfortunately, that means that when someone like Robin Merrill tosses a glass bottle in the blue recycling bin, it's hard to pinpoint where exactly it'll end up: a local sorting facility, an out-of-state processing center, or perhaps even in a landfill. "It's demoralizing to even think that the little we're already recycling isn't actually being recycled," Merrill says. "We're losing what little we even had."
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- After months of research, this month the county and local municipalities plan to release a major report on the state of recycling in Broward. The report, compiled by consulting firm

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Arcadis, will focus on how the county can collectively reach the state’s 75 percent recycling goal by 2020. Leaders are hopeful it will usher with it a new era of sustainability in Broward. “We can’t wait any longer to figure this out,” Broward County Mayor Beam Furr says. “What are we going to do when the Monarch Hill Landfill [Mount Trashmore] reaches its life span? Where will everything go then?”

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- If you ask the director of Public Works for Broward County, a deeply patient man named **Thomas Hutka**, the only way to understand the reasons recycling rates plummeted is to start from the beginning. Or at least all the way back to 1986, when Ronald Reagan was president and a quasi-independent government agency was formed in Broward to tackle recycling, uniting unincorporated parts of the county and local municipalities. The Resource Recovery Board (RRB) oversaw contracts with private companies that routed recyclables to sorting and processing facilities and, depending on your address, shuttled the trash put in garbage bins to one of two waste-to-energy plants—one in the north and one in the south—that incinerated the waste and created power. It’s not recycling, but since it generates energy and keeps waste out of landfills, the state credits the percentage of waste that is incinerated towards the county’s total recycling goal, which was added to the annual FDEP reports in 2012.
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- Recycling rates steadily hovered around 25 percent in the early aughts. In 2008, the RRB switched from the system where households put paper and cardboard in one bin and glass and plastic in another to a process called single-stream recycling, in which all recyclables mingle together in one 90-gallon blue bin. The logic was that by making recycling easier, more people would. Indeed, the rates began to climb slowly. With the added waste-to-energy credits, by 2012, the county celebrated its highest mark yet: Sixty percent of all solid waste was recycled.
-
- But things soon flipped. In 2013, Waste Management closed one of its recycling centers in southwest Broward. That July, the RRB, the group responsible for overseeing most recycling in the county, disbanded after its 27-year contract ended. The municipalities that once comprised the RRB had to now secure their own systems of recycling (typically now to a facility, where a company takes possession of it and it is then either shipped, sorted, processed and recycled).
-
- The county mostly had contracts with Waste Management, but now another waste disposal company called Sun Bergeron, run by Broward businessman Ron Bergeron, created competition. Rather than send trash to the waste-to-energy plants owned by Wheelabrator to the south and Waste Management to the north, Sun Bergeron mostly shuttled its solid waste to landfills including some in the middle of the state, which drastically reduced the waste-to-energy credits Broward had previously received. Less tonnage was being incinerated. Waste Management shuttered its waste-to-energy plant in Pompano in 2015. “It’s now a patchwork quilt with a lot of different players,” **Thomas Hutka** says. “Some cities have contracts with Waste Management, others with Sun Bergeron, others kept the contracts secured by the county ... But less waste is going to the incinerators than it used to.”
-
- Basically, without the RRB’s oversight, a local municipality like the City of Fort Lauderdale remains responsible for organizing curbside garbage and recycle pickup. Except now it’s nearly

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

impossible to pinpoint where that neighborhood garbage truck goes to dump its contents across 31 autonomous municipalities. Even if every single truck took its contents to the remaining waste-to-energy plant in south Broward, that plant's capacity still couldn't withstand it. There have even been talks about shuttling the waste further north to Palm Beach County and its new state-of-the-art waste-to-energy plant. "When they dismantled the waste-to-energy center in the north, it was a disaster for the county," Mayor Furr says. "As Palm Beach County's building a new \$600-million waste-to-energy plant in 2016, we're dismantling ours, and that's when our rates really started going down."

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- In 2014, Broward recycling had dropped to 55 percent and by 2016, it was listed at 48 percent. As Palm Beach County comes close to reaching the 75 percent state recycling goal and Broward's current downward trend continues, the county finds itself below the 50 percent mark for the first time since 2011, reversing years of hard work by residents and local leaders.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)
September 15, 2016

Crosswalk Plea from Widow Gains Backing

Author: Brittany Wallman

It's just one six-lane roadway, just one crusade to help veterans cross the street to the clinic, and it has support from City Halls to the halls of Congress. It's a cause that gained the voice of a widow after a 70-year-old Army veteran, Willie Span, was struck and killed there two years ago. But the effort to get the Commercial Boulevard crosswalk is a study in government red tape, a "cluster to the 10th magnitude," according to one elected official, Cooper City's Lisa Mallozzi. Today the crosswalk quest will get new attention, when Span's widow, Doris, addresses the Broward County Commission. She's got the backing of the local congressional delegation, among others. Five U.S. representatives from South Florida - Lois Frankel, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Frederica Wilson, Alcee Hastings and Ted Deutch - signed a letter to the county after Span's death, asking that a pedestrian traffic signal and crosswalk be installed in the 9800 block of Commercial Boulevard. Veterans cross the busy roadway midblock to reach the William "Bill" Kling VA Clinic on the south side. That might not be enough. The county says there aren't enough pedestrians to warrant a signal and crosswalk.

Willie Span, 70, took the Broward County Transit route 55 bus on Oct. 2, 2014, after 6 a.m. He rode about a mile, got off and started for the clinic across the street. A 36-year-old woman driving an Acura hit him before he got halfway across Commercial. The sun hadn't come up, and she didn't see him, police said. Span had a volunteer post to report to at the veterans clinic in Miami under a program for veterans with mental or physical disabilities. He intended to catch a shuttle there from the Broward clinic. He enlisted in the Army in 1963 and served six years, stationed in Germany during the Vietnam era. Back in the States, he became addicted to drugs and homeless. Doris Span had a history of drugs, as well, but when they met in 2003, they were both clean and remained so, she said. They married in 2006, on her 51st birthday. And in 2014, three months before the accident, they bought a house. When the deputy came to her home that morning, she thought he was welcoming her to the neighborhood. "He shuffled his feet a little," she remembered. "He said, 'Is your husband Willie?' I said, stop, don't say anything, just don't say it." She'd seen reports about the accident on TV news and had called him, leaving a message: "I saw there was a fatal accident the way you go. Did you see it? Love you. Bye."

Span couldn't talk about the accident until recently. She struggled with a breakdown and was hospitalized twice. As she watched others advocate for a crosswalk, she wished she could speak up, too. But the pain and guilt were paralyzing, she said. Now she said she's speaking out and is planning a memorial, "for me, to have joy about how my husband lived." Wasserman Schultz, D-Weston, said she met Doris Span in August at a Broward Veterans Coalition meeting. "I want to do everything we can to provide our veterans the health care, safety and security they deserve - including creating this crosswalk, which will help South Florida's veterans access the clinic in a safe manner," she said Monday in a written statement. Deutch said in a written statement that it's inconceivable that "after risking their lives for our country ... veterans are then expected to risk

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

their lives crossing a busy road just to access the health care and mental health services that they deserve." He said he'll continue working to support installation of a signal near the clinic.

The county is officially opposed, a position reiterated this week by Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. "A crosswalk cannot and should not be installed at this location because it would violate federal standards, state law and county law," he said in an email. According to federal guidelines, in order to justify a crosswalk or signal, 75 pedestrians must cross in a four-hour period, or 93 in the peak hour. But a January 2014 count found only five people crossing in a four-hour period and 14 at peak hour, according to the county. **Hutka** said the crossing is safer now, because the mid-block bus stop was eliminated after Span's death.

Span's memorial is planned for 3 p.m. Oct. 1 at Daybreak Assembly church in Tamarac.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)

May 8, 2016

County Wary of Contractor

Author: Brittany Wallman

The contractor who would build a Broward County Convention Center expansion and hotel has experience constructing the county's highest profile public works projects. Unfortunately, the experience hasn't all been good, county officials say. Broward County is fighting with Tutor Perini Corp. over delays in building a new courthouse in downtown Fort Lauderdale and construction of the traffic tunnels under the new, elevated runway at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. Millions of dollars are at stake, as the county and contractor Perini argue over who is at fault for the delays. "They feel the county owes them money. We feel they owe us money," said Kent George, immediate past aviation director, who still works for the county to resolve this issue, among others. The potential for litigation concerns some county commissioners as they step into their next major project, the convention center.

Commissioners on April 26 accepted the lone development team left in the competitive process to build a convention hotel, Matthews Southwest Holdings Inc. But they said they want to discuss later this month whether to allow Tutor Perini to remain part of that team. An update on the convention center project is scheduled for Tuesday's county commission meeting. Danny Hoisman, executive vice president of Tutor Perini Building Corp.'s Florida division, said he thinks both disputes will be settled. "On either project, the courthouse or the runway, we're not adverse with the county," Hoisman said. "And we have change requests that we are confident we will resolve amicably." The deal is the county's fourth attempt to get a hotel built at the convention center, a top priority of the business community for years. "My eyes are wide open, and we have history," Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler said recently, "and I don't know that I really want to consider that history and say, 'Yeah, go ahead and keep them as part of your team.'" Wexler said she's also concerned that the company has been given so many of the latest major county projects. "I've always subscribed to this philosophy of spreading money around," Wexler said.

Commissioner Chip LaMarca said he isn't concerned about the quality of Tutor's work, but said the rocky relationship with the county has some subcontractors waiting to be paid. "People still are not getting paid. That's my big issue," LaMarca said. "I don't want to endeavor on a new project for half a billion dollars where we have that similar issue." The courthouse is nearly complete, but a year late. In a June memo to commissioners, Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** said underground work along Courthouse Drive and courtroom redesigns requested by judges and other courthouse users were the primary causes of the delays. But there remain disagreements about how much is still owed. Tutor says the county owes it \$11.3 million for the extra work, assistant public works Director Steve Hammond said. "We have every ambition of resolving that amicably, but we are very far apart at this point," Hammond told commissioners. "... We are going to make every effort to hear it out, deal with it fairly and quickly, and hopefully not have to resort to the ultimate end game of litigation. But that's always out there."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Negotiations on the \$226 million airport job, mostly building the above-ground tunnels on U.S. 1, is coming closer, George said. Tutor originally claimed the county owed it \$40 million for the delays brought about by changes in the project, George said, while the county claimed Tutor owed it \$34.6 million. For a major public works project to end in squabbling over money is not unusual, he said. Two other major runway contracts also ended that way. But, he said, they were settled. "This has been a very, very difficult process, more so than necessary," George said. "It does not need to be this difficult and last this long." Matthews Southwest said it expects its convention center expansion and hotel would be complete in 2020.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)

June 29, 2014

Traffic Technology Improvement

Author: Michael Turnbell and Brittany Wallman

Broward County has been promising for 40 years to fix the problem of unsynchronized traffic lights. Now officials say they have the solution -- a real-time system that can adapt to changing traffic conditions -- but it is still about six years away. The county's current analog system allows for only three traffic patterns, but a new, more reliable digital system will allow as many patterns as needed. For instance, signals will recover timing much faster after a train passes. The digital technology already is installed on all major roads south of Interstate 595 but issues remain on Griffin Road as well as along Miramar Parkway and Pines Boulevard near Interstate 75. Traffic engineers said those roadways are overburdened and the county has hired a consultant to see if improvements can be made. All major roads north of I-595 will be converted to digital by 2015.

The next step is a planned \$22.9 million conversion to fiber optics that will allow video detectors -- the camera-like devices mounted on signal poles throughout the county -- to feed traffic headquarters such information as number of vehicles and length of traffic lines, said Broward's deputy public works director, Tony Hui. That will allow engineers to improve signal timing based on real-time conditions. The county is taking advantage of state road projects wherever it can to install the fiber optics. But that work that will not be complete countywide until 2020. "People are going to notice a difference," Hui said, but "it's not going to be perfect all the time." Blame complexity for some of the problem. For example:

- *The county's roads are not laid out in a uniform grid, and there are 400 to 500 left turns that complicate matters;
- *Intersections have to allow time for people on bike or foot to cross;
- *Trains, drawbridges and emergency vehicles thwart signal timing;

Some roads are just plain overloaded. "We have 150 gallons trying to get into a 100 gallon pipe," Broward Traffic Engineering Director Scott Brunner said. Don Crites, of Pompano Beach, said he would love to use Dixie Highway as an alternative to Interstate 95 at rush hour between Atlantic Boulevard and Glades Road. But the signals stymie him. "All the traffic lights operate counter to the flow of traffic no matter what time of day or day of the week," he said. "I have found that heading farther east to catch U.S. 1 will actually cut 10 minutes ... even though the traffic is much heavier on U.S. 1, all because the lights are timed to traffic on U.S. 1."

Dixie Highway is a trouble spot for signal timing because many roads that intersect it -- such as Sample Road and Copans Road -- have higher traffic volumes. That means green lights for Dixie traffic are shorter. Until now, smooth signal timing on Dixie and other roads hasn't been possible. The county's 25-year-old mainframe computer uses unreliable and "antiquated" technology that "doesn't work very well," said **Tom Hutka**, Broward's Public Works director. Signals currently are timed for three patterns -- morning, afternoon and all other times. Between midnight and 6 a.m., signals operate independently. Between 2009 and 2012, the county retimed

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55 roads and 1,050 intersections. Officials say that cut travel times 10 percent to 43 percent, and reduced stops at red lights by 10 percent to 32 percent. To date, the effort cost the county \$3.3 million. Metro areas with worse congestion have managed to get their lights timed. Los Angeles synchronized every one of its 4,500 traffic signals in a 469-square-mile area. It cost \$400 million and took more than 30 years to complete this past spring. The system relies on magnetic sensors embedded in the road, cameras and a central computer that constantly adjusts signal timing. City officials say average travel speeds are 16 percent faster, and delays at major intersections are down 12 percent. State Sen. Jeremy Ring, D-Parkland, said synchronization should be the county's top transportation priority. "Everyone agrees there is a problem," Ring said. "My eyes tell me it's definitely not fine."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

McClatchy-Tribune Regional News (USA)

January 24, 2013

Former Broward Official Faces Charges, believed to be in Middle East

Author: Jon Burstein

Jan. 24--Broward County's former traffic engineering director is a wanted man. There's been an arrest warrant out for Jihad El Eid since August with federal prosecutors accusing him of pocketing more than \$150,000 in bribes from a company that had millions of dollars of contracts with the county. The criminal allegations were unsealed Wednesday with the FBI wrapping up its lengthy investigation into El Eid's relationship with Southeast Underground Utilities, a Davie-based traffic equipment company. El Eid, 53, is believed to have fled to the Middle East, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office. El Eid, who headed the county's traffic engineering division for 13 years, took cash payouts from Southeast as he helped the company overbill taxpayers by at least \$3 million, federal prosecutors allege. He also is accused of ensuring the company had no competition for contracts as well as providing it with inside information.

El Eid was demoted from his job in March 2010 and fired a few months later. He subsequently became the top traffic official for the city of Amarillo, Texas. He stopped showing up for work there in July 2011, a few weeks after it became public that his relationship with Southeast was under federal investigation. El Eid told Amarillo officials that he had to go to Lebanon to attend to his dying father and then needed to be hospitalized himself. When someone from the city went to El Eid's Amarillo apartment in late August 2011, it was empty with spoiled food in the refrigerator, dishes in the sink and the apartment keys on a counter, according to Amarillo city records. Federal prosecutors are accusing El Eid of bribery, mail fraud and extortion. A relative, Wael El Eid, 45, is also facing an aiding and abetting charge. According to court records, Jihad El Eid got Southeast to hire Wael El Eid. Wael El Eid also is thought to be in the Middle East, federal prosecutors said. Jihad El Eid's attorney, Fred Haddad, could not be reached for comment Wednesday. Before he was demoted, Jihad El Eid ran a department of about 140 employees. With an annual salary of \$137,918.30, he oversaw the maintenance, repair and construction of the county's traffic control systems, street lighting and signs.

The criminal allegations against El Eid were unsealed Tuesday after federal prosecutors charged Southeast owner Anthoneel Allen and the company's former vice president, James Hashim, with conspiracy to commit bribery, fraud and extortion. A conviction for criminal conspiracy can carry up to five years in prison. Allen, 40, and Hashim, 50, surrendered Wednesday at the Fort Lauderdale federal courthouse. Their attorneys and Assistant U.S. Attorney Jeffrey Kaplan agreed that their bonds would be set at \$100,000. Hashim, of Plantation, is scheduled to enter into a plea deal on Feb. 1, while Allen's attorney said in court that his client has been cooperating with federal authorities. Allen, of Sunrise, has been liquidating his assets to pay back the county, said his attorney Michael Gary Smith. Broward County awarded Southeast a series of multimillion dollar contracts from 2005 to 2010. The company did repair work on the county's traffic lights and street equipment, installed video detection cameras to monitor traffic flow and laid hundreds of thousands of feet of underground cable to synchronize traffic. Jihad El Eid

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unilaterally assigned Southeast work to lay cables despite the company not having sufficient bonding capacity to bid on the job, according to federal prosecutors. He is accused of repeatedly boosting a contract's budget with it swelling from \$6.6 million to \$21.2 million. Jihad El Eid went before the Broward County Commission at least once to support such budget increases, court records show. Broward County is suing Southeast for more than \$3 million for overbillings, defective work and the cost to repair work.

El Eid's relationship with the company came into question in 2009 when a county employee began finding financial irregularities around the same time an anonymous letter arrived at County Hall, said Broward Public Works Director **Thomas Hutka**. The letter accused El Eid of giving preferential treatment to Southeast, repeating rumors that his family drove a sports car purchased by a company official. **Hutka** said that since the allegations against El Eid were made, the traffic engineering division has been reorganized and all contracts and expenditures now must be reviewed by multiple managers. County staff assisted the federal investigation, he said.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Broward Bulldog (FL)

April 27, 2012

Section: County

Bureaucrats’ Last Minute Demand Alters Broward Trash Negotiations and Could Lead to Higher Rates

Author: Buddy Nevins

The promise of the lowest price for waste disposal could be thwarted by a last-minute demand from top Broward County administrators. The county was in the throes of negotiating a multi-million dollar waste disposal contract when suddenly the government issued a requirement that any company must provide a list of disposal sites. “This is a big issue, a very big issue... Cities will have problems that they don’t know where their garbage is going,” **Thomas Hutka**, Broward’s public works director, explained during contract negotiations this week.

Newcomer Sun/Bergeron immediately complained that the new mandate favored Wheelabrator Technologies, the Waste Management subsidiary which has held a near monopoly on Broward’s waste disposal for over 20 years and already owns a landfill and a pair of waste-to-energy plants here. “When Wheelabrator won this contract 20 years ago, they didn’t have a disposal site. We are newcomers,” said Aleida “Ali” Waldman, Bergeron’s general counsel. Sun/Bergeron Vice President Phil Medico contended residents and businesses could get a better deal by disposing of the waste in whatever facility has the best price rather than tie themselves to one site for five years. Under Sun/Bergeron’s proposal, waste would be sent to various transfer stations around Broward and then sorted through for recyclable material. Anything that could not be recycled would be trucked to yet-unnamed disposal sites. Wheelabrator proposes to continue disposing waste in its two company-owned existing sites. The waste is minimally processed for recyclables and is either burned or buried – in a landfill along Florida’s Turnpike in North Broward or in an incinerator just south of Interstate 595 in Davie. The burned trash at both locations is used to generate electricity.

The sites were built in the late-1980s under a contract with Broward County that will expire in 2013. Under its current agreement, Wheelabrator handles the disposal for 26 of Broward’s 31 cities. Waste removal involves two separate jobs. A hauler has a franchise with each city to pick up waste at homes and businesses. That waste is then hauled to a disposal site that tacks on a fee. The hauling and disposal fees are generally rolled into one fee paid by residents and business owners. The current negotiations involve only disposal, but it is a contract worth tens of millions of dollars over five years. Negotiators are working over details of the contract at this point and no final prices have been set. **DEAL TO MAKE OR BREAK TRASH MONOPOLY**. With the end of its contract on the horizon next year, Wheelabrator at first proposed extending its monopoly for 20 years through 2033. Sun/Bergeron saw an opening and launched a lobbyist effort to block the renewal of the contract. The lobbying worked. Enough cities, and eventually the Broward County Commission, voted to reject renewal with Wheelabrator. They gambled that better rates could be obtained by pitting Wheelabrator against Sun/Bergeron in competitive bids. Miramar agreed to be the first city to ask for competitive bids from the two disposal companies.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Wheelabrator's bid was \$52.50 per ton, compared with Sun/Bergeron's \$43.25 per ton. Sun/Bergeron got the nod, and a deal is being negotiated. The negotiations by the county and other cities is their attempt to fine-tune the Miramar bid to see if an even a better deal can be reached. Sun/Bergeron is a joint venture, which is headquartered in Davie in an industrial area near I-595. Sun Recycling, the operating partner, is a subsidiary of the veteran waste company Southern Waste Services of Lantana. Bergeron Environmental and Recycling is the latest venture of Broward entrepreneur Ron Bergeron, who is already a dominant force in road building, storm recovery, real estate and rock pits. Medico, a long-time waste industry executive, is the chief negotiator for Sun/Bergeron. Medico told county negotiators that "supply and demand" would lower the price over the next five years because numerous new waste disposal sites are expected to open in South Florida, and there would be a "surplus of opportunities to dispose of waste." There sites in Miami-Dade, Lee and Okeechobee Counties. Palm Beach County is building a waste-to-energy incinerator that is scheduled to go online in 2015. Any site picked by Sun/Bergeron – like all legal disposal sites in Florida – would have gone through a rigorous permitting procedure by the state. "Any waste will have a final resting place in a legally permitted class one facility," Medico said.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES? Speaking to negotiators this week, Medico warned that Broward should not make the same mistake it did in the 1980s by binding disposal to one company's sites. The county missed opportunities to lower prices because "you were tied up in a 25-year monopoly. You didn't have a choice" about what sites to use, Medico said. Under the rules of the negotiating sessions, each company gets a day to be grilled and explain its position on why they should be chosen to dispose of Broward's waste. The discussion of the sites came on Thursday when county staffers and two city managers – Lee Feldman of Fort Lauderdale and David Rivera of Coconut Creek – were going over Sun/Bergeron's proposal line-by-line. Thursday was Sun/Bergeron's day to be questioned. Wheelabrator's Vice President of Operations Bill Roberts and Senior Legal Counsel Emily Kahn sat in the audience taking notes. In an interview earlier with Broward Bulldog at Wheelabrator's sprawling computerized incinerator plant in Davie, Roberts made his case for his company to continue the contract. "We have a proven technology that's reliable...The infrastructure exists. These facilities are strategically located," Roberts said. He added that having the disposal sites in Broward contributed \$23 million in wages, goods and services and other indirect spending to the county's economy. He said disposing waste locally takes vehicles off the road because it doesn't have to be transported to another county. "Our system has worked very well for 20 years," he said.

The county led negotiations are scheduled to conclude and go to the County Commission for its approval by May 8. On paper the negotiations only involve the small slice of Broward that is unincorporated, but several cities are expected to piggyback on the agreement, hence the presence of Feldman and Rivera. Deputy County Attorney Noel Pfeffer, who is leading the negotiations, said the company that is chosen is expected to go out and sell the agreement to the 26 cities now using Wheelabrator. "There will be some period of time (built into the final contract) for the company to go out and market the agreement," he said.

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COMPETITION AND LOWER RATES. Competition has already driven down the price of disposing of garbage in Broward. More price pressure is likely. For instance, there is an overcapacity at Wheelabrator's South Broward waste-to-energy plant. The plant was built to handle 1.5 million tons a year. A few years ago it was processing 1.2 million tons. Today, it's just 900,000 tons due to the failure to forecast increases in recycling and the struggling economy. "In the end, they have to have waste to keep that facility going. If they lose this contract and aren't getting enough waste, they'll cut the price and accept waste from other counties," predicted a waste industry source. Roberts confirmed that Wheelabrator's local facilities would have to take waste from other counties if they failed to get enough from Broward. One company that could conceivably help fill Wheelabrator's plant is Sun/Bergeron, if rates drop far enough. Sun/Bergeron would collect the waste at transfer stations in Davie and elsewhere, then send it to the plant for disposal. "We have a contract with them for disposal in other places," Medico said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)

December 4, 2011

County Moves at Slow Pace as Businesses Build, Officials in Government Deliberate

Author: Brittany Wallman

Tired of delays in building a convention center hotel, Broward County commissioners set a deadline of midnight to get a contract signed. Alas, that was 11 years ago. There's still no hotel. Years have passed, too, since the public first heard that a new election headquarters would be built in Broward, and a new county courthouse. Two more projects that have been talked about and worked on for years: a ship "turning notch" and ship-to-rail facility in Port Everglades. A new airport runway has been in the headlines for decades. Why is government so dang slow? "It's painful. It's absolutely painful," Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler said. "It's a disgraceful wonder." Fort Lauderdale developer Alan Hooper has listened to the public discussions about the runway and other projects, while he and his business partner built and opened Tarpon Bend Food & Tackle restaurant, Avenue Lofts, New River Trading Post, and The Mill and The Foundry residential lofts in Fort Lauderdale and opened Yolo restaurant and Vibe lounge, all in Fort Lauderdale. "Time is money," Hooper said, "and we can't waste too much of either." In the same period that Broward focused time, energy and money on the same few unfinished projects, a lot was accomplished in the rest of the world. Navy SEALs found and killed Osama bin Laden. National health care was passed. Downtown Fort Lauderdale erupted in high-rises. The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino opened in Hollywood.

Back in Broward, Wexler was waiting Thursday for a lobbyist to talk to her about that election headquarters. "And the beat goes on, and on, and on," she said. Businesswoman Barbara Sharief, a self-made multi-millionaire who is new to the County Commission, said the belaboring of things "over and over again" is "probably one of the most frustrating things about being on the commission." The county is like a \$3.2 billion business, she said, and delays hurt when it comes to projects that would build up the economy. The long-planned deepening and widening of Port Everglades would position Broward to handle super-freighters when the expansion of the Panama Canal is complete in 2014. But Miami has a port, too. "You sit around and twiddle your thumbs for too long," Sharief said, "and your competition's going to pass you by."

From the helm of Broward's public works department, Director **Tom Hutka** has a different view. The reason government moves more slowly than a private business would, he said, is they stand in the public eye, they seek competitive bids for the best price, they consider neighborhood concerns. It's not because they don't work as hard, or they're less efficient, he said. Especially now after several years of budget cuts, which forced government to "really look at everything and question the way of doing things."

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (FL)
September 23, 2011

Broward Sues Southeast Underground Utilities, Contractor on County Intersections

Author: *Brittany Wallman*

Broward County has filed suit against Southeast Underground Utilities, the company that was working on county intersections and whose relationship with traffic engineer Jihad El Eid is now under the eye of the FBI. The county's Aug. 3 lawsuit, which is being handled by county chief trial attorney Michael Kerr, alleges that Southeast Underground overbilled the county at least \$3 million, and did work that was defective. I called the Davie-based company and left a message with a woman asking officials to comment on the lawsuit and the FBI probe. If they do, I'll update this.

Broward hired Southeast Underground after a competitive process in 2006, and the contract was effective as of Jan. 25, 2007, for \$4.4 million, with some renewal options. It ballooned into a \$21.3 million contract. The company was to install and restore underground conduit. The contract was expanded to have Southeast upgrade the traffic signal system by replacing old conduits and copper wires with new conduits and fiber optic wires. That job was expanded once again to include replacing the wire-hung traffic signals with the black, metal mast-arms we see in major intersections now. The contract was terminated Jan. 24, 2010.

El Eid, who was not accomplishing the traffic light synching drivers were begging for, was dismissed from the county by then-new Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. Now El Eid is working for the city of Amarillo, Texas, and is "certainly a person of interest" to the FBI, his attorney, the local Fred Haddad, told us this summer. But he's not been charged with any crimes, nor accused by the FBI of wrongdoing. The FBI executed a search warrant at Southeast's offices in late June. FBI spokesman James Marshall said Thursday that the El Eid-Southeast Underground investigation is still ongoing. It was prompted by an anonymous letter alleging an improper friendship between the public servant and county vendor.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)
September 5, 2011

Traffic Signal Upgrades Smooth Out Commutes**Upgrades to Traffic System will Let Engineers Change Signals Remotely After Accidents**

Author: Michael Turnbell

Broward County is embarking on a \$25 million upgrade of its 25-year-old traffic signal system that will give engineers the ability to override signal timing in real time - without going to the intersection - if an accident, crime scene or special event creates problems. For example, if an accident closes northbound Interstate 95 before Commercial Boulevard, engineers would be ready with a response plan to alter signals on routes likely to become detours. "In just a few minutes we can come up with a new pattern at a particular intersection or along an entire corridor," said Scott Brunner, assistant director of the county's Traffic Engineering Division.

By 2016, Broward traffic engineers will be able to do everything from timing signals remotely to giving buses the ability to keep green lights green longer. And they won't have to fret every time there's a thunderstorm or if a contractor hits a cable underground, because the signal timing won't be affected. Poorly timed traffic signals are among commuters' biggest gripes, leading to wasted fuel, lost productivity and time, and road rage. The U.S. Department of Transportation has estimated as many as three out of four of the nation's 300,000 traffic signals need to be replaced or re-timed. In March, Broward finished re-timing signals on 19 major east-west roads plus University Drive and U.S. 1. Drivers now can hit a string of green lights sometimes stretching for miles, instead of keeping their foot on the brake to stop at red lights.

Engineers focused on east-west roads first because motorists on those streets lack high-speed alternatives that their north-south counterparts enjoy with I-95, Florida's Turnpike, Sawgrass Expressway and I-75. Now the county's light-synching workers, dubbed the Green Light Strike Force, hope to finish work on 10 major north-south roads by the end of 2011. They'll also re-time signals on Peters Road, stretches of Griffin Road and Sheridan Street west of Flamingo Road, and on Glades Parkway/Royal Palm Boulevard, Weston Road and Indian Trace, all in Weston. So far they've finished Flamingo Road and a stretch of State Road 7 in the middle of the county. And they're continuing to fine-tune streets they've already visited, like U.S. 1. Commuters are taking notice.

Ghanima Morales, of North Lauderdale, emailed the county in July that he's noticeably less stressed because the signals on his commute are timed better. "This is possibly the greatest thing that has been initiated in my 10 years of driving," Morales wrote. Marcy Whitaker wrote, "The first time I experienced the benefits of the program ... I thought it was my lucky day and bought a Lotto ticket." But not everyone is happy. As the county has improved traffic flow on major roads, it often has come at the expense of side streets where traffic is forced to wait longer for a green light. "When I drive on Northwest 81st Street to Pine Island Road, the light is so long," Jerry Yardley said. "There are times when I come out to a major road with no traffic and still have to wait at the light for minutes. At night time, it is very frustrating." Engineers know they

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

have more work to do. They've installed new software at 82 intersections on two east-west corridors - Broward Boulevard and Pines/Hollywood Boulevard. About 200 intersections in downtown Fort Lauderdale soon will be added to the new system. By 2016, all 1,400 intersections in the county are scheduled to be finished. The software will enable engineers to adjust timing remotely and allow individual signal control boxes to keep the correct timing as a backup if the connection between the signal and the county's main computer is damaged or disrupted.

It works: Several times this summer thunderstorms have severed communication between the main computer and the signals on Pines Boulevard, yet the signals kept functioning properly, according to engineers. The county also is placing devices aboard buses that extend the green-light time so buses approaching intersections can make it through. It's designed to get late buses back on schedule. Next year, engineers will begin working to get intersecting major streets working well, a mesh the county calls the "basket weave."

"That's where it gets more complicated," county Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** said. "We'll be using computer modeling to figure out compromises at intersections." For instance, in the morning rush hour, engineers have to figure out a timing pattern that moves traffic swiftly eastbound without penalizing drivers headed in the opposite direction or on north-south streets. "We can make one direction perfect or the other perfect, but we can't make both perfect," **Hutka** said. After a year of vast improvements in signal timing, improvements next year will be more incremental. But every week drivers should notice a difference. "We can't promise you all green lights," he said. "But we're doing everything we can to reduce the number of red lights you stop at."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Broward Bulldog (FL)

July 13, 2011

Broward Cuts \$107 Million Trash Deal; Calls Start to Disband Resource Recovery Board

Author: Dan Christensen

Saying it had gotten the best deal it could, Broward's Resource Recovery Board six months ago urged the county to approve its controversial 10-year, \$1.5 billion no-bid trash disposal agreement with giant Waste Management. But Broward County commissioners balked, asking staff instead to negotiate a better deal. The county's skepticism has paid off: before adjourning for summer vacation this month, commissioners unanimously approved a less risky short-term deal worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional cost savings to Broward cities and millions in new lease income to the county. The two-year, \$107.3 million disposal agreement is already being felt among cities that participate in the county's solid waste disposal agreement with Wheelabrator, the Waste Management subsidiary that owns and operates Broward's two waste-to-energy plants in Pompano Beach and Fort Lauderdale.

Last week, Oakland Park commissioners voted on first reading to decrease residential trash service rates by 15 percent, or \$3.75 a month – a reduction City Manager John Stunson attributed to the county's new deal. There's been political fallout, too. County Commissioner John Rodstrom, who led the charge for a better deal, told Broward Bulldog that the Resource Recovery Board – elected city and county officials who oversee the disposal of solid waste for 26 Broward cities and unincorporated Broward – must go. "What they were offering us was just ridiculous," Rodstrom said. "The board should be disbanded." He added that \$40 million remaining from a reserve fund to cover recently paid off construction bonds be divided up between the county and the cities. Another \$20 million from that pot went last week to encourage "single-stream" recycling that allows mixing bottles, cans and newspapers in a recycling bin, Rodstrom said. 'Big changes have to occur' Broward Commissioner Lois Wexler, who wants the next long term disposal agreement to be bid out, "would not resist" dissolution. "I think big changes have to occur and big changes include trust, direction and leadership," she said. Wexler mentioned no names, but the RRB's executive director is former state legislator Ron Greenstein. Its chair is County Commissioner Ilene Lieberman, sometimes referred to on the commission as the county's "queen of trash." Oakland Park Mayor Suzanne Boisvenue, a member of the Resource Recovery Board, says the board has made itself irrelevant. "I don't see why the board is needed," said Boisvenue, one of nine board members. "We have a lot of politics and nonsense going on there we don't need."

While last December's proposal by the Resource Recovery Board included significant rate cuts, it came under withering fire from municipal officials who said it didn't go far enough and amounted to a huge giveaway to a multi-billion dollar corporation flush with years of excessive profits made at the expense of Broward customers. The alternative agreement approved by the county commission on June 28 is an interim deal negotiated during the countdown to an Aug. 4 expiration of the decades-old service agreement with Wheelabrator's south plant. The north plant agreement expires next March. Officials intend to negotiate a longer-term agreement with

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Wheelabrator by July 2, 2013 – the expiration of the existing interlocal disposal agreement among the municipalities that make up Broward’s Solid Waste District. A memo to commissioners by Public Works Director **Thomas Hutka** said the options to be explored will include a further extension of Wheelabrator’s contract, a greater emphasis on recycling to reduce the demand on Wheelabrator’s plants, trucking a portion of the garbage to a disposal site in Palm Beach and finding service through other private providers. How the next agreement is reached, and which cities participate in it, will mostly be determined by price. Last year, chafing at Waste Management’s long-standing monopoly and the Resource Recovery Board’s decision not to put the new disposal contract out for bids, a number of cities indicated they might cut their own deals. Miramar recently took bids on its request for proposals for solid waste disposal. Bid prices remain sealed, but the two bidders – Wheelabrator and a joint venture by Bergeron Environmental and Recycling and Sun Recycling – met with city officials this week to describe their proposals. Other cities have indicated they might join with Miramar if a good enough deal can be found. Bergeron looks to become a player. The bid by the Bergeron group signals a determination by wealthy Davie developer and land baron Ron Bergeron to become a player in Broward’s lucrative municipal solid waste disposal business. This spring, Bergeron sought a zoning change in Pembroke Pines that would have allowed him to recycle solid waste at his recycling facility on 57 acres of industrial property off U.S. 27 on the edge of the Everglades. He withdrew his application after unhappy neighbors began to mobilize.

Bergeron, a man of significant political influence in Broward, already has a contract with the county to dispose of hurricane debris. His partner in the Miramar bid is his longtime friend Anthony Lomangino, the chairman and founder of Sun’s parent, Lantana-based Southern Waste Systems. The county’s new disposal agreement sets the base tipping fee at \$57 per ton starting next month at the Fort Lauderdale plant and next March at the Pompano Beach plant. The current rate at the north plant is \$72.57 per ton. Prior contract provisions that allowed Waste Management to hike the tab for inflation and other factors have been eliminated – including the so-called “put-or-pay” requirement that forced cities to kick in extra cash if they didn’t deliver a specified amount of waste within a given period. “These projected rates...are very similar to what the December 2010 (Resource Recovery Board) proposal would have produced, but with significantly less risk to the county and a much shorter term,” says **Hutka**’s memo. In all, the memo says, members of Broward’s solid waste district will save about \$380,000 in fees to Wheelabrator compared to the Resource Recovery Board’s proposal. A new lease also significantly ups the rent Wheelabrator must pay to the county every year to lease the Fort Lauderdale plant site [the north site is privately owned.] The current lease provides for an annual payment of \$100,000. The annual lease that starts next month on the 162-acre site makes that payment \$1.1 million for each of the next five years. A perception that Waste Management has earned an exorbitant profit on the backs of its Broward customers caused **Hutka** to have his staff to examine Wheelabrator’s finances and conduct an analysis of the deal. “The analysis showed that the proposed service agreement would provide what staff considers a reasonable (not excessive) level of income for Wheelabrator...considerably lower” than for any of the past five years, the memo says. Still, the staff’s look-see will remain largely an exercise in faith for any who choose to believe it. “Due to the confidentiality provisions of the existing agreements, staff cannot reveal any specifics of this analysis in a public document,” the memo says.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)
November 2, 2010

**Sewage Beach Marine Environment Pollution Issue
Is Treated Sewage Safe for the Sea?
Broward Fights State Mandate to Stop Ocean Dumping, Saying Residents' Bills Would
Double**

Author: David Fleshler and Brittany Wallman

Broward County wants to escape a state mandate to shut down a pipe that discharges treated sewage into the ocean off Pompano Beach, saying the cost would be huge and the environmental payoff negligible. The pipe is one of six in Broward, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties ordered closed by a 2008 state law, after a campaign by environmentalists who argued the pipes were polluting coral reefs and wasting fresh water. The law, which set a deadline of 2025, requires wastewater authorities to improve treatment systems so the water can be used for purposes such as irrigating golf courses, watering lawns and recharging underground water supplies. The Broward County Commission learned last month that it would cost about \$800 million to construct such systems. Sewage bills for the pipe's northern Broward users would more than double, with the average customer's bill rising from \$33.09 to \$69.48.

Now the county is aiming for a way around the requirement - by a change in the law, a waiver or some other exemption.

Thomas Hutka, Broward's public works director, said spending hundreds of millions to pump the water into the Floridan aquifer or to lay pipes to spray it on lawns "is not a cost-effective use of taxpayer funds." "The county will continue to work with the state as we have since the year 2007 so that we can continue using the ocean outfall, which we believe to be both cost-effective and environmentally sound," **Hutka** said.

Alan Garcia, the county's water and wastewater director, said the water already is 90 percent clean. "If you take a jar out of our treatment plant it's as clear as can be," he said. "There are no solids in it. It's not yellow or green." Ed Tichenor, director of Palm Beach County Reef Rescue, an environmental group that led the campaign to close the pipes, said environmental advocates would put up "quite a fight" to prevent Broward from keeping the pipe in service. "Solids aren't the problem," Tichenor said. "It's the nutrients, it's the pharmaceuticals, it's the pathogens and viruses that survive the initial treatment. And one reason they passed this legislation was a water shortage in southeast Florida, and southeast Florida doesn't recycle water like the rest of the state." The pipe off Delray Beach shut down last year. Boca Raton expects to be reusing 100 percent of its water by 2015, using the pipeline only for seasonal overflows, said Chris Helfrich, the city's utilities director. Hollywood and Miami-Dade County are exploring options, both saying the change would require a massive investment in new treatment systems.

The Broward-operated pipe, installed in the mid-1970s, discharges 32 million to 34 million gallons of treated sewage daily from Parkland, Pompano Beach, Deerfield Beach, Coral Springs, Tamarac, Oakland Park, Lauderhill, North Lauderdale, Coconut Creek, Lauderdale Lakes, part

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

of unincorporated Broward and a small part of Fort Lauderdale. Environmentalists have blamed this and other pipes for discharging nutrients such as ammonia that fertilize the growth of algae that smothers coral reefs. State legislators said the region can't afford to dump that much fresh water at sea when the region is facing permanent water-use restrictions. Broward Vice Mayor Sue Gunzburger said, "If there's anything we can do to avoid meeting that standard by 2025," Broward wants to do it. "It's a very expensive, unfunded mandate that I don't think would make much difference when it comes to the ocean," Gunzburger said. "The most telling fact is that most of the nutrients that go into the sea are not from the wastewater effluent but from storm water discharge."

Although there have been several swimming advisories in Broward for high bacteria levels over the past year, environmental officials inspected the pipes and plants and found no malfunctions. Health officials say the more likely source of contamination was animal waste washed into the water from birds and other wildlife.

Broward Commissioner Kristin Jacobs, who is known as an environmentalist, said the state mandate was not based on sound science and the alternatives have their own environmental issues. "It is not the intent of Broward County to slip one past the people," said Jacobs. "What we're looking for is a science-based solution." But she said she doubts the county will be allowed to keep using the outfall. "There are politicians who used this in their brochure for their next election: 'I shut off the ocean outfall.' They're going to come back and give us some grace to deal with this issue? I'm skeptical."

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (FL)

October 21, 2010

Find the Fat: Why is This Broward Employee Resting in His Truck?

Author: Brittany Wallman

Be assured that some of our readers are looking out for the taxpayers. Mary Graham, a reader of this blog, is one of the readers who are heeding the call to "find the fat" in the Broward County budget. She snapped photos of a county employee she said was "resting" in his vehicle with the engine running, and sent the photos to county officials, and to me. She said she has "observed many municipal vehicles occupied but parked and engines running for A/C at locations around the county. The locations are odd and the times are rarely lunch time. So when I spotted this today about 2:25 pm in a parking lot with the driver 'resting', I thought you may want to know. ... Frankly I am not real pleased to see tax dollars expended in this fashion, unless there is a real good explanation. Please." Suffice to say the employee in this photo got in trouble.

Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** told Graham in an e-mail that "we are in full agreement with you that all of our tax dollars must be spent wisely, and work very hard to make sure our operations in Broward County are at maximum efficiency." Here is Public Works Director **Hutka's** response to resident Mary Graham:

----- Original Message ----- From: **Hutka, Thomas** To: mga-aia@ix.netcom.com Cc: Corwin, Pete; Henry, Bertha; Keechl, Ken; Gunzburger, Suzanne; Wexler, Lois; Lukic, Evan; Wallman, Brittany; Hui, Tony; Ton, Anh Sent: 10/6/2010 2:32:41 PM Subject: RE: job description Please

Ms. Graham:

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention. We are in full agreement with you that all of our tax dollars must be spent wisely, and work very hard to make sure our operations in Broward County are at maximum efficiency.

We researched the situation regarding the employee identified in your photograph. The employee was a member of a three-person crew that was working to pump down the road flooding caused by Tropical Storm Nicole. The crew worked through their normal lunch period at noon, and then took their lunch break late on that day. Two members of the crew took their lunches elsewhere and the third member, seen in your photograph, parked the vacuum truck in a convenience store parking lot on the corner of NW 31 Avenue and Prospect Road. The late lunch break was confirmed by a roving supervisor who was responsible for several work crews deployed that day to alleviate flooding around the County.

The County has written procedures against sleeping in County vehicles and running engines unnecessarily. This employee violated those procedures and will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary action.

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The County has several mechanisms to ensure that employees are working effectively and efficiently, including GPS devices and mileage/gas usage tracking. Many times these methods are effective in ensuring employee productivity. Nevertheless, we work continually to ensure that our employees are properly supervised and managed and that they work on their jobs effectively. We want to thank you again for your assistance in bringing this matter to our attention. We assure you that it will be acted on.

Tom Hutka Public Works Director Broward County

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/the-untold-story-of-browards-other-traffic-cameras-part-ii-6470156>

October 20, 2010

The Untold Story of Broward's Other Traffic Cameras: Part II

Author: Stefan Kamph

You're sitting in a car, waiting for the light to change, when you notice a spindly little white camera peering down at you. Is this a red-light camera? Some sinister plot to spy on drivers? Nope, just a new way to control traffic at Broward's busy intersections. Last week, we covered the basics of what these cameras do. Now we'll take a look inside one of the traffic-signal control boxes, located near the Traffic Management division's headquarters on West Commercial Boulevard. The cameras send a video signal to a control box at each intersection, where a computer detects the positions of cars in the first few spaces of each lane. This affects light timing. For example, if no cars are waiting in the left-turn lane, the green arrow won't come on.

Broward Public Works Director **Tom Hutka** told New Times that in most instances, the video signal never leaves the intersection. But the boxes do have monitor hookups that allow you to see what the camera sees. "You can see that the cameras don't pick up much detail," says Traffic Signals Supervisor Brett Henderson as he flips on a monitor. A few thumbnail-sized outlines of blurry cars appear on the monitor. There's an overlay defining each spot for a waiting vehicle, and the spots light up as cars enter them: Here's the system that collects and processes the video feed, adding the overlay and gathering information about which lanes are full. Every night, the signals send a report to a central mainframe, where engineers look for anomalies like lights that are failing to cycle or are timed wrong. Here are some more fun facts:

Traffic engineers don't call yellow lights "yellow." They call them "amber."

- Do the cameras stay put in a hurricane or tropical storm? Don't bet on it. Crews go out to check on all of them after a big storm.
- East- and west-facing cameras have to be positioned higher up on their poles, so they can be angled down more to avoid the glare of sunrises and sunsets.
- Complaints about light timing may actually be caused by pedestrians smacking the crossing buttons and then crossing early anyway.
- Speaking of those buttons... if they break, the county actually likes to fix them. So they say. Go to Broward's contact page and give it a shot.

Henderson says the county is always getting wrongly blamed for the red-light camera programs, which are approved by municipalities and administered by Arizona-based American Traffic Solutions. ATS is in talks with the county over one aspect of those operations, though. Currently, ATS sensors aren't allowed to interfere with traffic signals, so they use cameras to sense when a red light comes on. The company wants to install an electromagnetic loop around the wire powering the red bulb -- which is maintained by the county. Negotiations are ongoing, according to **Hutka**.

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Thomas J. Hutka
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

<https://www.browardpalmbeach.com/news/the-untold-story-of-browards-other-traffic-cameras-6454775>

October 14, 2010

The Untold Story of Broward's Other Traffic Cameras

Author: Stefan Kamph

So, you've probably heard about the proliferation of red-light cameras around South Florida. You may have seen last month's news that Fort Lauderdale was adopting the program, beginning with installation of the cameras at ten intersections. But, wait... only ten? What about those white poles and sinister-looking cameras with wispy antennas that you see at nearly every intersection around downtown Fort Lauderdale? Some of you, like me, may have been extra-cautious with your right turns around these eyes in the sky, expecting a \$150 ticket for any infraction. Pay no mind, fair citizen. The ubiquitous white cameras are of a whole different breed.

"They're just to see if there are cars in the lane, so the lights can decide when to cycle," says Broward Public Works Director **Tom Hutka**. "With one or two exceptions, the video signal doesn't leave the intersection." More on those "exceptions" in a minute. The cameras replace the old electromagnetic loop system for detecting cars -- you may notice dark lines in geometric patterns covering the end of each lane at an intersection. The video cameras send a feed -- "not detailed enough to recognize faces or license plates," **Hutka** assures us -- to a computer system in a traffic-control box about the size of a refrigerator, located at each intersection. That computer interprets the signal, figures out how many cars are waiting in each lane, and adjusts light timing accordingly. "We're working through a program to replace the electric loop detectors with video detection devices," explains **Hutka**. "We take advantage of [preexisting] road projects to close the lanes and install the cameras."

If there's a red-light ticketing camera waiting for you, you'll know -- those intersections have to be marked with a sign saying the intersection is "photo enforced." They provide real video feeds to real people who can see who you are. These cameras, on the other hand? "There's very little detail, not so much that there's a privacy concern," says **Hutka**. "Also, we don't save the video signal."

A recent pilot project on Commercial Boulevard allowed the video signal to leave the intersections, traveling to a central facility. Crews installed fiber optic cables instead of the usual analog copper wires, enabling the transmission of video for remote monitoring. But **Hutka** insists that nobody's using this capability and that there are no plans to advance it. "There's a handful of intersections that we can watch in our home office, but nobody watches," he says.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel (FL)
September 3, 2010

Drivers See Green with Re-Times Lights. Traffic Engineers Promise to Ease Stop-and-Go Conditions on 21 Major Roads Across Broward

Author: Brittany Wallman and Michael Turnbell

Drivers on Broward Boulevard might have already noticed it: All these green lights! For the first time in years, drivers commuting into or out of downtown Fort Lauderdale on Broward Boulevard can actually make it a mile, or two, or three, or four - or more - without hitting a single red light. The same is true on University Drive in the center of the county, where drivers are hitting more green lights than ever. They're spending less time sitting at the reds. The outcry from angry drivers finally has been heard. Broward County officials just announced that they've re-timed traffic signals on the eastern part of Broward Boulevard and much of University Drive, so drivers traveling the speed limit will hit green light after green light after green light. The maddening stop-and-go that drivers endure all over will be eased by early 2011, county officials promise. Signals on 19 major east-west corridors, plus the entire north-south stretches of U.S. 1 and University Drive in Broward County, will be re-timed. After that, a year's worth of more complicated and expensive synchronization is promised; it would re-time more of the road network, adding north-south roads to finesse what traffic engineers call the "basket weave" of intersecting streets.

"We can't promise all green lights," Broward public works director **Thomas Hutka** said, "but we're reducing the number of times you stop at red lights." **Hutka** was hired last year and made the synchronizing of lights "absolutely a priority." He brought the top traffic engineers into one office - they named themselves the Green Light Strike Force - and they work on re-timing signals every day. A website's been set up, and a phone hotline is ready; both will be used to solicit opinions from the driving public. **Hutka** said the Strike Force set out two months ago to make a noticeable improvement to signal snarl using existing staff and hardware, at no additional cost to the county taxpayers. The team re-timed lights on Broward Boulevard from University Drive east to U.S. 1., and on University Drive, from Oakland Park Boulevard to Griffin Road. With the exception of University Drive and U.S. 1, the team's initial signal timing efforts are focused on east-west roads because north-south commuters have high-speed options via Interstate 95, Florida's Turnpike and the Sawgrass Expressway/Interstate 75. The next complicated step will be timing signals on north-south roads and coordinating them with east-west routes. The work is part of a 15-year, \$85.6 million overhaul of the signal network. Timing traffic signals in a progression for drivers is an industry standard and "one of the most cost-effective ways to improve traffic flows and reduce motorist travel time," county auditor Evan Lukic noted in a 2008 investigation. Drivers pleaded for it. County commissioners promised it. Yet, the auditor's office found, Broward County failed to deliver it, falling far short of "industry best practice." The county devoted insufficient staff to the work and let years pass without revisiting signals on heavily traveled thoroughfares such as Griffin Road. The result of the county's lackluster work: Drivers in Broward County the past decade spent more time at red lights than they should have, their drive times were longer than they needed to be, and they

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

wasted gas, auditors said. Before now, it was nearly impossible to travel east or west on Broward Boulevard without hitting half a dozen or more red lights. Now, drivers can make it through more than 20 green lights in a row. On University Drive, **Hutka** said he hit a "small traffic jam" every morning heading south between Sunrise and Broward boulevards. "In the last month," he said, "I haven't done that at all. That alone took five minutes off my commute." The system isn't perfect. On any given day, traffic accidents, gridlock, trains, emergency vehicles that preempt the lights, or road construction and lane squeezes will screw up the light synching. But it'll still be an improvement on what drivers are used to. Another facet of the fix: The county will improve traffic detection on side streets so drivers on the main roads aren't stopped unnecessarily. "When you're driving on a major street and you see a red light turn in front of you for no apparent reason," **Hutka** said, "or because one or two cars are coming in from the side street, this is what it's all about. This will significantly reduce the number of those occurrences."

Broward County is in the midst of a \$14.5 million project to install video detectors at 700 intersections countywide. When the work is completed in about 3 years, 1,250 intersections in the county will have the new technology. The detectors look like cameras mounted on traffic signal poles, but they don't take pictures or record video. Instead, they detect how many cars are lined up at intersections. The images are analyzed by computers that determine how much green time a traffic signal should provide. Let's say a signal is programmed to give 15 seconds of green time for a left turn. If the left turn lane is empty after five seconds, the detector will turn off the left turn arrow and assign the unused 10 seconds of "green time" to drivers going straight through the intersection. That means the green light will last longer for the majority of drivers. Drivers like Pete Tozzi said traffic signals on "pipsqueak" cross streets hold up traffic on major roads. Heading west on Pines Boulevard at rush hour, Tozzi said Pines drivers routinely get stopped for one or two cars entering Pines from 129th and 136th avenues. But the light stays green even though no more traffic is coming. Signals on Pines are scheduled for re-timing later this year. "One would think those two streets are the main thoroughfare with their prolonged green lights," he said. "I could personally drive around and improve traffic with a little common thinking and light time changes."

On Southwest 10th Street, drivers complain of constant stop-and-go conditions between Federal Highway and the Sawgrass Expressway because of poorly timed traffic signals. "At all times of day or night you get stopped at 90 percent of the traffic signals. It is intolerable," said Joseph Healey, who commutes from Coral Springs to Boca Raton. That busy connector between I-95 and the Sawgrass is scheduled for re-timing later this year. But rush hour drivers still likely will be held up at some red lights, as traffic engineers balance the need to keep traffic flowing on north-south highways that intersect it, like Military Trail, Powerline Road and even the I-95 exit ramps to prevent traffic from backing up onto the interstate. "If you hit just one red light, you can be assured that you will hit them all," said Carol Finkelstein, of Boca Raton. As the county gives new focus to drivers' frustration, **Hutka** said he's considering all options, including what Miami-Dade County does on some major roads like Biscayne Boulevard: putting signals into flashing mode - flashing red and yellow - between midnight and 5 a.m. to allow traffic on the major street to flow without stopping. "It's something we want to study more," **Hutka** said. But if the signal re-timing is a success, he said, that might not be necessary.

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

US Fed News (USA)

September 17, 2009

Broward County Names New Director of Public Works

Author: Judy Sarver

Broward County has issued the following news release:

Thomas J. Hutka has been named the new director of the Public Works Department for Broward County. He assumed his new position on September 4, bringing more than 28 years of municipal and county government experience to Broward County. Prior to joining the County, he was the director of municipal program management with the HNTB Corporation out of their Indianapolis office.

The Broward County Public Works Department includes eight county divisions, including construction management, facilities maintenance, highway and bridge maintenance, highway construction and engineering, seaport engineering and construction, traffic engineering, water and wastewater services, and waste and recycling services. **Hutka** will oversee a budget of almost \$400 million and more than 1,000 employees.

In making the announcement, Bertha Henry, Broward County Administrator, said, "We are extremely pleased that Mr. **Hutka** is joining our staff. His extensive experience in the public works field is impressive. I look forward to his leadership as the director of the Public Works Department."

Prior to joining HNTB Corporation in 2006, **Hutka** was the city manager for Port Huron, Mich.; assistant county manager for Osceola County, Fla.; and associate county administrator for capital programs for Hennepin County-Minneapolis, Minn. He has also led public works, finance and growth management programs in positions in Cleveland, Ohio; Raleigh, North Carolina; and New York City.

Hutka is a highly respected national and international public works subject matter expert. He has addressed professional associations such as the American Public Works Association International, International Council of Shopping Centers, American Water Works Association and National Council for Public-Private Partnerships. His articles have appeared in such professional publications as Public Management, APWA Reporter and Credit Week.

Hutka has a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering from Princeton (N.J.) University and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. For more information please contact: Sarabjit Jagirdar, Email:- htsyndication@hindustantimes.com

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

South Bend Tribune (IN)

October 25, 2005

City a Beacon of Hope for Lighthouse

City officials have received federal approval to take ownership of the Fort Gratiot Lighthouse. The ownership transfer, which was recommended by the National Park Service and approved Friday, comes after about five years of work by officials for the city and Port Huron Museum, which will operate the 176-year-old structure. "The Fort Gratiot Lighthouse is such a significant part of this community's history," Stephen R. Williams, Port Huron Museum director, told the Times Herald for a Saturday story. "And that historic symbol is going to keep standing now and be around for generations to come."

Williams said efforts will include restoring the exterior to how it appeared in the 1930s or '40s. The entire project will cost about \$1 million, and work could start late next year, he said. After advances in technology made them obsolete, the U.S. Coast Guard began transferring ownership of lighthouses to eliminate the cost of maintaining them. In 2000, the federal government passed a law giving cities and nonprofit groups the chance to own the lighthouses if they could show they would restore and preserve the structures.

The lighthouse will be a great addition to Port Huron's museum system, City Manager **Tom Hutka** said. "This is a symbol of the city and its history," he said. "And we think it's going to be an attraction that will help with our economic-development efforts."

Joel Garinger, of St. Clair Shores, Mich., said he comes up to the area about five times a year and makes a point of seeing the lighthouse. "It's nice to see that they're going to preserve it," he said. "I know a lot of people who are really into lighthouses, travel all over the place to see them. This will be something special for this area."

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The Detroit News (MI)

November 16, 2004

**Mich. Gets Terror Fight Technology
But Critics Say Latest Equipment Installed in Port Huron is Ineffective and a Waste of Money**

Author: Frank Donnelly

It would behoove Osama Bin Laden to stay away from this Michigan city when trying to infiltrate the United States. The border town was one of three cities that unfurled the latest in terrorism-fighting technology Monday. But critics have already labeled the \$700 million program, which takes photos and fingerprints of some foreign visitors, a hornswaggle. They say it will be too expensive, too shortsighted and too ineffective. The only people it will impede from crossing the border, critics said, are travelers and business people. "It's slow enough," said Rick Bunin, 56, a Sarnia mechanic who sometimes works on the U.S. side of the border. "It's one more line we need to wait on."

The system will be expanded to the two Detroit border crossings -- the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel -- by the end of the year, possibly as early as Dec. 6, federal officials said. All 165 land border crossings in the United States will have the system in place by the end of 2005, said Kimberly Weissman, of Homeland Security. The nation's 115 airports and 14 seaports have used the program since January. Weissman defended the program, saying the process should be quick and seldom cause delays. That's a concern with Port Huron residents with its well-traveled crossing, the Blue Water Bridge. "We'll continue to evaluate it," she said. "We'll make necessary adjustments to ensure there aren't significant wait times." She said the process should take no more than 15 seconds.

The process, which affects only foreigners who need a visa to enter the U.S., actually began before the visitors reached the Port Huron border Monday. Their first step was to apply for a visa in their home country. Then, when they reached the U.S. border crossing, they inserted their index finger, right then left, into a fingerprinting machine. A digital camera snapped their picture. On the other side of the machine was a border crossing guard who asked the routine questions that all travelers are asked: Where are they going? How long will they be there? Port Huron's first day on the vanguard of the fight against terrorism went off without any major problems, Weissman said. The process for three visitors averaged several minutes apiece. The photo and fingerprint information went into a databank to ensure it matched the information the visitor had given earlier when applying for the visa.

The data also was compared with the FBI's criminal database and with government lists of terrorists. The info was checked against lists of sexual predators. Monday was the first time the so-called United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology program, US-VISIT for short, was used at a land crossing. Besides Port Huron, it also was kicked off at the Mexican crossings at Laredo, Texas and Douglas, Ariz. Federal officials said it was a pilot program geared toward catching mistakes before the system expands to the 50 busiest U.S. crossings by

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the end of the year. While some border town politicians and businesses originally balked at the program, a Port Huron officials sounded a conciliatory note for the maiden voyage. "Anything that helps them identify who people are helps us," said **Thomas Hutka**, city manager of Port Huron. He said federal officials have allayed some city fears about the possible delays that could result from the terrorism protection. With one day under their belt, US-VISIT officials said it was too early to judge the program a success. But they said they would continue tinkering to ameliorate any problems.

Weissman said she wasn't aware of any serious stumbles on the first day in Port Huron. "It's too soon to tell," she said. "Of course we'll continue to evaluate and make any improvements when necessary." The system won't be used for all foreign visitors - just those who need a visa to enter the country. Most Canadians also will be exempt from the program. Critics have called the security program a feel-good measure designed more to placate the terrorism fears of residents than actually catch anyone.

When Congress created the system in the wake of September 11, it had hoped it would track foreign travelers who stayed in the U.S. far past the expiration date of their visas. Several of the foreigners involved in the terrorist act had overstayed their visas. But the current system can't track the departures of foreign visitors and program officials said it would be several years before they can do so.

Another critic, Rep. Jim Turner, D-Texas, also said the system doesn't go far enough. Rather than settle for two fingerprints, it would be better to get all them, like the FBI crime database does, he said. That also would raise the chances of getting matches between the border system and the FBI one, he said. Only two fingerprints would lead to more errors. But federal officials said the 10-fingerprint system would be far more costly, and time-consuming.

The Homeland Security department, which is overseeing the program, spent \$340 million to kick off the service. It has budgeted another \$340 million for 2005.

Border checks

* The U.S. Department of Homeland Security is expanding to border crossings its airport program that fingerprints, photographs and runs checks on many non-U.S. visitors.

* The pilot sites are at Laredo, Texas; Douglas, Ariz.; and Port Huron.

* The program is expected to be used at all 165 U.S. land border crossings, including the tunnel and Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, by the end of 2005. It already is in place at U.S. airports and seaports.

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Herald (MI)

April 26, 2006

Cliff Schrader: City Manager `Had No Choice' But to Resign

Author: Shannon Murphy and Mike Connell

On his radio show this morning, a former Port Huron council member said he'll explain the real reason why City Manager **Tom Hutka** is resigning. "He had no choice," Cliff Schrader said Tuesday. "He no longer has the support of the majority of the council." **Hutka**, who said he's leaving his \$118,000-a-year job for personal reasons, called that nonsense.

"Cliff has never let truth stand in the way of his radio announcements," he said. "This was entirely my decision." He also said rumors of his job being in peril are nothing new. "It's always an issue," **Hutka** said. "Every month for five years, without exception, I've had someone come up and say, 'I've heard rumors. ...'"

Schrader, who was mayor pro tem five years ago when **Hutka** was hired, does a morning radio commentary for WGRT 102.3-FM and writes a column for Blue Water Senior Options, a monthly newspaper. He often focuses on local politics. "They've been negotiating (his resignation) for months," he said of **Hutka** and the council. "Why all this spin? Why hide it? Here's a guy who's making all this money, has this great job with all these big projects going on, and we're supposed to believe he just walks away?" Schrader drew a parallel between **Hutka**'s resignation and the firing of his predecessor, Larry Osborn, in September 2000. "What happened here is not much different than what happened to Larry Osborn," he said. "The mayor sat down and said, 'We have the votes to fire you, but if you resign, we can work this out.' Larry decided to fight it tooth and nail. **Tom** saw the writing on the wall and decided to spare the city another big fight."

Different council members had different reactions to Schrader's analysis. "I've known Cliff for a number of years, and Cliff has always had a conspiracy theory about everything," Mayor Alan Cutcher said. "And I think it's just another one of his theories. There's no truth to this one." B. Mark Neal, the mayor pro tem, indicated Schrader was on target in saying **Hutka** had lost the council's backing. "I think over the last few months, his support has dwindled," Neal said. "It's (a matter of) not getting things done in a timely fashion and a combination of a lot of different things."

A year ago, Neal gave **Hutka** a poor evaluation and wrote: "We need to discuss his future, but I don't know if the votes are there to (fire him)." Asked if he would have voted to fire the city manager, Neal replied, "He and I disagreed on a number of things, and let's just leave it at that." **Hutka** acknowledged he had never been able to win the support of Neal or Councilwoman Sally Jacobs. In 2001, **Hutka** was hired on a 5-1-1 vote with Jacobs opposing him and Neal abstaining. "When I took the job, I thought I could win over the two who voted against me," **Hutka** said. "I was never able to accomplish that." Jacobs confirmed she remained lukewarm on the city manager. "I didn't vote to hire **Tom**. I was the one vote to not hire him," she said. "We

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

have had our differences in the past, and I didn't always give him the best evaluations. But he did start some good projects." Asked if she would have voted to fire him, she replied: "I really don't know how I can answer that. If you take a look at everything, I would not want to go through another Larry Osborn. I don't know if I could go through that again. I think if that was a decision that council had to make, I'd have to really think long and hard on that one."

Kim Prax, a former council member who voted to hire **Hutka** in 2001, said she suspects there's truth to both versions of why the city manager is leaving. "I think there have been some issues between **Tom** and the council," she said. "**Tom** probably wants to move on, and now was probably a good time for him to do that." She gave **Hutka** good marks. "I give **Tom** a lot of credit because he did come in at a very tumultuous time in the city's history, and he worked very hard to build a consensus," she said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thomas J. Hutka
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Herald (MI)
April 25, 2006

**Port Huron City Manager Quits
Hutka to Pursue Other Career Options**

Author: Molly Montag

Port Huron needs a new city manager. The City Council on Monday night unanimously accepted City Manager **Tom Hutka's** resignation request. **Hutka**, city manager since 2001, presented individual council members with his resignation earlier Monday. His last day will be June 30. Mayor Alan Cutcher said he had known for several weeks that **Hutka** was thinking about resigning. He wished him well. "He's been a challenge," Cutcher said. "And I have been a challenge." Saying he was not forced or asked to quit, **Hutka** said he was exploring other career options and plans to focus on his family. He would not say what options he was exploring. "I'm far enough along in discussions that I'm comfortable with a two-months notice," **Hutka** said.

Councilman Jim Fisher feared **Hutka's** resignation would be detrimental to development projects, including several downtown proposals. Among the projects and proposals council members have been discussing in recent months is the possible conversion of the Municipal Office Center into condominiums; the development of a hotel-waterpark-casino; and turning several city-owned parking lots into a mix of business and residential properties. "I have a fear that a minimum, if not a majority, on council would support delaying these projects until they die," Fisher said.

Hutka didn't share that concern. He said development supporters and city staff would continue to move the projects forward. "There are too many people working to see the many projects that have been started, completed," he said.

Richard Frasier, 61, said **Hutka** will be missed. The Bancroft Street resident hoped **Hutka's** replacement would respond as quickly to complaints. "I just hope they (the city) keep up with the blight programs," he said. "It's really made a difference."

Councilman B. Mark Neal, who has given **Hutka** unfavorable performance reviews in the past, would not say if the resignation was good for Port Huron. "**Tom** and I haven't always seen eye to eye, and I wish him well," he said.

Council members and city officials need to start searching for **Hutka's** replacement almost immediately, Councilman David Haynes said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Times Herald (MI)

April 13, 2005

Hutka Gets Mixed Job Reviews**Port Huron Mayor Says Manager Should Be Fired; Others Praise Work**

Author: Ryan Werbeck

It's become a rite of spring in Port Huron's city government: The City Council produces a wildly divergent slate of opinions on how **Tom Hutka** is performing as city manager. This year features Mayor B. Mark Neal, a longtime vocal critic of **Hutka**, wondering aloud if there are enough votes on the council to fire the city manager. The annual performance evaluations were made public Tuesday. **Hutka**, who's paid \$114,000 annually, was hired in 2001 to replace Larry Osborn, who was fired by the council in 2000 during a bitter political struggle within the city government. With written evaluations in place, **Hutka** can meet with council members face to face to discuss his job performance and respond in writing, both options he plans to pursue.

Councilmen Alan Cutcher, Jim Fisher, David Haynes and Mark Steinborn support **Hutka's** performance, while Neal and Councilwomen Sally Jacobs and Kim Prax said improvement is needed. "It's a shame with the staff working so hard and all of our accomplishments that council members Prax, Jacobs and Neal are attacking the integrity and ability of the city manager," **Hutka** said. "We're not going to let fighting and aggressive politics stand in the way of getting good things done for the city."

Most evaluations praised **Hutka** for work dealing with tight city finances and his relationship with the media. Neal wrote that **Hutka** struggles in his job and wonders if the best person is doing the job. "We need to discuss his future," Neal said. "But I don't know if the votes are there to (fire him)." Councilman Jim Fisher was at the other end of the spectrum in his review of **Hutka's** work. "The city manager we have is one of the most honest and honorable men I've come across in my mind," he said. Among Neal's complaints are not being kept informed of city business and e-mail being used as a means of communication from **Hutka** to council members. Under Port Huron's form of city government, the mayor is a largely ceremonial position, and the daily administrative power is concentrated in the hands of the city manager - who is hired by the council.

Communication is a hot topic lately because of the trouble plaguing the county government a few blocks from the Municipal Office Center. The county is embroiled with budget overruns for its new jail and accusations ex-county Administrator Troy Feltman did not inform commissioners about major cost changes with the project. "I'm hearing about things on the street before I'm notified," Neal said. "I just don't want to be part of the same predicament (as the county)." **Hutka** said his form of communication is dictated by the importance of the topic; phone calls and face-to-face discussions are used for bigger issues and e-mail for informational-type items.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Lifelong Port Huron resident Marty Marshall was surprised the job review again was divided. "I think he's doing a good job," he said. "It seems like the city is going in a good direction." Marshall said the city's work to find more activities for people and rehabilitating neighborhoods - both **Hutka** priorities - must continue. Some on the council agree. Steinborn doesn't agree with Neal's assessment **Hutka** isn't performing well. "I don't get the impression he's struggling," Steinborn said. "He inherited a strong staff that's allowed him to address bigger things the council has put on their agenda, like blight."

WHAT THEY SAID CITY MANAGER'S EVALUATION

Port Huron City Council members rated City Manager **Tom Hutka** in seven areas. Here's a sampling of what they said:

ALAN CUTCHER: "**Tom** has continued to be an excellent city manager for Port Huron. He has embraced new ideas and opportunities through the year."

JIM FISHER: "I have always been pleased with **Tom's** communications with council. His personal integrity ensures his following both the spirit and letter of the city charter."

DAVID HAYNES: "The manager has demonstrated good leadership in his involvement and staffs regarding participating in attracting new investment."

SALLY JACOBS: "I am very concerned that after four years many of my original complaints and concerns regarding **Tom's** performance have not been addressed."

MARK NEAL: "In my opinion, Mr. **Hutka** is struggling as city manager. He has lost some respect in the community."

KIM PRAX: "I feel that **Tom** continues to do an exceptional job in the area of revenues. (But) I have a few areas of great concern. While I have always considered my communication with **Tom** to be exceptional, several recent events have led me to believe that the council is not informed of issues in a timely manner."

MARK STEINBORN: "In my opinion, the manager is at least satisfactory in every area. That is already enough to exceed expectations."

A CLOSER LOOK

TOM HUTKA, 47

RESIDENCE: Port Huron.

OCCUPATION: Port Huron city manager since May 2001.

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Princeton University in New Jersey; master's degree in public administration from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

FAMILY: Wife, Ashley; and grown daughter, Stacey.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thomas J. Hutka
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Herald (MI)
July 31, 2002

Hutka Wants to Look Ahead

Author: Amber Hunt

Some might say Port Huron City Manager **Tom Hutka** is stuck in a carnival game of Whack-a-Mole: As past divisiveness among City Council members rears its head, **Hutka** starts whacking away - to no avail. "Most (residents) are frustrated because it looks like the city's going back into conflict," **Hutka** said Tuesday. "I keep telling them we're still focused on the issues." **Hutka** last week wrote a two-page response to a 10-page evaluation that calls the manager "invaluable" and "anal." **Hutka** was hired in May 2001. His first annual review was compiled this month.

The review, a compilation of the seven council members' individual re-views, sparked debate among council members because some accused Mayor B. Mark Neal of encouraging them to write negative reviews of **Hutka**. The composite review is mixed, calling **Hutka** "the best city manager the city has had in years" on one page, then blasting him for being "almost anal about small, petty things" on another.

In his response, **Hutka** said his first 14 months were challenging. "The first year in any management position is always a challenge," he wrote, "but I think as a team, we worked very hard and got a lot accomplished." He disagreed with some of the council members' individual comments, which were anonymous. He wrote that none of the complaints were discussed with him prior to his review. "Furthermore, none of the serious concerns are accompanied with specific examples," he said.

Hutka listed his top priorities as revitalizing the city's neighborhoods, redeveloping the downtown and providing high-quality, low-cost services to residents. He said he'd prefer working on those "important fights" rather than battling "previous conflicts" that seem to be resurfacing.

Resident Loren Richardson, 47, said it seems **Hutka** is caught between trying to please the council and the city employees he oversees. "He doesn't get an 'A' from me, either," he said. "I just want to see some leadership from him." Richardson, who lost a 2001 bid for a council seat, said he'd prefer the city switch to the mayoral form of city government.

Hutka was hired after a nationwide search to replace former City Manager Larry Osborn, who was fired in a 4-3 council vote in September 2000.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Times Herald (MI)

July 23, 2002

Port Huron Council's Manager Critiques Destroyed

Author: Amber Hunt

If three of Port Huron's City Council members organized to write negative reviews of the city manager, residents - and the manager - may never know. Mayor B. Mark Neal said he destroyed the documents that either would prove or lay to rest the allegation. "I was just following what had been done previously," Neal said Monday. "That's just precedent." The Times Herald asked for copies of the seven council members' individual reviews after some members said Neal encouraged them to write negative evaluations of City Manager **Tom Hutka**.

Neal said he couldn't give the documents to the newspaper because they'd been destroyed. City Clerk Pauline Repp, who's been clerk since 1989, agreed Neal was following protocol. Original copies of former City Manager Larry Osborn's reviews also were destroyed by previous mayors, she said. "The thinking is that it isn't important who said what," she said. "It's meant to be an overall evaluation." Each council member was asked in June to fill out an evaluation of **Hutka**. The final review finished this month was a compilation of the individual reviews. The overall review included comments ranging from glowing to critical, with no indication of who said what.

Neal dictated the overall review to Repp. She saw the reviews to more easily transcribe large blocks of text, and said every comment in the individual reviews was included in the 10-page overall review. Neal said after the final review was compiled, he destroyed the seven individual reviews. "What's the purpose of having them?" he asked. "This way, (**Hutka**) doesn't know who's making the comments, so council members can feel comfortable saying things frankly." Council members Kim Prax and Cliff Schrader last week said most council members were contacted by Neal and asked not to "sugarcoat" the evaluations.

An e-mail sent by Neal to Laurie Sample-Wynn and Jim Fisher refers to "grumblings in the community" about **Hutka**. "If you have heard some (grumblings) as well and you concur, please notate those concerns," Neal wrote. The mayor said he simply asked the council to be open and honest. He denied Schrader's suggestion the council's perceived minority - a 4-3 split in which Neal apparently is aligned with Sally Jacobs and Alan Cutcher - hopes to fire **Hutka** if the three gain an ally and control of the council in the next election.

Cutcher and Jacobs also denied the accusation. They said they wrote their reviews without input from Neal. "Actually, (**Hutka**) and I had gone out to lunch to discuss the evaluation after it was done," Jacobs said, adding the lunch lasted more than five hours. "I had some concerns in some areas. We discussed it, and I'm assuming he heard a lot of the comments and will work from there on them."

The overall evaluation rates **Hutka** a 3.8, or satisfactory to very good, on a scale from 0 to 5. In former city manager Osborn's 1998 review, he rated a 4.0, or very good. In 1999, the rating

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

dropped to a 3.7. He was fired the next year after an election caused a shift in the makeup of the council. Previous managers were reviewed informally during budget session. **Hutka** on Monday said he has never seen the council's individual reviews. "I don't know what protocol or procedure was used in the past," he said. "This is my first evaluation." Schrader, who's serving his fourth term, said he assumed the individual reviews were put in the city manager's personnel file. Neal acknowledged he doesn't know why the practice of destroying the documents was adopted in the first place. "Maybe it's something we need to review," he said.

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Times Herald (MI)

July 20, 2002

Schrader: Neal Faction Takes Steps to Oust City Manager

Author: Amber Hunt

At least two Port Huron City Council members have accused Mayor B. Mark Neal of trying to sway the council into giving the city manager a negative employee evaluation. Manager **Tom Hutka** was hired in May 2001. His first review, a compilation of individual evaluations written by the seven council members, was finished this month. **Hutka's** overall evaluation was rated a 3.8, or satisfactory to very good, on a scale from 0 to 5.

While some portions declare **Hutka** "invaluable" and "the best city manager Port Huron has had," harsher criticisms come under the headings "management responsibilities" and "leadership." "The lack of communication with other governmental entities is a concern. The inability to convey to his staff what he wants done, plus the lack of finishing projects or ideas is very evident," the review reads. The review consists of snippets of comments from council members, though it doesn't note which member said what.

Councilman Cliff Schrader, who is serving his fourth two-year term, said past managers have scored much higher than **Hutka**. He believes Neal tried to manipulate the evaluation by contacting council members and warning them not to "sugarcoat" the reviews. "He lobbied everyone except me to do a derogatory evaluation," Schrader said. "Mr. **Hutka's** evaluation, to be quite honest with you, was terrible for a CEO." **Hutka**, reached on vacation Friday, acknowledged the review was mixed. He said he's "not sure what happened behind the scenes" between Neal and the rest of the council. "I'm pleased most of the council members see I'm doing a good job for the city," he said. Neal did not return phone calls seeking comment Friday.

Councilwoman Sally Jacobs, who is considered by some to be in the minority of a 4-3 council divide along with Neal and Councilman Alan Cutcher, said Schrader's accusations are off-base. Neal called her about the review, she said, but only to help her out with what would be her first evaluation of a city manager. "He told me just to be honest about your thoughts and feelings and put them down," she said. Schrader said Neal, Cutcher and Jacobs are paving the way to fire **Hutka** if they gain control of the split council in the next election. Jacobs said that's absurd. "I don't enjoy firing anybody. I don't know if the city could go through something like that again," she said.

City Manager Larry Osborn was fired by a 4-3 vote in September 2000. Councilwoman Kim Prax said she, too, was called by Neal. "I thought it was a strange conversation. It was negative," she said. Neal also sent an e-mail to council members Laurie Sample-Wynn and Jim Fisher asking them to "answer each question sincerely and honestly. "There is a tendency to sugar-coat evaluations, so take your time. I have heard rumblings in the community of some concerns," he wrote. "If you have heard some as well and you concur, please notate those concerns." **Hutka** previously was assistant county manager for Osceola County, Fla.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Grand Rapids Press (MI)

August 4, 2001

Restaurateur Aims to Get Dice Rolling**Tribes Usually Initiate Development of a Gambling Hall. This Time, a Potential Operator Wins Over Port Huron and Woos the Prospective Owners.**

Author: Garrison Wells

Better known for his Mr. Fabulous burgers, local businessman Don Reynolds is putting his money on becoming a Port Huron casino kingpin. The owner of the now-closed Mr. Fables burger chain and the Lakos restaurant in Grand Rapids -- who wants to attach a casino to his Thomas Edison Inn in Port Huron -- has laid out a \$50,000 bet that he can lure an Indian casino to the town of 33,000. So far, the dice are breaking in his favor. In an advisory election he bankrolled in June, Port Huron residents voted 54 percent in favor of his proposal. Talks now are under way with the Bay Mills Indian Community of Brimley, the tribe Reynolds wants to own and operate the proposed 120,000-square-foot casino. The casino would be hooked to his hotel by a walkway.

The tribe already owns the Bay Mills Resort and Casino and Kings Club Casino in Brimley, near Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula. Tribal officials didn't return phone calls. The June vote was non-binding, but gives city officials a read on the electorate's opinion. Proponents said the casino is expected to be an economic windfall for Port Huron and has the backing of city officials. Supporters project the casino will bring in \$100 million a year, with \$5 million to be earmarked for city government and \$3 million for local charities. The casino is expected to provide 1,000 jobs with a \$30 million payroll, generate \$2.5 million in sales of goods and services, and boost tourism, a critical component of the area's economy. "We've worked hard on this," Reynolds said. "We're negotiating right now with the Bay Mills tribe and haven't arrived at anything yet." He declined further comment because of the continuing talks.

But critics are concerned that his tack on getting an Indian casino sets a dangerous precedent. Most Indian casinos have opened in Michigan after a tribe wins federal recognition, then obtains a compact with the state. Tribes then hire consultants or a management firm to operate the casino. Reynold's method has turned the procedure on its head. "It's a bad precedent in this state that now has 17 Indian casinos, whereby businesses can decide that they want to develop an Indian casino, and then set about to profit by finding a tribe that will help them get into the casino business," said casino opponent William McMaster of Birmingham, who is head of Taxpayers United. McMaster also questioned corporate funding for an election.

Port Huron city officials, however, defended the election. "He wanted the casino, so he paid for the election. It's was just logical," city manager **Thomas Hutka** said. The casino, to be built with the same decor as the hotel, would be called the Thomas Edison Casino. For Reynolds, at least part of the payoff would come from filling his hotel, banquet and conference rooms and restaurant. Two floors of the three-story casino would consist of gaming. The third floor is planned as an Indian museum. Still, winning the election only begins what could be a long

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process. Even if the Bay Mills tribe likes the idea, getting federal recognition can take time.. And Gov. John Engler has repeatedly said he will not negotiate any further compacts unless he is asked the Legislature. That puts the Bay Mills tribe in the same position as the Dorr-based Gun Lake Band of Pottawatomi, which wants to build a casino south of Grand Rapids, but has to get a compact with the state before it can move forward.

The difference, however, is that the Thomas Edison casino has the open support of Port Huron officials. "The project has the potential of not only providing direct cash benefits, but of increasing the number of tourists that come to the city," **Hutka** said. "There are great possibilities for spinoff tourism and trade from the casino." The city, he added, "is prepared to help with the development any way we can." **Hutka** added that money crossing the St. Clair River to the Point Edward Charity Casino in Sarnia, Ontario, would be more likely to stay in Port Huron.

To downtown Port Huron business owner Kathy Noetzel, however, it's too early to start celebrating a casino windfall. Some reports, she said, indicate that casino visitors don't spend money outside the gambling hall, while other suggest they spend freely. "You can take it or leave it as far as I'm concerned," she said. "If it comes to town, though, I hope it is successful."

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
January 28, 2001

**Osceola County Central Florida County Commission Change
Top Jobs Change in office Shuffle**

Author: April Hunt

Two of Osceola County's three assistant managers will oversee major divisions of restructured government offices. The third, Larry Lenz, will drop down to office director of information services. Lenz will take a pay cut; exact numbers were not released. John Ford, who will become division director of administrative services, and **Tom Hutka**, who will oversee the public-works division, will have no change in their salary. "Change is not an easy process," said county spokeswoman Twis Hoang, noting that Lenz had requested his new post and has extensive experience in the field. Those moves, and several others, will be formally unveiled at the County Commission meeting Monday, scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m.

County Manager Bob Fernandez is restructuring the office hierarchy in an effort to make government more efficient and more responsive to residents. Commissioners have given him unanimous support in the move. The largest change -- eliminating the three assistant positions and creating an office of deputy manager -- is half-done. More than 35 people applied for the deputy position, none of whom now work for the county. The county has not held any interviews on the job, and it will remain open as the shuffling begins.

Another surprise in the restructuring is a decision by Tim Hemphill, executive director of the convention and visitors bureau, to turn down the newly created division director overseeing community services. That job will remain open, as will another division, overseeing public safety. The fifth division job, head of the growth/management department, will go to Mike Kloehn. He already handles that work as planning director and will receive no pay increase with the new title. Also open is the division director for financial services. Current employees have expressed interest in the job, and the county is also accepting outside resumes. A utilities-office head will be kept open indefinitely, as the county slowly reviews whether it wants to add that to the services it already provides, such as trash pickup.

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Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
December 6, 2000

**Osceola County Central Florida Neighborhood Controversy
BVL Struggles to Find Voice
Buenaventura Lakes Has a Backlog of Unanswered Complaints, and Residents Have
Become Apathetic**

Author: Pamela Mercer

Nine months ago, the Buenaventura Lakes Community Association seemed doomed. Its president, Tony Costanzo, had resigned after complaining that he was unable to work in an environment of apathetic residents, declining membership and unresponsiveness by the Osceola County government. Then, under a cloud of controversy stemming from disputes about election procedures, a new leadership took over. Beulah Farquharson and Cruz Castillo, two community activists, became president and vice president of the association with a promise to transform the group into an effective voice for the people. Today, the association remains a small and struggling group that finds itself revisiting issues that have plagued the community for years but remain unresolved. Apathy runs high, and despite efforts to publicize its events, many there do not even know the group exists.

Although Farquharson and Castillo have worked to increase the group's membership, the number of people present at the association's most recent monthly meeting did not surpass the usual 12 or 13, according to those present. Because an insufficient number of the five-member board of directors was present, there was not a quorum to make any decisions, Castillo said. Since February, Castillo and Farquharson indicate, the group and the county are no closer than they were when Costanzo left. The unincorporated community of more than 20,000 residents still has no government of its own. Neither does it have a high-ranking county representative to tend to its needs. For many, that person used to be Bob De Gori, the former Buenaventura Lakes director whose duties included listening to concerns and complaints by residents and reporting them to the county's management.

After De Gori's resignation last year, the county opted to eliminate the position and instead hire Maria Alvarez as community coordinator. Earlier this year, Alvarez was dismissed and replaced by Lizette Pagan. Pagan's former duties were taken up by others in the county's parks and recreation department. To some in BVL, this served as the latest indication that the county was leaving its largest voting block at the mercy of mid-level officials. "We have no direct person to deal with our problems with the county commissioners," said Alfred J. Switzer, a retiree who has lived in BVL for 19 years. "If we have someone who is employed by the county whose job it is to take our problems to them, he's speaking for 28,000 people."

Thomas Hutka, the assistant county manager, said the county decided to change the way BVL's concerns were dealt with by giving residents direct access to each county office rather than have their concerns centralized through one person. "When Bob De Gori left his position we were able to actually enhance the service that we have at BVL by dividing up his responsibilities and

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

having those responsibilities shared among several people who are with the parks department," said Osceola County spokeswoman Twis Hoang. Farquharson has been one of the most outspoken opponents of the new system, saying that it has made the county less effective in handling residents' concerns. "I get voice mail 24/7 with complaints about BVL such as zoning complaints and complaints that happen in people's neighborhoods," she said. "I call the county, same old joke, and nothing gets done."

Farquharson said she had recorded many of the complaints in a log book and had designed a complaint form for residents to fill out. She declined a request to review those records saying she feared that the county would dispute them. Switzer remembers how it used to be when he arrived in 1981. In terms of services, he said, "we're worse off now." County officials have defended this approach and argued that some residents in BVL may have overestimated De Gori's powers by characterizing him as a go-between for the government and the people.

Yet according to the county's own personnel records, De Gori's job description included acting as "a liaison between the residents of BVL . . . and the county manager's office." At \$51,095, De Gori's salary was more than \$20,000 higher than that of Alvarez or that of Pagan. Paul Owen, a recently elected county commissioner whose district includes BVL, said he plans to address long-standing problems facing BVL and other communities in his district. He met with residents from his district this week. County code enforcement officials say they get more complaints from BVL than anywhere else, usually answering between six and 10 telephone calls a day. But officials said they had no written records of the calls.

Walter Krujaick, the county's chief code enforcement officer said statutory provisions limit his power to enforce the codes. "People have rights, and I can't violate people's rights," he added. "There's a due process by law that's granted to the people." For some in BVL, however, such explanations echo comments they've heard for years. "BVL should be separate or should be part of Kissimmee," said William Franz, one of the residents who attended the community association's meeting and plans to join the group. "But not one or the other. Right now we have no representation."

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The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
November 11, 2000

Central Florida Osceola County Neighborhood Talk**Poinciana Envisions Future****About 300 People Met to Share Their Hopes and Fears and of What Their Community Will be Like in 20 Years**

Author: Pamela Mercer

Think of this community 20 years from now. What do you see? One group of Poinciana residents pondered the question Thursday night during a meeting that drew about 300 members of the nation's second largest master-planned community in the first attempt to devise a roadmap for the future. What they saw were trees, wide spaces and pedestrian-friendly roads.

They saw "the beautiful Florida sun smiling down on a peaceful, quiet community with plenty of vegetation," **Tom Hutka**, an assistant county manager of Osceola County, told the gathering. "The quality of the community is surrounded by trees and recreational facilities."

Others had a dramatically different view. As she held up a sketch on a large piece of paper that she and others used to present their vision, Barbara Erskine, who lives on Darlington Street, spoke of a convention center, a hotel, car dealerships and an auto-repair shop. "We see Poinciana growing and growing," she told the group. And then there were those who envisioned this community of 20,000 suffering through the growing pains of many large, dense suburban areas. Their drawings satirized what could happen.

Mickey Siegel, 72, of Hunter Circle, showed a woman flying from her house to Poinciana's very own Wal-Mart Supercenter with a Buck Rogers back pack. Penny Grace had her own tongue-in-cheek version of sprawl, depicting a busy, urbanized Poinciana "with Big Brother watching, police with traffic lights. I see youth not motivated. I see a YMCA there; there's adults in there, not youth. On one corner of the drawing, she depicted a "fat cat." These visions were shared during a session sponsored by the Kissimmee/Osceola County Chamber of Commerce's Poinciana Area Council at Deerwood Elementary School.

The gathering was led by facilitators from Community Vision, a group with a mission to make Osceola a better place to live. What emerged were almost as many visions as there were ethnic groups and ages gathered in the school's cafeteria. Poinciana, an area of more than 20,000 residents that has the potential to grow to 250,000, has grown slowly through the years. It is changing from an isolated haven of peace and quiet to a suburb whose increasingly younger and more active population is demanding the services of a city in a country setting.

This paradox came to light when facilitators asked groups of residents to write down a list of Poinciana's strengths, challenges and opportunities. What emerged was a group torn by its desire for peace and quiet and the need for amenities that might threaten such a way of life. Many agreed that Poinciana's sense of community, its diversity and its peacefulness were the traits that lured them there in the first place. Yet they expressed a desire for more gas stations, large

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department stores and easy access to Interstate 4. The three-hour session was the first of its kind in Poinciana -- a chance for hundreds of residents to make suggestions for improving life and looking for ways to bring about those changes by themselves. Armed with these suggestions, the residents will break up into committees and address issues separately. Then, under the guidance of Community Vision, they will go about making their dreams come true. Some decisions involve spending millions of dollars. Others may warrant intervention by the county and the consent of the developer. "We will help them focus, but it's up to the people of Poinciana to make this happen," said Mike Horner, the president of the Chamber of Commerce. "Because not everything is free."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

April 7, 2000

The County is Looking for a Replacement – and Considering Nontraditional Candidates – for Manager Rob Magnaghi

Author: Tyler Gray

Osceola County Commissioners talked this week about how and when they would seek interim and full-time replacements for Osceola County Manager Rob Magnaghi.

Magnaghi resigned, effective May 2, but he reiterated this week his willingness to help continue several large projects, including a new courthouse campus, an agricultural center and a county convention center. "Some of them are 20- or 25-year decisions for this county," Magnaghi said. Meanwhile, commissioners will look for a professional with an education in public administration or comparable experience to replace Magnaghi, who made \$100,800 a year. Some said they wanted to be free to pick from business people without government experience or assistant county managers already in Osceola. "I don't want this board to be trapped into only hiring people or to be reviewing people who have only been in city or county government," Commission Chairman Ken Smith said.

Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka** was mentioned as a potential replacement, as were former Sprint executive and Economic Development Commission of Mid-Florida president Darrell Kelley and former Volusia County managers Tom Kelly and Larry Arrington. Arrington is not related to Osceola County Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington. "In the interim, it would be best if we tried to find someone from the outside to come in," Mary Jane Arrington said. Assistant county managers would then be free to pursue the permanent manager post without appearing to have an unfair advantage because of the interim-manager position, she said. She also recommended speaking with Leigh Root, assistant executive director for the Florida Counties Foundation. Root said she does not keep resumes but is able to help link up managers who are between jobs with counties who need interim administrators. The commission approved an advertisement for local and national publications. The target date for interviews is June 15. Finding an interim replacement will be the first priority, commissioners said. "I think we need to be thinking quickly in terms of getting someone to fill in," Smith said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
January 30, 2000

Column: Osceola 2000 Forecast
A Look Ahead
Buenaventura Lakes Takes New Direction
Author: Pamela Mercer

The new community coordinator for Buenaventura Lakes has to change people's opinions and overcome community apathy. Maria Alvarez, a social worker from Puerto Rico, vows to bring together children and families and said she would organize sports and social gatherings aimed at building unity within this culturally diverse community. "I'm committed to providing good services for the community," she said. "I'll be here for you, and I'll be hearing what you say." Her arrival signals a ray of hope to many here that the county may be making a commitment to its largest voting bloc. More than 20,000 people live in Buenaventura Lakes. "The county has never really taken BVL into consideration," said the Rev. Vidal Martinez, the pastor at St. Catherine's of Sienna Church, whose congregation includes many Hispanics. "[Alvarez] should be instrumental in seeing how we can work together."

During a recent BVL Community Association meeting, Tony Constanza, the group's president, told a small gathering of residents that he hoped Alvarez's presence would reawaken their interest in the community. Alvarez, 42, has a master's degree in social work from the Interamerican University in Puerto Rico. Previously, she worked at the Department of Children & Families and the Education Department in Puerto Rico. She moved to the Lakeside area 31/2 years ago and was appointed to her current post last month. She will earn about \$30,000 a year. Many say that as the community's main organizer, she faces an uphill battle to muster participation. County officials say their lack of support for recreational activities in BVL was partly because the county was engaged in financing and maintaining buildings and facilities.

Tom Hutka, an assistant county manager, said the decision to create Alvarez's position was part of a restructuring effort involving areas of the county bureaucracy that oversees BVL. In other changes, the county has transferred functions such as the maintenance of parks and facilities back to its own corresponding departments. "We want to turn the community center in BVL into a place where we can have our own events," **Hutka** said. "We want to be the instigators and implementers" of events. Most of BVL's upkeep is paid for by revenue from its Municipal Service Benefit Unit fees, a type of fixed tax charged to each BVL house for maintenance projects in the community. It is roughly equivalent to the assessment fees paid by Poinciana residents. A BVL homeowner currently pays \$37.65 per year. Overall, the county raises about \$300,000 annually from the fees, **Hutka** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

January 26, 2000

Garbage Landfill Cost Controversy**Trash is Creating a Costly Dilemma****If a Cheaper Replacement for the Southport Landfill Can't be Found, Trash Pickup Fees are Bound to Go Up**

Author: Tyler Gray

By 2007, money stored away for covering trash pickup and disposal in Osceola County will run out, leaders predicted this week. Without a trash fee increase or a money-saving alternative to the Southport Landfill, the cost of trash disposal will jump with inflation and population. The cost will lead to more than a million-dollar shortfall in the budget, leaders said. The good news is that the rates are safe for seven years. "If we find a replacement to Southport that's more cost-effective," said assistant county manager **Tom Hutka**, "we can go for many more years without touching rates." Without a more efficient way to get rid of the garbage county residents bring to the curb twice a week, commissioners will have to consider raising rates in the universal waste program, which started last October and serves most residents. "It's the position we're in," **Hutka** said. "We have to pay the bills."

The pressure is on. By court order, Southport must close by 2005. It is likely to fill up before then, said solid waste director Lenny Marion. The county needs an alternative - something to stretch the \$11.50 trash fee paid by almost every household. Finding the alternative will be a tricky task under a tight time line. Officials are about to open the floodgates. They'll invite companies to pitch trash incinerators, landfills and contract agreements with existing operations. Trash could be shipped to Okeechobee, Lake or Brevard counties. It could be burned or buried within the county limits. Leaders agreed this week to negotiate with the intent of making a decision by summer. Residents will live with their decision for decades.

Commissioners at a special meeting Monday said they wanted to nail down exactly what they wanted before asking companies to negotiate. "Prior planning up front will save you a lot in the rear end of this thing," said Commissioner Ken Shipley. Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington told purchasing manager Rey Palma that his time line for selecting a partner to built a landfill, an incinerator or another type of facility was a bit too ambitious. Palma had suggested soliciting trash company negotiations as early as Feb. 8. "I think you need to give yourself a little more time," Arrington said. She also said she would support a transfer station, regardless of the method of disposal the county chooses. Other commissioners questioned the need for a transfer station if the commission decides to dispose of trash within county limits, but all agreed to study the issue. A transfer station would cost about \$5 million, officials have said. Monday's meeting ended with a solution in motion. Commissioners suggested assembling a negotiating committee that would focus on choosing a trash company for Osceola's future. Palma agreed to return with a lengthier time line. "There are a lot of dollars here," Marion said, "and we need to make sure we make the right choice."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

June 27, 1999

Officials will Give Trash Plant Sniff Test**A High-Tech Incinerator, Along with Several Other Options, is Being Considered to Replace a Landfill That will Close Soon**

Author: Chris Cobbs

Osceola officials are flying to Minnesota, not to see snow melt, but to watch trash burn. They will study the operation of a high-tech incinerator to see if it makes sense to build a similar plant here. The Alexandria, Minn., facility also must pass an important sensory test. "As we drive up, we'll roll down our windows and see how it smells," said Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka**. "We want to make sure it's a good neighbor for people living near it." If the nose says "no," then **Hutka**, Solid Waste Director Lenny Marion and other members of the party likely will return home with a negative recommendation. Until then, a similar trash-burning facility is one of several options being considered by local officials.

The County Commission said it wants to have a long-range plan for Osceola's solid-waste disposal by the end of 1999. That's because the county's Southport landfill may close as soon as 2003. As the county presses forward with plans for universal track pickup, a plan where all county residents will pay an equal fee to have trash and recycling material picked up curbside, it must decide what to do with the trash it collects. It could go to a transfer station, a sort of central holding area. Then it would be trucked to a permanent disposal site. It will be up to commissioners to decide the most economical long-term site for dumping, Marion said. One possibility is a huge landfill in Okeechobee County. Another is a proposed landfill near Holopaw.

If neither alternative works out, the board could send the trash to another site in Florida or possibly South Georgia. Still another alternative: Osceola's trash could be dumped in a new incinerator and sent up in smoke. That's where the trip to Minnesota fits into the planning picture. Unlike an incinerator in nearby Lake County, the Minnesota plant uses new technology, with no moving parts in areas where trash is burned, officials said. It's cheaper to build and operate than older-style facilities, officials said. "We can be economically competitive to a landfill, with fewer emissions and less groundwater contamination," said Ron Barmore, an official with the group that owns the Minnesota plant and proposes to build one here. The cost of the facility would be between \$32 million and \$35 million, he said. It would take six months to develop plans, a year for permitting and another 18 months to build.

Tipping fees likely would be in the range of \$42 to \$49, which is higher than the county wants, **Hutka** said. Current tipping fees at Southport are \$38, and the county hopes that even with inflation and the cost of building a new disposal plant, the cost won't rise past the low \$40 range, **Hutka** said. To get rid of trash via the Lake County incinerator would cost at least \$52 per ton, while it could be taken to a landfill at Okeechobee for about \$40 per ton, **Hutka** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The permitting process for the new, no-moving-parts technology could be lengthy because of concerns about air quality, Marion said. "You would be the new kids on the block," he told the County Commission. "This would be new technology in Florida." The county also needs to determine if it would need to build and operate a transfer station if it decides to use the incinerator option for disposal. A transfer station, which would cost about \$5 million, would serve as a collecting point. Trucks would haul trash to the centrally located transfer station, where a group of larger trucks would take it to its final destination.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)
January 24, 1999

Courts to Stand for Past, Future

Author: Chris Cobbs

The best of past and present will help make up the new county courthouse complex. The creaky hardwood floors, tall windows and high ceilings of the third-floor courtroom at the Osceola County Courthouse are stately reminders of the 19th century. The new \$40.3 million courthouse that will soon begin to rise nearby will pay homage to the past, but also will feature modern touches, such as technology allowing witnesses to give testimony from across the country through videoconferencing. On the outside, the new building will look a lot like the old one, with the same red brick and a bell tower topped by a cupola. But the similarities end with the exterior touches, because the new courthouse will be designed with the aid of computers, every square inch catering to the needs of a fast-growing county. The new building will be home to, among others, court administration, judges, clerk of court and public defender employees.

Construction of the new complex is beginning, along with an expanded parking area. If there are no glitches, the building will open late in 2000, officials said. "We will have 12 courtrooms when we open and space for three more," said David Peach, capital projects manager for the county and construction manager for the courthouse. "Ultimately we could have 24 courtrooms in use by the year 2017. And we are trying to make it all as user-friendly as we can, taking into consideration the likes and dislikes of the people who will use it." The courthouse complex will include a six-story central office structure with a three-story wing on the west side.

In the future, a three-story wing could be built on the east, allowing for growth and adding symmetry to the building, Assistant County Manager **Tom Hutka** said. About 15,000 square feet - the equivalent of a couple of good-sized mansions - will be unfinished space, Peach said. The vacant space can be used for future offices or courtrooms. No estimate of the cost of finishing the empty space was available. "It is more cost-efficient to provide unfinished building space than to come back and put new additions on a building," **Hutka** said. "We are planning the building so courtrooms can be adjacent and other agencies will have space on the same floors. We will also have the unfinished space allowing for efficient expansion."

County Commissioner Mary Jane Arrington, who has been meeting regularly with judges, architects and others to plan the building, said the final proposals specified about 40,000 square feet more than discussed. "We realized we needed a little more space than we had been talking about," she said. "The larger building we have come up with gives us a comfort level for another decade. I think we will be in good shape through the year 2007." The courthouse project also takes in new parking, renovation of the administration building and restoration of the old courthouse. The county also is fixing up office space nearby at the site of the old Beaumont School.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Orlando Sentinel (FL)

June 28, 1997

Osceola Suspends Officials for Inappropriate Activities

Dateline: Kissimmee

Two zoning inspectors in the Osceola County zoning and code enforcement office were disciplined this week for inappropriate activities during work hours. Don Stewart was suspended without pay pending termination after being cited several times in the past year for leaving his work area without permission, insubordination and deficiencies in performance.

Norman Fout was suspended for five days and placed on special probation for misuse of county time, inefficiency and insubordination. Fout was accused of making "frequent unauthorized visits to your home, to restaurants, shops or stores," according to records.

"We are working hard to ensure that all county employees are putting in a full day's work and earning their pay," said **Tom Hutka**, assistant county manager.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Plain Dealer (OH)

August 23, 1995

Council to Try to Determine Who Authorized Overruns

Author: Robert J. Vickers

City Council hopes to find out who authorized \$2 million in cost overruns on the repaving of Prospect Ave. and to approve a lakefront maintenance cost-sharing plan when it meets today for its last monthly summer meeting. "It's fairly routine," Council President Jay Westbrook said of the daylong, meeting-of-the-whole session. "We try to keep the two summer sessions to the basics." On the table before regular meetings resume Sept. 11 will be further inquiries into who in Mayor Michael R. White's administration approved overruns for the street repaving and replacement of curbs and sidewalks on Prospect Ave. "Our big question all along has been, 'How did they occur and who authorized the overruns?'" Westbrook said. "If we can get an answer to that, we can move to settle the bill and get the contractors paid."

Rick Werner, executive assistant to the mayor, said the administration has told the council that former commissioner for engineering and construction **Tom Hutka** authorized the overruns and that the administration is eager to pay its outstanding bills. As a result of the overruns, the council passed legislation forcing the administration to report all city projects to the council that go over budget by 5 percent or more. A related project that Westbrook said the council will discuss with the administration is the Humphries Park and Service Center in Collinwood. Construction on the project has not begun, although it was approved as part of a 1994 bond issue. "We authorized Prospect and Humphries," Westbrook said. "In Prospect we get the work and the overruns and the other one we get no work at all. We want to know why there can be authorized overruns in one and no work begun in the other."

Council also will push to pass legislation so that the cost of upkeep and maintenance of public areas around lakefront enterprises - such as the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum and the Great Lakes Science Museum - is shared with the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority. "It's really a way to cushion the cost to the city and create more participation by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the science museum and the Mather Maritime Museum," Westbrook said. "We want to see it in place before the opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame." The rock hall opens Labor Day weekend. The council is expected to approve legislation authorizing the administration to apply for and accept grants from the Regional CBTransit Authority and the Public Square Preservation and Maintenance Committee for the rehabilitation of Public Square. Westbrook said the council will probably hold off until September to take a closer look at what several council members believe are shortcomings in the Cleveland Public Power system. Last week's heat wave caused neighborhood wide power failures and led to White declaring a four-day heat emergency. "We're going to deal with that in much greater detail when we resume the regular session in September," he said. The council is also interested in learning what the reallocation of city services during the heat emergency cost, Westbrook said. "We've made an inquiry on that, and I don't think there's been an accounting on that," he said. "It's a question we've raised, but we won't expect it answered by Wednesday."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Plain Dealer, The (OH)

August 22, 1994

On Certain City Byways, Residents Do Own the Road ‘It’s A Lot of Hard Work, But You Get to Know Your Neighbors ... and People Watch Out for Each Other’

Author: Anjetta McQueen

From Lake Shore Blvd., four streets run to a small, grassy hill that slopes down into Lake Erie. They spread no wider than single cars. These streets, nestled in the northern edge of the city's Collinwood neighborhood, are framed by neat, cottagelike houses with children playing and adults strolling out front. At one of them, Meg Mills watches her husband, Nigel, shovel dirt onto stones that are the foundation of his street's new sidewalk. This is the price the Mills and about 80 households pay for streets that are considered theirs. "It's a lot of hard work," said Meg Mills, who grew up on Dalwood Dr. and now lives in the house on that street her grandfather owned. "But you get to know your neighbors really well, and people watch out for each other. It's like having a block group set up automatically." Dalwood, Bonniewood, Groveland Club and Overlook Park drives are designated as private - non-dedicated, the city calls them - which gives residents limited city services and greater power. The residents, paying the same tax rate as everyone else, get fire, police and trash services, but they must maintain their own streets, footing the bills for streetlights, paving and snow removal, among other things. But no one is allowed on the streets unless invited. And these streets boast one of the best lakefront views in Cleveland.

Some of the signs bolted on the trees and telephone poles at the street entrances off Lakeshore Blvd. make the point abundantly clear: "No Trespassing" warns one sign with red letters. "Private Drive" says another. The word "private" even appears under Dalwood's black and white street sign. And on Groveland Club, four signs are tacked to one tree. "It's not like there are armed sentries," said Councilman Michael Polensek, whose Ward 11 includes the private drives. "They're the ones who keep the grass cut, the trash cleared. They are the ones who pay the liability insurance. Because of that, they are entitled to a say in who comes in. "We're not talking about something that was put up yesterday," adds Polensek, who over the years has helped residents with minor trespassing issues such as teen-agers wanting to party by the lake.

The enclave goes back to the 19th century, when Collinwood was a separate village. Some of the streets in that village, which was annexed by Cleveland in 1910, were never built to conform with Cleveland city codes, so they remained undedicated. The area is predominantly white, with a few black families. The modest houses tend to be passed from one family to the next. At least one home has gone through five generations. Many of the deeds date to the 1920s and stipulate membership in clubs that operate much like a cross between a city block club and a condominium homeowners association.

Tom Hutka, engineering and construction commissioner in the city's Public Service Department, said streets such as the four in Collinwood are "fairly unusual." The department also has records of some public streets it has vacated, or relinquished, to private ownership. But for

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

the most part, the city doesn't have a complete count of private streets, he said. **Hutka** said he wouldn't even hazard a guess as to how many private streets are out there. Most of the private streets the department is aware of are little more than private driveways in housing subdivisions.

"Sometimes people come to us and say, 'We want you to take the street over.' But that depends on whether it was built to city standards or whether it serves the public interest. That's decided on a case-by-case basis," **Hutka** said. "In many cases, the streets were not built to city standards. The city does not accept a street just because somebody wants to donate it."

Meg Mills said there had been talk over the years of asking the city to take Dalwood and its neighboring streets back, particularly from older and lower-income residents who found street maintenance too costly. But there is less talk about it these days, she said. Polensek said that such an action, which must be approved by the City Council, would be highly unlikely, because the short, narrow streets do not meet city construction codes. "You would have to tear down half the houses," Polensek said. "We all know that's not going to happen."

Christine Story likes her street just the way it is. For the former Glenville neighborhood resident, this private swatch has given her something she's always wanted: a safe and close-knit Cleveland neighborhood. "This is it," said Story, 37, who moved onto Bonniewood with her husband, Carlton, and five children nine years ago. "It was the easiest move I've ever had. I grew up here, so I have had the opportunity to live all over Cleveland. Here, people come to the door and offer you cookies. You can go down the street and people will wave. "Some might ask you what you are doing there," she said. "Even so, they would wave at you first. How many places can you go in the city and see that?" Story, like Meg Mills, doesn't want anyone to think she's a snob on a country estate. In fact, she says, she and her neighbors recognize the greater need of a community that has been historically torn by racial and economic divisions.

That is the feeling behind their work in the Collinwood H.O.P.E. (Help Our Playground Exist) project, a plan to build a playground in nearby Euclid Beach Lakefront State Park. Mills said the playground project is important for more than just the children: "This is good for some of the new people. We're trying to get them involved, give them a little ownership in the neighborhood. "This area's been on the edge," Mills said. "We're fighting crack dealers, fighting litter. ... We might not be able to change things south of the boulevard. But we can spend four hours a Saturday hammering a nail, and that might help somebody find something inside themselves."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Plain Dealer (OH)

August 24, 1992

Money Poured into City Streets

Author: Pauline Thoma

Cleveland officials are spreading nearly \$76 million over the city's deteriorated streets and bridges. Having scooped up available dollars from every imaginable source, Service Director William M. Denihan is scrambling to transform that cash into concrete and steel. Denihan, who was hired by Mayor Michael R. White in November 1990, and his staff, which now includes the new commissioner of engineering and construction, **Thomas J. Hutka**, have developed an ambitious plan to repair the city's aging and crumbling infrastructure. They are concentrating this year on the transportation system in neighborhoods that for years have had little attention. To do that, they are using Cleveland's general obligation bonds and income taxes to attract far larger sums from county, state and federal sources, including Urban Development Action Grants and Housing and Urban Development grants.

That combination of money will pay for 39 projects, including improvements just completed, under construction or to be started before the end of 1992. The jobs include bridge replacements or renovations and street resurfacing from downtown to the industrial Flats and the far reaches of the city. The projects' costs total \$75.9 million. Of that amount, Cleveland is paying just \$14.2 million. Results of the endeavor already can be seen. One recently finished project is the new parking lot at the East Side Market, at E. 105th St. and St. Clair Ave., a job done with \$260,000 in federal grants and \$130,000 from the city. There was also the \$2 million resurfacing of West Blvd. completed with a combination of city bond issues and state Issue 2 funding, derived from voter-approved bond issues. Denihan said 154 Cleveland streets were resurfaced in 1991, and he hopes to complete another 160 before the year is over. But he deplores the red tape that prevents quick starts for many projects. "If we had to wait and go through the long process with the state and the feds on every project, people would be killing us because we're not getting things fixed," he said. "If it wasn't for help from Issue 2 and (Cuyahoga County Engineer) Tom Neff, we'd be in big trouble."

The projects, their locations, their total cost, Cleveland's contribution and their completion dates are:

1. PURITAS RD., reconstruction of hillside and roadway from Rocky River Valley to Grayton Rd.; \$1.8 million total; \$273,000 from Cleveland; completion November 1992.
2. W. 150th ST., resurfacing from Brookpark Rd. to Puritas Rd.; \$200,000 total; \$40,000 from Cleveland; October 1992.
3. W. 130th ST., replace Conrail bridge, lower and resurface the road beneath it, upgrade drainage; \$4.6 million; \$920,000; November 1993.
4. WARREN RD., rebuild from Lorain Ave. to Lakewood boundary line, \$1.6 million; \$510,000; September 1992.
5. WEST BLVD., rebuild from Jasper Ave. to Cliff Dr.; \$2 million; \$734,000; completed.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thomas J. Hutka***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

6. W. 79th ST., demolish footbridge over RTA and railroad tracks and do not replace; \$190,000 from Cleveland only; October 1992.
7. W. 53d ST., rebuild bridge over Train Ave. and Conrail tracks; \$3.5 million; \$700,000; June 1993.
8. STORER AVE., rebuild between W. 65th St. and Fulton Rd.; \$1.7 million; \$425,000; December 1992.
9. FULTON RD., install safety netting on bridge over the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo until major renovation can be done; \$200,000 from Cleveland only; December 1992.
10. W. SCHAAF RD., resurface from Broadview Rd. to Brooklyn Heights boundary line; \$530,000; \$106,000; October 1992.
11. JENNINGS RD., reconstruct retaining wall on hill between Bern Ave. and Bradley Rd.; \$170,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
12. BRADLEY RD., from Jennings Rd. to Brooklyn Heights boundary line; \$500,000; \$250,000; December 1992.
13. W. 41st ST., resurface from Fulton Rd. to Lorain Ave.; \$1.3 million; \$260,000; November 1992.
14. W. 25th ST., rebuild bridge over RTA tracks; \$2.4 million; no cost to Cleveland; September 1993.
15. WASHINGTON AVE., rebuild bridge over abandoned Conrail tracks; \$520,000; \$174,000; completed.
16. CARTER RD., rebuild vertical lift bridge over the Cuyahoga River; \$14.8 million; \$2.9 million; November 1992.
17. EAGLE AVE., rehabilitate ramp and vertical lift bridge over the Cuyahoga River; \$6 million; \$1.2 million; October 1992.
18. ROCKWELL AVE., resurface from Public Square to E. 9th St.; \$83,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
19. E. 9th ST., resurface from Erieside Ave. to Broadway; \$1 million; \$256,000; December 1992.
20. CHESTER AVE., new sidewalks between E. 12th and E. 13th Sts.; \$75,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
21. JEFFERSON BRIDGE, rehabilitation over Norfolk & Western Railway tracks; \$220,000 from Cleveland only; May 1993.
22. INDEPENDENCE RD., reconstruct from Bading Rd. to Broadway; \$2.84 million; \$710,000; December 1992.
23. E. 71st ST., resurface from Grant Ave. to Broadway; \$670,000; \$134,000; November 1992.
24. UNION AVE., rebuild from Kinsman Rd. to Broadway; \$3.1 million; \$780,000; June 1993.
25. OUTHWAITE AVE., rebuild from E. 55th St. to E. 61st St.; \$120,000 from Cleveland only; completed.
26. E. 131st ST., resurface from Union Ave. to Garfield Heights boundary; \$730,000; \$146,000; September 1992.
27. MILES AVE., resurface from Broadway to Bedford boundary line; \$2.53 million; \$76,000; September 1992.
28. LEE RD., rebuild from Miles to Shaker Heights boundary line; \$1.26 million; \$182,000; June 1993.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thomas J. Hutka

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

29. WADE PARK AVE., rebuild from E. 65th St. to E. 118th St.; \$2.4 million; \$863,400; completed.
 30. EAST SIDE MARKET, new parking lot; \$390,000; \$130,000; completed.
 31. LAKE SHORE BLVD., resurface through Cleveland between Bratenahl and Euclid boundary lines; \$800,000; \$24,000; November 1992.
 32. IVANHOE RD., resurface from St. Clair Ave. to Hillbrook Rd.; \$290,000; \$58,000; August 1992.
 33. E. 185th ST., from I-90 to Euclid General Hospital; \$580,000; \$116,000; August 1992.
 34. E. 55th ST., rebuild deck and replace beams of bridge over the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad tracks; \$840,000; \$168,000; December 1992.
 35. JENNINGS RD., erosion control at bridge over Big Creek; \$100,000; no cost to Cleveland; December 1992.
 36. KINSMAN RD., reconstruction of bridge over Norfolk & Western and RTA tracks; \$3.17 million; \$317,000; completed.
 37. LORAIN AVE., reconstruction of bridge over Norfolk & Western and RTA tracks; \$2.87 million; \$287,500; completed.
 38. E. 116th ST., reconstruction of bridge over RTA tracks; \$1.5 million; no cost to Cleveland; July 1993.
 39. EAST MEMORIAL SHOREWAY, reconstruction and safety upgrading from the east end of the Main Avenue Bridge to I-90 at the Inner Belt; \$8.16 million; \$333,000; July 1993.
-

Prepared by: Amanda Dillabough and Cara Slade
Colin Baenziger & Associates

COLIN BAENZIGER & ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 15

Ramon Trias

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Resume

RAMON TRIAS
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Miami, FL 33173
Ramontrias@aol.com

POSITION

City Manager, City of Lake Worth Beach

QUALIFICATIONS

- Principal author of 1992 Redevelopment Plan for Downtown Lake Worth, which resulted in reconstruction of Lake and Lucerne Avenues
- 23 years of public sector experience in Public Administration in Florida
- 7 years of private experience in Planning, Architecture and Preservation as principal of own firm
- Since 1990, staffed and organized 85 Urban Design Charrettes, in 16 states and internationally
- 10 years as part-time adjunct professor of History, Theory and Design of Architecture
- 20 years of civic service, including chairman of Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, vice chairman of St. Lucie County Planning Board and trustee of Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
- Member of the American Institute of Certified Planners; founding member of the Congress for the New Urbanism, signer of the CNU charter and CNU-A accredited; registered architect, Florida, AR94425 and NCARB 67353; LEED-AP Accredited Professional
- PhD in Public Affairs, (Policy and Administration)

EXPERIENCE

TOWN PLANNING AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

2012 - Present **Assistant Director of Development Services for Planning and Zoning**
Director of Planning and Zoning
Coral Gables, Florida

Reorganized planning and zoning functions of City as a single division. Improved review times and customer service. Coordinated and chaired Development Review Committee and established high standards and effective processes for project review. Enhanced

Section 15

aesthetic review process for Board of Architects. Developed reference materials on Mediterranean Architecture and Best Practices for Architecture. Prepared planning plans and amendments to zoning code for key areas. Provided design advice for capital projects, including Miracle Mile, Giralda Avenue and Public Safety building. Promoted transparency and public information with web tools. Reorganized and updated the Coral Gables Zoning Code. Advised City Commission, Planning Board, Board of Architects and Board of Adjustment on development issues.

- 2005 - 2012 **Founder and Principal, Trias and Associates: Town Planning, Architecture, Preservation**
Fort Pierce, Florida
- Organized and staffed charrettes and workshops for public clients, including the City of Vero Beach, Gretna, Sarasota, Fort Pierce Redevelopment Agency, Fort Pierce Farms Water Control District, and others, and prepared master plans for redevelopment and capital investment projects.
Prepared development plans for new town of Indrio Groves (1000 acres), and new villages of Laurel Gardens (500 acres), Grand Reserve (130 acres) and Sunset Lakes (135 acres).
Organized and staffed grass-roots project "Visions of Fort Pierce."
Architect for historic preservation projects.
Continuing services consultant or sub-consultant to FDOT District 4, St. Lucie County MPO, St. Lucie County, City of Fort Pierce CRA, University of Florida, Florida International University. Expert witness on planning issues for Palm Beach County Attorney.
- 1999 - 2005 **Director of Development**
Fort Pierce, Florida
- 1995 - 1999 **Director of Planning**
Fort Pierce, Florida
- Reorganized and staffed planning and zoning activities, and supervised building and code enforcement divisions. Developed city-wide plan, through public participation efforts, including charrettes and workshops. Guided design and construction of waterfront plaza, major road corridors, library, police substation, visitor center and Riverwalk. Worked with FDOT, County and School Board to improve the design of projects, such as Magnet School for the Arts and Smithsonian Aquarium.
Established Historic Preservation program, Art in Public Places program and educational efforts, including exhibits and publications.
Advised City Commission, Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Historic Preservation Board and Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) on development issues.
- 1991 - 1995 **Urban Design Coordinator, Regional Planner**
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Stuart, Florida
- Established technical assistance program for urban design and city planning.
Organized and staffed 20 charrettes, in West Palm Beach, Lake Worth, Boca Raton, South Martin County, Boynton Beach, Lake Park and other towns.
Assisted municipalities in the implementation of master plans and form-based codes.
Principal author of *Strategic Regional Policy Plan, "Vision for the Future"*.

Since 1990 **Urban Design Consultant**

Organized charrettes for road designs, downtown and greenfield development and educational workshops. Major projects included: Austin, Texas; Parlier and Lindsay, Central Valley, California; San Francisco bay area towns, California; Salem, Oregon; Oyster Bay and Huntington, Long Island, New York; Traverse City, Niles, Hartland, and Grand Rapids, Michigan; Charlotte, North Carolina; Gainesville and Orlando, Florida; San Salvador, El Salvador; Calgary, Canada.

ARCHITECTURE

- 1989 - 1990 **Architectural Designer**
Ron Dorris and Associates, Homestead, Florida
Prepared construction documents for residential and commercial projects.
- 1989 **Drafter**
Rodriguez and Quiroga, Coral Gables, Florida
Prepared archival drawings for the Historic American Building Survey.
- 1988 **Architectural Designer**
Jorge Hernandez, Architect
Prepared schematic designs and construction documents for residences.
- 1987 **Architectural Designer**
School of Architecture, University of Miami
Prepared plans for library renovation.

TEACHING AND RESEARCH

- 2010 - 2011 **Researcher and Adjunct Professor, Planning and Architecture**
Lehman Center for Transportation Research, and school of Architecture, Florida International University, Miami, Florida
- 2008 - 2012 **Instructor, Continuing Education**
Fort Pierce Academy of Town Design, Fort Pierce, Florida
Taught short courses on Town Planning and Historic Preservation.
- 2007 **Visiting Assistant Professor, Architecture**
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida
Taught Town Planning studio. Assisted with Master Plan for School of Medicine.
- 2001 - 2008 **Adjunct Professor, Architecture**
Indian River State College, Fort Pierce, Florida
Founded Architecture Program. Taught courses on History, Theory and Design.
- 1989 - present **Speaker, on Urban Design, Architecture and Planning**
Institute of Traffic Engineers; National and Florida American Planning Association;

National League of Cities; Florida Redevelopment Association; FDOT seminars; University of Virginia; Congress for the New Urbanism; Florida Trust for Historic Preservation; Green Building seminar, Palm Beach; Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce; FIU Business School; University of Miami Schools of Law and Architecture.

CIVIC SERVICE

- 2015 – 2016 **Mayor’s Advisory Group on Historic Preservation, Miami-Dade County, Florida**
Member
- 2010 – 2015 **Seven50, Southeast Florida Prosperity Plan**
Executive Committee Member
- 2009 – 2012 **Smart Growth Committee, St. Lucie County, Florida**
Chairman
- 2008 - 2012 **Board of Historic Preservation, City of Fort Pierce, Florida**
Vice-Chairman
- 2007 - 2012 **Fort Pierce Academy of Town Design, 501 – c3 organization.**
Founder and President, prepared educational exhibits and publications on architecture and town design. Received research grants to study Transfer of Development Rights and rural development issues.
- 2005 - 2015 **Florida Trust for Historic Preservation**
Trustee
- 2004 - 2012 **Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, Stuart, Florida**
Board Member, Treasurer, Vice Chairman, Chairman.
- 1999 - 2007 **Planning and Zoning Commission, St. Lucie County, Florida**
Board Member, Vice Chairman
Provided leadership on growth management issues.
- 1998 - 2008 **Manatee Education and Observation Center, Fort Pierce, Florida**
Board member provided direction for environmental education programs.

PUBLICATIONS

- 2015 **Seven50 Plan and Regional Governance in Southeast Florida, Current Urban Studies Journal**
Principal author of peer reviewed paper.
- 2006 - 2007 **Indian River Magazine**
Author, general interest articles on architecture.
- 2001 - 2005 **Fort Pierce Tribune, daily newspaper**
Author, multiple articles on architecture, town planning and cultural issues.

- 2001 **Fort Pierce, a Town in Florida**, book
Principal author, historic development of oldest town in Florida's Treasure Coast.
- 1999 **Street Design Guidelines for Healthy Neighborhoods**, book
Coauthor with Dan Burden, manual for street design. Recognized as definitive guide on pedestrian design issues.
- 1998 **Building Plans and Urban Design Principles for Cities, Towns and Villages in South Florida**, book and plan guide
Contributing author, prepared chapter on building types and city redevelopment.

EDUCATION

DEGREES

- 2014 - 2019 **Ph. D. in Public Affairs, Public Policy and Administration** Department
Florida International University, Miami, Florida
Dissertation, *Democracy and Bureaucracy of Smart Place: Coral Gables, FL and the Role of Aspirational Content in Local Governance*
Phi Alpha Alpha
- 1990 - 1991 **Master of Architecture, Suburb and Town Design Program**
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida
Studied under Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
Outstanding student award
- 1984 - 1989 **Bachelor of Architecture**
Bachelor of Arts
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida
Magna Cum Laude, General University Honors, Dean's List, President's List

SEMINARS

- 2017 **Florida International University, Miami, Florida**
Six Sigma Green Belt
- 2012- 2014 **National Management Incident System (NIMS)**, Miami-Dade County, Florida
FEMA Training
- 1996 - 2005 **Indian River Community College, Fort Pierce, Florida**
Management seminars
- 1994 **Harvard Graduate School of Design, Boston, Massachusetts**
Institute of Affordable Housing
- 1987 **Rice University**
Architecture program in Amsterdam, Paris and Barcelona

Candidate Introduction

Ramon Trias

EDUCATION

Ph. D. in Public Affairs (Public Administration and Policy), Florida International University
Master of Architecture, University of Miami
Bachelor of Architecture, University of Miami
Bachelor of Arts (Spanish), University of Miami
Registered Architect, Florida

EXPERIENCE

Planning and Zoning, Coral Gables, Florida	2012-Present
President, Trias and Associates, Town Planning, Architecture, Preservation Development, Fort Pierce, Florida	2005-2012
Planning Coordinator, Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council	1995-2005
	1991-1995

BACKGROUND

The population of Coral Gables is approximately 50,000. The city has 846 employees. I directly supervise up to 12 individuals. The total budget is \$254,000,000 and the general fund is \$177,000,000.

The three most important issues facing Coral Gables are:

- Quality of large-scale development
- Effective communication with residents
- Public projects, new and maintenance (street design, public buildings)

GENERAL, MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

In 1992 I led a redevelopment plan for Downtown Lake Worth, when I worked at the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. It was my first project after graduate school, and I had the opportunity to apply theory to a community that was motivated to improve quality of life.

As a result, Lake and Lucerne Avenues were reconstructed with wider sidewalks and city staff expanded and implemented many ideas discussed with the community.

I have always been impressed with the city's historic urban fabric and appropriate development scale. This job presents an opportunity to enhance quality of life, one project at a time.

My management style is to provide direction and encourage professionals to use judgment and strive for quality. I do not micromanage, but I take full responsibility for outcomes.

Ramon Trias

The staff would say that I add value to their work by providing constant input and policy direction.

The elected officials would say that I provide the information and advice they need to enhance the quality of life in the community.

My strengths are professionalism, expertise in planning and development, experience in the private and public sectors.

In terms of weaknesses, I have not followed a conventional career path for the position of city manager.

The metrics I use to measure performance are customer service responsiveness, quality of development projects, feedback from Commission.

My greatest achievement is the construction of the waterfront Plaza in Downtown Fort Pierce. A public parking lot was transformed into the most iconic, beautiful, and functional public space in St. Lucie County, with modest local resources and great public support and pride.

One of my regrets is related to several towns I designed in private practice prior to the great recession of 2007. They were not implemented. I learned to respect the relentless effect of finances and economic conditions, even when they are completely beyond our control.

Yes, I have let employees go. Two cases were clear violations of regulations. It was the best decision for the city and, in the long term, for the employees.

The challenges facing the next City Manager for Lake Worth Beach are establishing an expectation of excellence and quality, based on the policy direction of the Commission.

In my first six months I will listen with the intent of understanding and facilitating the goals of the Commission and the aspirations of the community.

The media has always been a valued partner towards informing the community and building support for an enhanced quality of life. Nothing in my background would embarrass an employer.

Social media adds value and immediacy to an overall communication strategy. My view is that communication is a profession. I would seek the assistance of professional staff.

None of the activists in the communities that I worked will contact the city with “the dirt” on me.

In my leisure time I like to read and visit buildings and towns of great artistic merit.

Ramon Trias

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF

Professional
Honest
Patient
Experienced
Visionary
Practical

REASON FOR WANTING TO LEAVE CURRENT JOB

The past decade in Coral Gables has been an outstanding experience. Nevertheless, I am ready to apply many lessons learned.

CURRENT/MOST RECENT OR RELEVANT SALARY

\$138,000 base salary plus car allowance and other benefits.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
RAMON TRIAS**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	No Records Found
St. Lucie County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Miami-Dade County, FL	Results Pending
St. Lucie County, FL	Results Pending
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed expect for:
Coral Gables (2012 – Present)

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
RAMON TRIAS**

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
RAMON TRIAS
Personal Disclosure**

Name of Applicant: RAMON TRIAS

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. LINKEDIN - RAMON TRIAS
9. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: Ramon Trias
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (561) 621-5965 **no later than 5:00 PM PST 07/30/2021.**

(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

Property of Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes
Ramon Trias

Arceli Redila – Principal Planner, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-460-5212

Ms. Redila has reported to Mr. Trias since around 2017. Mr. Trias provides clear direction to the team and is very enjoyable to work with. He is good at his job.

Land use and zoning are difficult issues, and the public generally only attends community workshops when they are very angry. Mr. Trias does very well in these situations. When citizens are being difficult, he responds by thanking them for the question, or commenting that they bring up a good point. He is really good with the public and stake holders.

Mr. Trias is not a micromanager, he is more involved with the coordination. He makes good decisions both when hiring personnel and in general. He maintains an organization at a high performance level. He keeps employees informed on a daily basis.

Their department is in a studio and Mr. Trias leads the staff every day in exchanging ideas to resolve issues. He manages the budget well. He is very responsive. He responds well in challenging circumstances because he has a mellow personality.

While Mr. Trias has been involved in controversy related to planning and zoning, he has not personally been involved in anything controversial.

Ms. Redila would definitely hire Mr. Trias. She believes he would be a good city manager. He has done well as a top-level manager for Coral Gables.

Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:

- Great manager,
- Organized,
- Good with time management, and
- Knowledgeable.

Strengths: Knowing how to dance around the issues and facilitate a good conversation between stake holders. He achieves end results others are in awe of and did not consider possible.

Weaknesses: Strengths can be weaknesses. Though he is not a micromanager, he tries to manage and coordinate everything. Also, he is good at providing direction and feedback to the senior staff but could be more demanding of the admins.

Reference Notes
Ramon Trias

Dennis Beach – Former City Manager, Fort Pierce, FL 772-971-5767

Mr. Beach has known Mr. Trias since the mid 1990s and they worked together for ten years. Mr. Trias reported to Mr. Beach.

Mr. Trias is a genius, and quite a capable individual. Some of the better employees in the department were hired by Mr. Trias. He makes good decisions generally. He is definitely a change agent, and he is innovative as well.

In Fort Pierce Mr. Trias was very active in the community. He led the effort to involve the community in the decision-making process. He was excellent with the public. He led a series of planning workshops that resulted in the direction that the community has followed since.

Mr. Trias kept Mr. Beach informed. Mr. Trias was a leader who rallied the staff around the vision of the elected body. He was very capable of handling the budget for his operation. He completed tasks on time. He created more stress than he received because he is a very demanding individual who expects the best from both colleagues and the people he works with in the public.

As an architect and planner Mr. Trias sometimes was at odds with other professional architects and planners because he was certain that he was correct and wanted to do it his way. Nothing in his conduct or behavior would concern a reasonable person. He left Fort Pierce to start his own consulting business.

Mr. Beach would absolutely hire Mr. Trias. Mr. Beach cannot say whether Mr. Trias would be a good City Manager because it requires a different skillset, attitude, and flexibility. However, if he approaches the position the way he approached his role in Fort Pierce, he will do just fine. He was really good at his job and really made a great difference in the community. He may be able to accomplish more as a manager because he will have more authority.

Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:

- Very determined,
- Tenacious,
- Intelligent, and
- Leader.

Strengths: Training and education have prepared him well for what he does, very focused, determined, gets the job done.

Weaknesses: Like others who are extremely capable, he does not communicate as well as he could and can be assertive at times. Some may see this as a weakness and others a strength.

Reference Notes
Ramon Trias

Venny Torre – Builder / Developer, Coral Gables, FL 305-442-9494

Mr. Torre has known Mr. Trias since around 2014. Mr. Torre is a builder and a developer in the community, and they have interacted in this regard. In addition, Mr. Torre has served in many roles in the city. He is president of the business permit district, and he has served on the park preservation board, the planning and zoning board, and more.

Mr. Torre values his interactions with Mr. Trias and rates him high in terms of job performance. While people may be frustrated and complain that they do not get what they want, Mr. Trias is right on point in his decisions. He is good about keeping others informed.

The staff in Mr. Trias' department are top notch, they are very highly regarded in the community. He is often out in the community, and he does a good job with residents. He gives presentations and explains projects. When he becomes frustrated with another's lack of understanding, he keeps his cool and has always been respectful to them.

The code is subject to interpretation. For example, zoning interpretations on how to park a car in a specific zoning type vary. Mr. Trias works through the fine print to determine how it all can work. He is amenable to working with individuals to arrive at solutions. He is not robotic, and he does not see matters in black and white.

Mr. Trias has not been involved in any matters of large consequence, though he has worked in controversial situations because of his role in the city. However, nothing occurred that put him in the spotlight in a negative way.

Mr. Torre does not know of anything related to Mr. Trias that is concerning. Those who complain about Mr. Trias say that his ideas are too old fashioned or rigid.

Mr. Torre would hire Mr. Trias. While Mr. Torre is not sure whether Mr. Trias would be a good city manager, that role takes a different skillset, he is not saying no to the idea. Mr. Trias is a good person.

Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:

- Thoughtful,
- Helpful,
- Visionary,
- Flexible,
- Professional, and
- Straight up person.

Reference Notes
Ramon Trias

Strengths: Good vision for what the city should be and what is needed to move the vision forward, very scholarly and makes decisions on his knowledge of architecture and planning rather than being swayed by the politics.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Miriam Ramos – City Attorney, City of Coral Gables, FL 305-460-5084 305-733-0216

Ms. Ramos has worked with Mr. Trias since March of 2015. Mr. Trias is extremely knowledgeable and is always improving his skillset. He attained a higher degree in architecture or planning.

Mr. Trias makes good decisions. He is innovative, a change agent, and he maintains an organization at a high performance level. He always keeps others informed.

Often out in the public Mr. Trias was very visible in the community. He worked with the public generally well but could be a little impatient at times. He is responsive and his responses are timely. In stressful situations he can come across a little strong, but he always finds a way to collaborate and resolve the issue.

One project Mr. Trias led was the update of the entire zoning code which had not been revamped since 2007 so it was a significant undertaking. The process lasted over a few years, and he was at the helm.

Everything in zoning is controversial but nothing embarrassing or controversial comes to mind in relation to Mr. Trias specifically. His conduct would not embarrass an employer.

Ms. Ramos would hire Mr. Trias. She only knows him as a Planning Director and has not evaluated him on other attributes needed for a City Manager role.

Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:

- Committed,
- Responsible,
- Responsive,
- Knowledgeable,
- Intelligent, and
- Confident.

Strengths: Work knowledge, knows the code, applies processes and procedures.

Weaknesses: He can be a little impatient.

Reference Notes
Ramon Trias

Marshall Bellin – Architect, Coral Gables, FL 305-447-1927

Mr. Bellin is an architect in the community and he has worked with Mr. Trias in this capacity. They met in 2012 when Mr. Bellin was hired.

Because his allegiance is to the community Mr. Trias makes good decisions with respect to his work. He is very involved with the community. Mr. Bellin has enjoyed their interactions. Mr. Trias answers questions and they talk about the issues at hand.

Coral Gables has a very complicated zoning code and sometimes issues come up that are not easy to decipher. Mr. Trias' guidance in these situations is good. He is always very responsive and he is timely in his responses.

Decisions made with respect to zoning can be controversial and Mr. Trias has been involved in the conversations, but he has not personally been involved in any controversy. Mr. Bellin is not aware of anything concerning about Mr. Trias' behavior, nor does he know anyone who has a negative opinion of Mr. Trias.

Mr. Bellin would hire Mr. Trias, though he is not sure what the responsibilities of a city manager are. Mr. Trias does his job well and is a good candidate.

Words or phrases used to describe Ramon Trias:

- Presents well,
- Conscientious,
- Easy to work with, and
- Great communication.

Strengths: Planning.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Prepared by: Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
March 2, 2021

Coral Gables commission forges deal on contentious Miracle Mile rezoning. Will it fly?

Author: Andres Viglucci

Coral Gables officials looking for a key to unlocking redevelopment on ailing Miracle Mile without obliterating its small-scale charm say they may have found it: A consensus measure that would cap new construction at four stories.

That's taller than most existing buildings on the Mile, but two stories shorter than current rules permit. At the same time, city commissioners and planners appear to have settled on an outright ban on parking within the footprint of any new buildings on the retail street. Together, they say, the contemplated new rules will protect the Mile's pedestrian-first ambience while promoting mixed-use development at the right scale to revitalize one of South Florida's signature streets, long plagued by vacant shops and a lack of foot traffic.

That fresh compromise, forged during a two-hour public city commission workshop last week, may resolve a sometimes heated, months-long debate over the fate of the Mile that was sparked by a broader update of the Gables' stringent zoning code. The commission is scheduled to take a first vote on the Miracle Mile measure March 9. A second and final vote would follow on March 23.

Commission members were at pains to point out that the consensus reached will lower height caps on the Mile compared to what's allowed now. "We are lowering the height on Miracle Mile — that's h, e, i, g, h, t," Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Faui said during the Wednesday workshop, adding later: "Whatever we get, it's going to be an improvement over what we have today."

Commissioners approved the broader, mostly technical zoning update on Feb. 8 by a 4-1 vote, with vice mayor Vince Lago dissenting. But they agreed at the time to put off a final vote on proposed tweaks to rules governing Miracle Mile, by far the most contentious piece of the zoning rewrite, to consider alternatives. The Miracle Mile measure has become a bone of contention in a crowded city election with few other issues to fire up voters.

Candidates for two open commission seats have dominated public hearings and community meetings on the question, accusing incumbents of ramming through the rezoning proposed by city planners while ignoring public consternation over an intense development boom in the city.

The original Miracle Mile proposal developed by city planning director **Ramon Trias** and consultant Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, a noted architect and University of Miami professor, sought to tweak existing zoning on the street to spur small-scale redevelopment.

The key, they concluded, is to allow owners of the often obsolete, one- and two-story buildings on small lots that dominate the street to redevelop while providing required parking somewhere

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Ramon Trias***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

else nearby. The small lots can't accommodate the required parking, effectively encouraging any owners wanting to redevelop to aggregate property and build big with on-site parking garages — something city officials want to prevent.

To avoid litigation from property owners over potential downzoning claims, that original plan kept height limits at currently allowed levels of 70 feet, or six stories, while requiring new buildings to step back at four stories to preserve the street's intimate feel. Nothing has been built at that height on the street, however, in part because of the difficulty in accommodating on-site parking on shallow lots.

The proposal raised the hackles of residents and preservationists who feared it could lead to a uniform, 70-foot-high "concrete canyon" along the Mile — a concern some commission members, including Lago, seconded. The debate boiled down to precisely how tall any new construction on the Mile should be, a question that's anything but straightforward because it depends on complex technical and legal variables.

All five commissioners agreed on allowing developers on the Mile the option of so-called "remote parking" within a 1,000-foot radius of their property. Ample parking is available near the Mile in both public and private garages, and the supply will be enough to meet demand for about a decade even as redevelopment occurs, city administrators assured commissioners.

Lago and Commissioner Patricia Keon, both vying for the retiring Valdes-Fauli's seat, each released an alternative proposal, as did Commissioner Michael Mena. At this week's workshop, Coral Gables' five elected officials weighed four proposals, including a slightly tweaked plan from city planners, before settling on the four-story compromise substantially along the lines of Mena's alternative. This time, only a handful of people turned up on Zoom to oppose the Mile changes.

The proposals were designed to avoid directly downzoning the Mile, something Gables City Attorney Miriam Soler Ramos warned could open up the municipality to property-rights lawsuits. To keep a lid on heights, all proposals banned the use of additional "air rights" on the Mile. Those development rights can be purchased by developers from owners of historically designated properties to add stories to projects in the downtown Gables over what basic zoning allows, but their use must be approved by the commission. Because the approval is discretionary, Soler Ramos said barring them doesn't constitute a property "taking."

Lago, however, proposed also prohibiting the use on the Mile of the city's so-called Mediterranean bonus, a measure that allows developers who adopt the Gables' trademark architectural style to add stories to downtown projects. That ban would effectively reduce development capacity and limit heights to four stories on the street. Lago also proposed still allowing developers to build a garage if they chose to, providing them flexibility to skirt property-rights concerns. But Lago's plan ran into concerns from other commissioners that it would still encourage developers to aggregate property and build street-killing garages and access ramps fronting the Mile.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Keon proposed no hard-and-fast height cap, saying small lot sizes effectively would keep most new building heights under six stories, since development capacity is dependent on the property footprint. Avoiding a hard cap also preserves creative flexibility for architects by not constricting a building's shape, she argued. Keon persuaded fellow commissioners to embrace city planner's proposal for ground-floor stories of up to 15 feet to satisfy requirements from high-end retailers.

Mena proposed a strict four-story cap, or about 50 feet, with a step-back at the fourth floor. That means building owners could have terrace restaurants or other uses on the fourth floor, promoting activity on the street, he said. Mena also proposed requiring remote parking for new buildings on the Mile instead of making it optional, an idea other commissioners appeared to embrace along with the four-story height limit.

Trias, the planning director, said the proposal will work if the city also eliminates building setbacks on the Mile. The ability to build to the property line means redevelopment or expansion projects could still use the full capacity allowed under current rules while hewing to a 50-foot cap, avoiding any takings issue, **Trias** said. Again, commissioners agreed.

Commissioners noted that there is ample precedent on the Mile for 50-foot heights — such as the large building at 55 Miracle Mile that houses the new Gramercy restaurant, among other businesses. The building, which occupies multiple lots, was the last significant construction on the street, made possible because required parking is in a garage in a companion condo high-rise at its rear.

At roughly that same 50-foot height, Mena said, the cap in his proposal respects property rights and the Mile's modest scale while encouraging new development that enhances and modernizes the street. "I appreciate the fundamental concern about the Mile, that it not be developed into something that is out of scale with what residents expect Miracle Mile to be," Mena said in an interview before the workshop. "But we have to be cognizant of the property rights of those owners. We can't just come in and say, 'Hey, you can only do two stories now.' "

But Mena said he wanted to avert the possibility of parking decks on the street by any means possible. "I think that would be a travesty on the Mile," he said. "No one wants to see development on that scale. What I'm trying to do is foreclose this possibility."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
November 29, 2020

coral gables - 'Miracle Mile is sick': Coral Gables looks to redevelopment - to save iconic street - Coral Gables wants to lift parking requirements for new construction to spur redevelopment on Miracle Mile, which is beset by vacancies and lack of foot traffic.

Author: Andres Viglucci

Looking to rejuvenate an ailing Miracle Mile, Coral Gables commissioners say they're ready to embrace a zoning tweak that could carry big repercussions for one of South Florida's most iconic streets: significantly easing rules that require on-site parking in new construction on the strip. The measure, a small piece of a wide-ranging update of the Gables' famously strict zoning code, could pave the way for extensive redevelopment of the Mile, the city's premier shopping street.

The proposed new rule would make it far easier for developers to provide "remote" parking for tenants and customers - that is, make a deal for them to park elsewhere in downtown Coral Gables. Studies show that parking across the business district is both plentiful and severely underused.

Backers say that simple expedient would unlock the potential for new retail, office and even residential development along the Mile by essentially lifting requirements for on-site parking within the envelope of new construction. Those requirements, they say, now make redevelopment along the Mile and its narrow, shallow lots physically and economically unfeasible.

The parking proposal appears to enjoy broad support among elected officials, city administrators and business leaders, who say the Mile is in desperate need of modernization. They contend the street has been hobbled by property owners' inability to replace or expand the one-story storefronts - in many cases tiny and obsolete - that were built after World War II and still dominate the Mile.

Despite a recent \$25 million streetscape makeover that widened sidewalks and beautified the street, the Mile is plagued by vacant storefronts, a longstanding issue that has only been worsened by prolonged street reconstruction and the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent count by the Miami Herald found 37 empty shopfronts along the half-mile-long street. "Miracle Mile is sick," Coral Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli said at a recent commission debate over the new zoning rules. "Miracle Mile is in deep trouble. And unless we do something to stimulate it, it is going to go down."

But exactly how much new development should be encouraged on the Mile as parking requirements are eased, and at what scale, has become a sharp bone of contention among commissioners as the city undergoes a sustained wave of new construction in and around its increasingly dense downtown.

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Though all five Coral Gables commissioners say they support the remote-parking measure, a debate between two mayoral contenders, commissioners Vince Lago and Patricia Keon, over related limits to new development on the street became so heated that board members unanimously agreed to break out the Miracle Mile plan from the broader, largely uncontroversial zoning rewrite. With Valdes-Fauli opting for political retirement, Lago and Keon are seeking the mayor's seat in elections next year.

Expanded remote parking would offer property owners and developers on the Mile far greater flexibility to build up to a height of 70 feet, or about six stories - the current cap, established by a previous zoning rule that would remain in place. Keon says she's satisfied that the height cap and requirements for buildings to "step back" at 45 feet will be sufficient to preserve the street's pedestrian-first feel and intimate scale. But Lago wants to restrict the size of new buildings further, saying he fears the result otherwise could be a "monolithic" new six-story scale along the entire Mile, a prospect other critics have likened to a concrete canyon. He argues developers should be willing to accept further limits on size in exchange for the right to forgo building costly parking decks.

The commissioners will hash out the remote parking measure and some possible tightening of restrictions on new Miracle Mile development at a special virtual workshop Nov. 30, before a final vote on the full zoning rewrite that's scheduled for Dec. 8.

Developers with holdings on Miracle Mile, including the street's largest property owner, Terranova Corp., have been quietly watching the debate. The group's plan for a boutique hotel on the prominent corner of Miracle Mile and Ponce de Leon Boulevard stalled in 2019 amid issues with provision of off-site parking and some public and political blowback over its proposed seven-story height.

Terranova Chairman Stephen Bittel said he supports the remote-parking measure, developed as part of the broader zoning update by city planners and its consultants, the Miami firm of Duany Plater-Zyberk. "Miracle Mile, as a result of COVID-19 and changed retail patterns, is at a low point of the last 20 years," Bittel said in a brief interview. "City staff and their consultant Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, a renowned urbanism expert, have come up with an enlightened plan for the future." "The definition of insanity is to do the same thing again and again and expect different results," Bittel added, alluding to critics who oppose changes on the street.

To bring desperately needed attention to the Mile and generate some activity, Bittel and the city teamed up in October to temporarily turn over a half-dozen vacant storefronts for use as working studios and galleries for artists. The artists will remain at least through the end of the year, depending on when shops are leased.

The studios are open to the public. Artists say the experience of working with other artists has been good. But business has been light, though some curious pedestrians do drop in. "It's been slow, but people are happy that this is going on," said ceramicist Laura Mármol. The debate over the Mile's future could be consequential beyond Coral Gables' borders. The city's busy

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downtown is a major regional office hub but has found itself increasingly in a losing competition, at least pre-COVID-19, for retail and dining customers with newly vital entertainment districts in Wynwood and nearby Coconut Grove, among others.

And how the city, famed for its careful planning, handles the parking question could provide new impetus to efforts by some planners and activists in the Gables and elsewhere in Miami-Dade County. Some have called for easing of what they describe as onerous on-site parking requirements that block needed new development on small lots and foster over-scaled construction and lot aggregations, inflating housing and other costs.

Miracle Mile property owners holding at least 200 feet of frontage can already apply for remote parking. But most have single lots of small holdings and don't qualify, one reason nothing new has been built on the street in 15 years. New construction under current rules would require aggregating lots and building big with parking decks and ramps - something the city wants to discourage.

The new rule would make remote parking available to those small property owners, who could then build to three or four stories, Plater-Zyberk said. The hope is those upstairs floors, where retail won't work, will be offices or apartments, boosting foot traffic to help sustain the shops and restaurants at street level, she said. The measure would encourage development of a modest, pedestrian- and neighborhood-friendly scale that's economically sustainable and largely missing in the city, she added. "It will be kind of an urban street that's developed incrementally. Hopefully it would be an interesting, varied streetscape, rather than one long building," Plater-Zyberk said. "The city has lots of big, tall buildings, and some little, small buildings, and nothing in between. We're hoping to bring in that missing middle."

Anthony De Yurre, a partner at Bilzin Sumberg who represents some Coral Gables developers, said some limits could work if carefully calibrated, but he said the remote-parking measure is essential if Miracle Mile is to thrive. "It depends on what you think the vision of Miracle Mile should be," said De Yurre, who has no clients with property or a project on the Mile, but represents developers bidding on a stalled city project to redevelop obsolete public parking garages next to it. "It comes down to a pedestrian scale. That to me is what the debate is about. They're really going to get granular with it on Monday. They know it's going to have a tremendous impact on the Mile. I think you will see a new Miracle Mile in the next 10 years."

At the November workshop, commissioners will also consider a second zoning change that would expand the city's downtown. The broad zoning update doesn't affect single-family or residential-only neighborhoods, but this proposal would be an exception. It would rezone an anomalous, two-and-a-half block island of single-family homes and duplexes that's surrounded by larger-scale residential and commercial development.

That change comes at the request of a majority of property owners in the section, who signed a petition asking for it to be upzoned for commercial or mixed use so they can sell out. Originally part of a plan by city founder George Merrick for a crafts section that was never realized, the

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small neighborhood is today plagued by cut-through traffic and increasing density around it, including the massive Plaza Coral Gables under construction two blocks to the east.

The city plan is to classify the area under a new category under the zoning rewrite that's designed to foster more of the "missing-middle" development Plater-Zyberk describes - in this case, low-scale development mixing residential, retail and office uses.

But Commissioner Michael Mena called for a recalibration of the proposed upzoning, citing concerns over the impact on the abutting, historic San Sebastian Apartments, rising four stories at their highest point. Mena doesn't want any new development to overwhelm the building or residential areas across LeJeune Road. "This is unique because it's a three-block area in our downtown. I view it as a blank canvas," Mena said. "So rather than just come out and upzone and see what comes along, I want to be a little more thoughtful."

City commissioners have few quibbles with the larger zoning rewrite. Plater-Zyberk and Gables Planning Director **Ramon Trias** said it mostly streamlines and reorganizes the code, making it easier to navigate and understand. It also introduces defined zoning categories that mix commercial and residential uses to the code for the first time. Although numerous large mixed-use projects have been built, approval for each one has until now involved a laborious process of negotiation. Adding a set of tailored rules should result in a simpler review process and better buildings, Plater-Zyberk said. But Miracle Mile has been a sticking point. Lago and Keon both agree on the need for remote parking and more residential development downtown.. But they differ, at times acerbically, on the particulars.

Keon suggests Lago's concerns are overblown. Most property owners with small holdings would be unable to build to the maximum of 70 feet, or about six stories, she noted. "You would have to have a certain footprint to do that. Not everything will go to that height. You could have some buildings at three or four stories. You would still have a varied roofline," Keon said in an interview. "I think what's important is the scale and the viability of the Mile. You can leave it at two stories, and if all the stores are empty, that's not a pretty picture."

But Lago wants to further restrict development capacity to ensure that not every property is built out to the maximum 70 feet. That could be done by barring from the Mile measures that provide additional building capacity to downtown Gables developers - a "bonus" for hewing to Mediterranean style, and the purchase of unused "air rights" from designated historic properties. "You need to ensure that out-of-scale projects are not built on Miracle Mile, that you're not allowing developers to build every square foot of the envelope," Lago said in an interview. "The idea that additional height will solve the problems of Miracle Mile is wrong. Let's protect one street, and that's Miracle Mile."

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<https://www.vice.com/en/article/xwnykg/luxury-housing-is-threatening-to-wipe-out-miamis-trailer-parks>

Luxury Housing Is Threatening to Wipe Out Miami’s Trailer Parks

By Alexandra Martinez

When Miguel Castro moved into his Little Gables trailer home, his backdoor neighbor gifted him a potted schefflera tree. It was a welcome gift, but Castro quickly saw a more practical use for the umbrella tree—he would plant it as a barrier to discourage trespassers. Today, Castro’s rectangular lot is a tropical oasis from the encroaching concrete on Miami’s southwest Eighth Street. But the verdant refuge could soon be demolished. For the past three years, the wealthy city of Coral Gables has been pushing to annex a 205-acre, unincorporated area of Miami-Dade County that includes the Little Gables trailer park and its 225 residents. It’s a move that would subject them to higher taxes and most likely, displacement—recently re-elected Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli has openly said the trailer park would have to “disappear”, adding that the new development would be built for young couples. The mayor’s words mirror a national trend of trailer park owners selling their long-time investment to new investors who drive up the rent and eventually wipe the trailer park off the map, adding to a nationwide housing crisis where only 37 affordable homes exist for every 100 low-income renters. And there’s plenty of incentive for local politicians in charge: During the recent election in Coral Gables, Mayor Valdes-Fauli received \$29,500 in March alone from developers, real estate firms, contractors and construction companies.

The Little Gables trailer park opened in 1931 when the Great Depression plunged the economy into scarcity. Since then, Miami’s population has grown from 143,000 to 2.7 million, and the average rent for a one bedroom apartment has reached \$1,700, with only more growth expected. At \$500 a month for the lot rental, tenants said the trailer park offers a reprieve. For residents with fixed incomes, disabilities, or who have recently immigrated to this country, there is often no other option—applications for public housing in Miami are closed and people are still being called off a 2008 waitlist intended to alleviate Miami-Dade’s affordable housing crisis. The annexation would weigh heavily on the residents of Little Gables. Many tenants have spent their whole lives here, and have cultivated a community in those decades. They have families, doctors and jobs nearby, and relocation would upend all of it. Their trailers, which most spent at least \$4,500 to purchase decades ago, would be too expensive to take with them, and would have to be demolished. And for those who are in critical health conditions, the physical strain of moving would put them in an even more precarious situation.

Filiberto Llerena, 81, said he doesn’t want to leave. He has owned his trailer for over 30 years. His days are spent taking care of his ailing wife, Julia Edith Llerena, 82, who is confined to her bed after open-heart surgery, a fractured hip, and a stroke three years ago landed her in a fragile condition. “I’m going to wait until they find me somewhere to live if they have to demolish this,” Llerena said. On a typical day, the residents at Little Gables Mobile Home Park sit on patio chairs in front of their homes, sip café, and check in with their neighbors. Castro’s spot, particularly, is a hub of community. Patchouli incense and Marc Anthony on the radio waft

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through the air. Inside, his pets create a symphony: parakeets chirp against their cage's metal bars, ping ponging with the rooster's crowing. The humble space feels like a slice of his native Cuba. "Every morning the neighbors drink coffee with me, sometimes we smoke a cigarette here. If I barbecue, I go give them some, we have a sense of feeling, of connection," said Castro. But that sense of peace is limited—Castro is also president of the homeowners association, formed in response to the sudden onslaught of penalties for code violations.

In 2014, the County Regulatory and Economic Resources building department, a local agency that oversees housing, started running random sweeps on the property owned by Burleigh Kaplan of Gables Trailer Park INC and found over 70 code violations in Little Gables, mostly illegal additions to their homes that the tenants rented out for extra income. In an attempt to get the tenants off the land, the agency slapped them with substantial fines and forced them to take down the additions, but the property was finally up to code.

A year later, when tenants heard that the property owners were interested in selling, they sought out the help of the nonprofit organization, Legal Services of Miami. As owners of the trailers, but renters of the land, they attempted to use their right of first refusal to purchase the park. An angel investor was willing to provide a mortgage, but it wasn't enough. The property was sold to Jay Suarez of Titan Development Partners LLC, a real estate and property management company. "After I cleared up the violations, everyone is suddenly interested in the park, I got an offer for \$8 million," said Suarez, who insisted he wanted to keep the trailer park as it is. "The bottom line is, I turned that down. That's not my interest."

If the annexation passes, the trailer park would still be subject to Coral Gables' notoriously strict code enforcement, which includes painting your home a palette of muted colors approved by the Board of Architects, and not parking a pick-up truck in your driveway. The affluent city's higher property taxes would amount to an increase of \$1.21 per thousand in taxable value or \$500 to \$1,000 annually for homeowners, in addition to \$405 more for solid waste removal. Suarez, who already raised the rent \$40 in October, admitted that the increases would have to come out of rent spikes for the tenants. Regardless of development plans, annexation would mean stricter regulations and an increase in rent. Relocation would be inevitable.

Coral Gables is not waiting for him to get on board. In November 2017, the City of Coral Gables sent out official consent petition forms to see how many residents in the Little Gables neighborhood, which houses roughly 5,400 people, of which the trailer park houses only 225, were actually in favor of the annexation. Out of 1,607 registered votes, they received 400 in support of the annexation. But according to the residents' lawyer, Nejla Calvo, no one at the trailer park received the notice.

Once they had the minimum requirement to submit the application at a city commission meeting on December 2017, the city retained a planning consulting firm to be available to redevelop the park. And City Commissioner Patricia Keon proposed that the commission pass an ordinance to make trailer parks illegal upon annexation. Other officials advised the Commission to find

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adequate places for mobile homeowners to relocate, such as Orlando, for example, four hours north of Miami.

This wouldn't be the first time that government officials in Miami-Dade make a deal with developers to wipe their property clean of trailers. In 2016, Chinese company Wealthy Delight agreed to a deal with the Village of El Portal, a community slightly north of Little Haiti, to buy the Little Farm trailer park on the condition that they demolish the park. Two hundred and forty residents were displaced, some were sent to Orlando, while others remained homeless.

The Director of Planning and Zoning, **Ramon Trias** says nothing has been decided and plans are still in a very preliminary, conceptual level. "I think we can have some, let's say row houses, small apartments, some way to keep the streets where they are but enhance the landscaping," **Trias** said. "The idea is not to displace people, but to provide better ways to develop the land. But, is there a willingness to do it?"

For now, it's a waiting game. The application for annexation was submitted in February 2018. By December 2018, it passed in the County Planning Advisory Board. It will ultimately come down to a vote by the roughly 5,400 Little Gables residents of which the trailer park houses only a fraction of that.

At the end of the day, Castro's partner washes dishes inside their recently renovated trailer. The couple stripped the walls of mold and redid the kitchen, totaling a near \$4,000 investment. Now, Castro's only hope is that he can keep his labor of love. "I would have to cry and declare a state of misery because where would we go?" says Castro. "That would be like a hurricane coming and destroying everything."

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
February 18, 2019

A high-rise building boom put Coral Gables on steroids. Will it remain the City Beautiful?

Author: Andres Viglucci

Just five years short of a century ago, developer George Merrick conjured up a Mediterranean fantasyland on his family's holdings of scrub pine and avocado groves just outside the backwater city of Miami. He called it Coral Gables, and it was good.

The city beautiful that Merrick romantically baptized "Miami Riviera" would have it all: Charming Spanish-style homes and gracious Italian villas masterfully laid out amid gardens, lush boulevards and golf courses; imposing formal entrances; a university and a thriving business district. In promotional brochures, its crown jewel, the Biltmore Hotel and its 300-foot tower, rose out of the humid mist like a mirage in Washington Irving's "Tales of the Alhambra".

Merrick's vision, and the master plan and strict controls he drew up to realize it, have endured through boom and bust, firmly establishing Coral Gables as one of the most desirable, stable and envied communities in Florida. Now it's gone on steroids.

Enthusiastic backers of a new wave of high-rise, mixed-use development, including city leaders, say it's re-invigorating the city, enhancing Merrick's vision and turning its once-stodgy downtown into a lively urban neighborhood. But some residents fear that what's made the Gables special could be obliterated in a rush to build big. No visitor to the Gables can miss its redrawn face. The city's downtown and commercial corridors of South Dixie Highway and LeJeune Road bristle with construction cranes erecting Mediterranean-inspired buildings of a scale and density Merrick could not have foreseen.

A dozen large-scale projects recently inaugurated, nearing completion or just now under construction are delivering around 2,000 condos and apartments, hundreds of hotel rooms and hundreds of thousands of square feet of retail, restaurants and offices to the Gables in the span of a few years. It's a surge likely not rivaled since Merrick began building his city in earnest in 1924.

The biggest by far, Agave Ponce group's massive, \$600 million The Plaza Coral Gables, will spread across seven acres and three city blocks on Ponce de Leon Boulevard, just south of the recently revamped Miracle Mile. The project, the largest in Coral Gables history, will encompass 242 hotel rooms, 164 apartments and lofts, 160,000 square feet of retail, 445,000 square feet of office space and 2,000 parking spaces.

And that's after city planners and commissioners scaled back an initial plan during three years of stringent review — and after the developers trimmed it again, redesigning and renaming the former Mediterranean Village project, in response to changing market conditions following

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approval in 2015. Agave finally began construction on the first of two phases last year, with completion expected in May 2020.

The tweaks include less retail space and more office, reflecting a downturn in the fortunes of brick-and-mortar retail and unflagging demand for workspace in downtown Coral Gables. Agave also scaled down a hotel tower that would have exceeded the usually strictly observed height cap of 190 feet for usable space in the city, not including spires and cupolas. A development wave is redrawing the face of Coral Gables. Backers of a new wave of high-rise, mixed-use development in Coral Gables say it's re-invigorating the city, but some residents fear that what's made the Gables special is at risk of being obliterated in a rush to build big.

The Agave project's shifted footprint now places the bulk of construction around a one-acre plaza with a historic building — the turreted, three-story studio of Merrick's noted city designers, architect Phineas Paist and artist Denman Fink — at its center. The new plaza opens up to Ponce Circle Park. Agave executive Gregory Schwartz boasts the project, designed by the international firm CallisonRTKL, is so consequential it will shift the center of downtown south. "It's going to open right up to the park, shift the center of gravity towards the park, and create the new social, civic center for the city," Schwartz said. "The plaza embodies the spirit of the project."

An architectural rendering shows how The Plaza Coral Gables mixed-use project on Ponce de Leon Boulevard will look when completed. The project's first phase is now under construction. An architectural rendering show how the completed The Plaza Coral Gables mixed-use project on Ponce de Leon Boulevard will look when completed. The project's first phase is now under construction.

A few blocks west, a new mid-rise Aloft hotel introduces a sense of walkable urbanism to the traffic-choked gash of LeJeune Road, with arcades along the ground floor, a garage that's concealed within the building and a street-facing restaurant and outdoor cafe. The change in scale and approach that it represents is abundantly clear. The Aloft building comes right up to the sidewalk and goes straight up to create an arcaded street wall, an approach that planners say creates a welcoming, sheltered space for pedestrians. The hotel's suburban-style neighbors, by contrast, are set back, often behind a parking lot and a fringe of scraggly greenery — an approach that planners say is less inviting.

Abutting the downtown's western border on Douglas Road is the curving hulk of Gables Columbus Center, a newly opened 200-unit apartment building designed by Behar, Font & Partners that backs directly up to the quaint, stucco three-story La Palma Hotel from 1924. One of the earliest surviving commercial buildings downtown, and protected as a historic landmark, it's now hemmed in by towers.

Farther south, in the former industrial district south of Bird Road that's gradually been converted into a mid-rise residential neighborhood since the 2002 launch of the Shops at Merrick Park, the latest addition is about to open. Crews are putting the finishing touches on Astor Companies' Merrick Manor, a 227-unit, 10-story condo, also designed by Behar, Font, that fills nearly an

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entire block and overlooks LeJeune Road and Coral Gables High. Its value at sell-out is estimated at \$160 million.

Just north of Miracle Mile, a nearly finished deluxe 33-unit condo building, Giralda Place, stretches nearly the full length of a block on Giralda Avenue, with a new art gallery on one corner. A gym and Bread Cycle, a health-conscious Mediterranean restaurant, are among other planned sidewalk amenities. The building, which varies in height but is 90 feet high at its tallest point, replaced a strip of nondescript, low-scale modern storefronts.

The \$65 million project, with a clean, updated Mediterranean design by architect John Fullerton, also encompasses a renovated bank building on the corner of Ponce de Leon Boulevard that houses 700 WeWork shared-office desks. WeWork joins competitor Pipeline, which opened a shared workspace floor in the downtown Gables in 2015. That's a fresh wrinkle for the formerly buttoned-down Gables workplace aesthetic that Giralda Place developer Christopher "Cristo" Brown says portends the broader sea change in store for the neighborhood. "In the next six months, it's going to be a very different feel here, a more energetic one," Brown said. "You're going to see more and younger people out and about. There's going to be buzz and you're going to see people coming in from other areas who would not have made the drive before. People want walkability and all the Gables has to offer."

That a city of 50,000 should be in line to absorb so much new development is the result not just of its lasting desirability, but the redevelopment tsunami overtaking much of neighboring Miami. A seemingly insatiable, pent-up demand for urban, walkable places across the region has dovetailed with a determination by Gables leaders to turn the city's downtown — long a regional business center where sidewalk cafes were banned and streets quiet after office hours — into a denser, full-service, live-in urban hub.

The thinking is straightforward: Build dense to bring in enough residents and workers to support a variety of shops, amenities and activities in close proximity, and people will happily walk more and drive less. Planners say that creates an appealing alternative to sprawling auto-dependent development of the kind that has dominated South Florida for decades, fostering desirable growth while keeping a lid on traffic congestion. There's another big benefit for the city. Downtown properties already account for as much as 40 percent of the city's tax base, said Gables Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli. That allows the city to boast of one of the lowest property-tax rates of any city offering full fire and police services in Miami-Dade County, he said.

While he could not provide a precise figure for how much new development will add to the city's bottom line, Valdes-Fauli said it's substantial and will help preserve those low rates while producing "a very livable Coral Gables." "We have measured development, rational development," Valdes-Fauli said. "I see it as a continuation of what Coral Gables is and has been. We don't want a Brickell."

Umbrella Sky in Coral Gables More than 720 bright umbrellas will sway gently over the newly transformed Giralda Plaza through September 17, 2018, the pedestrian promenade located at the

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100 block of Giralda Avenue. There's a way to go to reach the critical mass that will fill the new buildings and generate the level of street life and retail revival the city wants, said Bill Kerdyk Jr., a former Gables commissioner and CEO of Kerdyk Real Estate. But it's starting to work. Many of those now renting and buying downtown are empty-nesters who don't want to deal with car commutes to work, dine out or see a film or a play, said Kerydk, who represents the new Gables Columbus Center apartment tower.

"That was once a foreign concept, having people living downtown," said Kerdyk. In the mid-1990s, when developer Armando Codina built the first apartment building in the business district on the old bus station site, that project, too, faced considerable skepticism. "Now you come down on a Wednesday night, and it's hard to find a place to park, and there is a buzz about being downtown. "I think having people living downtown will reinvigorate the retail. It comes back to quality of life. That's what the city of Coral Gables offers."

To many residents, though, the increased mass and density is jarring. So is a longstanding city code requirement that requires buildings and entryways that come right to the edge of the sidewalk, something which planners say creates a true walkable city environment and fosters pedestrian activity. All that some critics see, though, is concrete, increasing traffic and a loss of the modest neighborhood scale that once characterized the Gables' urban districts. "These big buildings are consuming the streetscape," said Ellen Ugucione, a longtime resident and former historic preservation chief for the Gables and neighboring Miami. "I think it overwhelms. The downtown district in the 1920s was small-scale buildings. We have to evolve. But that evolution needs to take into account what buildings existed before and pay homage by stepping back. "We need to be more astute and ask, 'What is the essence of Coral Gables?' "

Ugucione stressed that the city has so far managed to protect its residential areas from intrusive or inappropriate development. But longtime Gables resident Sue Kawalerski watches the march of the cranes down South Dixie Highway and, like many of her neighbors, is afraid. Very afraid.

Like many in the Gables, they fear that what they describe as a developer-friendly city commission will turn Coral Gables into a facsimile of Miami's high-density, high-rise Brickell district, and downtown and U.S. 1 into concrete canyons. "They have absolutely no regard for what residents want," Kawalerski said.

To be sure, Coral Gables has seen waves of large-scale development before. The real estate bust of the late 1920s brought Merrick's dream to a close with much of his city yet unbuilt. Things didn't pick up until after World War II, when Miracle Mile was built and Modernism was the style of choice. By the time Mediterranean architecture came back into vogue in the 1980s, many original downtown Gables buildings had been replaced with a new run of taller, modern office buildings.

Some more-recent Med-style buildings have come under fire for mediocre architecture and ungainly proportions unbecoming of Merrick's handiwork, but city planners say they have cracked down and sharpened the quality of design. Most of the new buildings eschew pastels and

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pasted-on detailing for whites and a pared-down, contemporary version of Mediterranean design that may be more appealing and sophisticated. But what's also different about them, critics say, is their sheer bulk and in-your-face presence.

The two most attention-drawing and controversial of the new projects loom on South Dixie. The mixed-use complexes by NP International, now under construction, represent an obvious shift in scale for the corridor, now dominated by mostly low-scale, suburban-style strip malls.

Hugging the sidewalk between the elevated Metrorail tracks and the traffic-choked highway, the 504-unit Gables Station extends all the way from LeJeune Road to the intersection of Ponce de Leon and South Dixie, requiring no fewer than five cranes for construction. The apartment complex is designed to capitalize on adjacent transit and the planned Underline, the 10-mile bike and running trail connecting to downtown Miami. A public plaza lined with shops and food will connect to the Underline through a colonnade.

Farther south, on the site of a former Holiday Inn across from the University of Miami, NPI's Paseo de la Riviera will include a 10-story, 252-room hotel, 224 apartments in a 13-story tower, and retail around a plaza. An imposing arch leads out to Jaycee Park and the residential neighborhood behind it.

Both NPI projects, designed by Coral Gables architect Jorge Hernandez and architectural giant Gensler, required changes in zoning to accommodate greater density and height, prompting complaints that the city was not hewing to its code. The height of the Paseo tower matches that of a 1971 office tower next door that's now owned by the University of Miami. The UM tower, though, is slimmer and set back behind parking because its footprint is suburban.

City planners and elected officials see both projects as a new, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly model to replace the strip-mall mode of development along that stretch, extending the Gables brand of Mediterranean architecture to the nondescript, auto-dominated corridor. But Kawalerski, president of the Riviera Neighborhood Association, sees high-density development and its impact, like increased traffic and blocked skies, starting to encroach on the garden-like tranquility of her single-family neighborhood. The association bitterly fought the Paseo project, which won commission approval by a 4-1 vote.. "It's right on top of U.S. 1, and it's a big block of cement," she said. "How could you allow that to happen?"

Commissioner Vince Lago, considered a voice for moderation in development on the body, favored the Paseo project after it was scaled back, but voted against Gables Station because he thought it was too big for the location and would generate too much traffic at what's already a choke point. He said the city needs to be "prudent" and some projects need to be scaled back. But he also noted that most are built to what the city code allows, giving commissioners little ability to alter them.

Still, he defended the city's overall strategy, noting that it's already bearing fruit downtown. "It's very welcoming," Lago said. "You see a lot of families and young professionals enjoying

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

downtown, which is what we envisioned." Lago said the city has also been astute in developing transportation alternatives in tandem with the more intensive redevelopment. Those include a growing bus-trolley circulator network, an experiment with shared electric scooters that appears to be succeeding, and establishment and expansion of the on-demand Freebee electric golf-cart system in the city.

The current Gables boom has been simmering for at least five years, when City Hall was flooded with development proposals at the height of the real-estate expansion that's now in retreat. But projects were slowed in part by drawn-out, painstaking review by city planners and, in the case of Paseo, unsuccessful litigation by unhappy residents. The Agave project, for instance, could not win approval until it was shrunk and the developers agreed to donating millions of dollars worth of public amenities, including incorporating a stop for the city's expanding system of free bus trolleys as well as paying for new vehicles for the service.

Another major project, a long-contemplated proposal for redevelopment of two obsolete city parking garages on Andalusia Avenue, has been under negotiation while undergoing substantial revisions and downsizing for two years. The Allen Morris Company and Related Group were selected in a competition by the city with a plan that would combine public parking with retail, residential and office space. The Coral Gables commission will consider the plan in March, though critics concerned about overdevelopment are pushing for the city to finance and build new garages on its own, at a cost of around \$40 million, without the developers. "We've been trying to find the right balance," said Anthony De Yurre, an attorney for the developers, describing the city review. "We have made a significant number of concessions. They have been very collaborative with us. You can't do anything that's not world-class in Coral Gables."

City officials say smart planning, adherence to the 190-foot height cap, rigorous review of new designs by planners and the Gables board of architects, and close attention to what happens at street level together ensure new development hews to Merrick's plan while fostering greater urban density where it's called for. The city's long-established Mediterranean bonus rules grant developers greater density than allowed by the basic zoning code if they adhere to Mediterranean design precepts like arcades and courtyards. "In my opinion, we are fulfilling the original vision," said Coral Gables planning director **Ramon Trias**, who hung framed, blown-up architectural drawings of city landmarks such as the Biltmore throughout his department to show applicants the high bar they must clear to win approval. "This is very rare in American cities, that something was that well thought-out and has been carried out for a century. "Merrick had a very clear vision. The people who crafted it were very professional. We have the history, the tradition, and people who really care. What other city gets to this level of quality?"

All mixed-use buildings in the city require commission approval, even after they have been closely vetted — and usually significantly modified — by planners and review boards. All get a public and sometimes contentious airing, especially when developers seek variances. Those few that are approved, **Trias** argues, usually improve a building because a zoning code can't anticipate all circumstances. "I've never worked with a commission that gets so involved in design," **Trias** said. "Sometimes there is conflict, but that's a very good thing. Always, the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Ramon Trias***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

projects get better. It's that kind of passion that makes Coral Gables Coral Gables." The type of design quality the city demands can add 25 percent to the cost of development, **Trias** said, but he contends it pays off both for developers and residents.

Veteran developer Armando Codina agrees wholeheartedly. Codina, who built some large commercial buildings on LeJeune road in the Gables in previous booms in addition to the first downtown apartment building, says the city has the approach and the downtown scale about right — though he, too, disagrees with the rules requiring no building setback from the sidewalk. "I happen to like the scale of Coral Gables, and I like how careful they are," he said.

Codina went an extra mile or two in conceiving and building his newest project, built on a former parking lot just north of Alhambra Circle. The newly inaugurated 2020 Salzedo consists of a five-story office building with a stately rotunda, an expansive public courtyard that will hold tables for a new bakery and restaurant by star Lebanese-Puerto Rican pastry chef Antonio Bachour, opening Friday, as well as a 213-unit apartment tower. Codina said he personally "went after" Bachour, who will teach other chefs in a glassed-in kitchen once a month.

The building, where Codina moved his headquarters, is clearly a labor of love. So is the masonry front of the rotunda, which also bears the Codina name discreetly etched in the concrete. He commissioned well-known Miami artist Naomi Fisher to design elegant black terrazzo floors in the lobby and elevator landings of the building. Each features a different design with native palm fronds and plants. Fisher also designed metal gates that open to the courtyard. The office building balconies, meanwhile, have Cuban-tile floors. His architects at Nichols Brosch Wurst Wolfe took special care to get details and proportions right, so that the building echoes the skillful and evocative Mediterranean design that Merrick's architects were so good at. "I care," Codina said. "We view this as our second home."

The city has been carefully laying the groundwork for the downtown transformation since the 1990s, when it acquired the Miracle Theatre movie house and renovated it for use as a live drama venue by Actors' Playhouse. Since then, it created an arthouse cinema on the ground floor of a new parking garage across from the storied Books & Books shop. It converted and expanded the original fire and police station, an Art Deco landmark by Paist in coral rock, into the Coral Gables Museum.

After years of debate and planning, the city also embarked on a thorough makeover of downtown's main street, Miracle Mile, dramatically expanding sidewalks and restoring entry plazas and fountains.

Since opening last year, along with a companion conversion of the Giralda Avenue restaurant row into a pedestrian plaza, the \$20 million project has been credited with luring new dining spots and shops and boosting street life and foot traffic. Drawn-out construction, however, also claimed some longtime merchants and restaurateurs who did not survive. "Those two years really crushed a lot of existing tenants," Kerdyk said. "It's only now coming back."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The shake-out may not be done. Last week, Tarpon Bend restaurant, a 15-year-old mainstay on the mile, closed abruptly. The owner blamed higher taxes and maintenance costs passed on to the business by the landlord. But Tarpon Bend also faced increasing competition from new bars and restaurants catering to the young professional crowd he relied on.

Some skeptics are concerned that the Gables has not yet refreshed its stale image sufficiently to attract the necessary big numbers of those young people, many of whom see Mediterranean architecture as their parents' speed and might instead prefer to patronize a resurrecting Coconut Grove or Midtown Miami. But some seem willing to gamble on it. The former Scientology building on Giralda, the city's original post office, is now being renovated and expanded by a developer to house several restaurants and a rooftop lounge, for instance. The building sat on the market for two years until the Giralda makeover was approved, said Kerdyk, who handled the sale. "It's going to take Giralda a little time to retool with some more restaurants, but it's going to be a really nice scene," Kerdyk said.

The combination of public foresight, the emphasis on culture and the encouragement of mixed-use development downtown is attracting new developers to the Gables who might not have considered it previously, said Rishi Kapoor, founder of Location Ventures. Kapoor is now seeking to raise the ante exponentially on downtown Gables condo living. He's won city approval for Villa Valencia, a lavishly amenitized, 13-story condo on the edge of downtown where the top penthouse will be priced at \$10.5 million. Kapoor expects a sellout will yield \$111 million. The average size of the 39 units is an expansive 3,000 square feet, he said, and the building is designed for affluent, downsizing Gables couples who don't want to give up the space of a house — and want to spend less time in a car while enjoying an urban lifestyle.

The retooled, upscaled downtown Gables fits the bill perfectly, and he expects other developers to follow suit at that very high end, he said. "Coral Gables has gone through this beautiful rejuvenation," he said. "Look at Miracle Mile and Giralda. It's unrecognizable from 10 years ago. Now people are seeing it as a hub for an elegant lifestyle. We think the Gables market is hungry for it." Yet it's that feeling of not recognizing the Gables anymore that gives many residents an uneasy feeling.

Despite its famed zeal for architecture and preservation, the city has at times failed to guard its legacy in the face of development pressure, said Karelia Carbonell, president of the Historic Preservation Association of Coral Gables. Last year Carbonell led a drive to save the last standing building from Merrick's original business district, the LaSalle cleaners building. The city had a deal with the owners to demolish it and replace it with a parking lot but backed off under public pressure. But the city decided earlier this year not to purchase the building because the owners were asking too much, leaving its fate in limbo. "It would be a sad day in Coral Gables if that building came down," Carbonell said.

Carbonell is now tilting at an even more unlikely windmill. She is urging the city to reconsider its decision to tear down its existing fire and police station, a 1970s example of severe, sculptural Brutalist architecture that many in the city deride as "The Thing."

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The city approved a deal to swap the station property with Codina. He owned a lot catty-corner from his 2020 Salzedo where the city is now building a \$34 million, 190,000-square-foot new public-safety building, designed by international architectural and engineering firm AECOM in a modernized version of Mediterranean style. Codina said he has not decided what would replace the old station. But Carbonell, who organized a panel of noted architects last month to highlight the historic value of the Brutalist style, said the station represents a modern phase of the city's evolution that's as much worth preserving as the LaSalle.

Meanwhile, she said, the newest buildings are not only much larger than what they replace, but often architecturally bland, without the sense of grace, creativity or proportion of the Mediterranean style that inspired Merrick. It's instead "faux Med," as she put it. "The developers get credit for having a little fountain out front, so they just plunk it down. We start losing that authenticity," Carbonell said. "Coral Gables is not the sleepy town it used to be. It's lost that pleasurable feeling. It's very dense. Parking is an issue. Getting around has become complicated. Miracle Mile has changed. You feel it as you go about your day. I know we can't just live in the past. But it has not been well curated."

Architect Jose Gelabert-Navia, who helped write the original city ordinance providing the zoning bonus for Mediterranean architecture, says it's often been misused. The rules were meant to encourage architectural variety by allowing modern design that incorporates Mediterranean features such as arcades, colonnades, plazas and balconies, he said. But, he told a full house during a lecture at the Coral Gables Museum last month on the design of cities through the centuries, the city has mostly succeeded in its quest to build on Merrick's "unique" vision. "The plan is there, and for the most part it survives," Gelabert-Navia said. "I think the city is getting better and better."

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Ramon Trias
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami New Times
February 14, 2019

Coral Gables: If You Must Use Fake Grass, Hide It

Author: Brittany Shammas

When Miami city officials decided to tear out grass along Brickell Avenue and replace it with artificial turf last fall, residents were not pleased. A days-long protest ensued, complete with "Save me! I will die soon" signs on trees the protesters said would be smothered by the fake sod.

Now, commissioners in notoriously code-happy Coral Gables are making sure that kind of turf war never happens in the City Beautiful. This week, they voted to require permits for artificial grass and to largely limit it to backyards or floors above ground level. The new rules apply to both residential and commercial buildings throughout the city.

The idea is about limiting the spread of turf — and keeping it out of sight. "It doesn't look great in the context of Coral Gables, which is about authenticity; it's about landscape," planning and zoning director **Ramon Trias** said in January. "If all of a sudden everything is artificial turf, then pretty soon we lose some of the most important qualities of the city."

Miami's fake grass debacle started in October when contractors suddenly glued artificial turf on the swale along Brickell Avenue between SE 15th and 25th Roads. Residents complained trees wouldn't get the water and nutrients they need and that dog poop wouldn't disintegrate. They said the city was being "plastified." Filmmaker Billy Corben called it "beautification fraud."

Mayor Francis Suarez initially defended the change, saying the swale looked "dramatically better." But eventually, he surrendered and ordered the removal of the fake grass.

In Coral Gables, permits for fake grass may be issued for children's playgrounds, recreational ball fields, rooftop gardens, or open joints in pavements. For residential areas, even backyard artificial turf comes with the requirement that it be hidden by a "buffer," such as a fence or wall. Other locations will be allowed only if landscape options are limited by the lot conditions.

The new rules, which passed on second reading Tuesday, went into effect immediately.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel (Fort Lauderdale, FL)
September 19, 2018

Live-work-play growth spurt for Coral Gables

Author: Lisa J. Huriash

Coral Gables is in the midst of a growth spurt of mixed-use residential projects. Apartments, hotels, restaurants and more are being planned that will make "the city more active," said **Ramon Trias**, the city's Planning and Zoning director. One is at the doorstep of the Metrorail, within walking distance of shops and restaurants. Another will be outfitted with generators, thinking ahead to hurricane season. Many of the mixed-use projects are in "areas that in the past used to be mostly commercial," he said. "It's high-quality growth." Among the projects, according to the city or developers, are:

Giralda Place, a nine-story, mixed-use project of 33 condos on top of retail space. It's adjacent to a nine-story tower of Class A office space.

Closings will begin this month on the condos at 255-275 Giralda Ave. Building amenities include 24-hour concierge service and electric vehicle charging stations. Prices start from the \$900,000s. Units range from one to three bedrooms and have custom Italian cabinetry by Snaidero.

The Plaza Coral Gables, a 16-story project that is under construction. The 7-acre project will have 150 rental apartments, a 220-room hotel, 161,000 square feet of retail space and restaurants, and 465,000 square feet of office space.

Gables Station, a 499-unit rental apartment project that is under construction. The building, on Federal Highway from Ponce de Leon Boulevard to Le Jeune/Grand Avenue, will rise 14 stories tall and include commercial and office space. It will be 30 feet from a Metrorail station.

Paseo de la Riviera, an 11-story project that is under construction. It will feature a 249-room hotel, 211 apartments, retail space, and a large public open space in the form of a classically designed "paseo" (which is the Spanish word both for a leisurely walk and a walkway).

Merrick Manor, a 10-story building at 301 Altara Ave. that is expected to be completed by year's end. The project, by the Astor Cos., will have 227 condominiums, ranging from one- to four-bedroom units. Prices will range from \$374,900 to \$2.5 million. The project will also include 19,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and restaurants.

It is next to Merrick Park, which is an upscale shopping mall. "This area needs good condominium housing," said developer Henry Torres, of the Astor Cos. Among the perks: emergency generators for the amenities floor, which includes the fitness center area.

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Ramon Trias**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
June 20, 2018

Mediocre won't do for Fort Pierce's crown jewel - For plant site, patience better than so-so plans

Author: Anthony Westbury

I don't think it sends the message to the development world, ... that we can't make up our mind. I think it says just the opposite: We have a very special place here and we insist on only the best. Fort Pierce Community Redevelopment Agency board members made the first move Monday evening by giving the go-ahead for a new round of bids to develop the former H.D. King power plant site in downtown.

As I've written before, this is – or should be – the city's crown jewel. It's the last major undeveloped parcel that overlooks the Indian River Lagoon. It could be a visually stunning centerpiece for the city. Unfortunately, two recent proposals for the site were not, as Mayor Linda Hudson noted Monday, very "exciting." "I was struck by the lack of (public) enthusiasm for either proposal," Hudson said. "I'd hoped for a lot of excitement." We all did, but we didn't get it in the plans submitted.

CRA members voted unanimously Monday to re-do the city's request for proposals for the King site in the hope the city will receive better ideas next time. The timeline for a new RFP process is a little daunting. It'll take about 18 months all told, but several community members spoke in favor of getting the process right this time rather than settling for second-best, or worse. "We're not a third-rate community," resident Holly Theuns argued from the podium. "We deserve and can get better as a city. We're obliged to get the best (proposal) we can. Let's have community forums and make the third time the charm."

A former city commissioner, Eddie Becht, agreed. "We can do better," he said during public comment. "This is a unique centerpiece for Fort Pierce: It's on the water, it's right next door to the city marina where you've just invested \$20 million. "Why the rush (to approve inferior plans)? Three years ago we couldn't get a hotel; I believe if you put out another RFQ you'll get better proposals." Becht, a lawyer who specializes in real estate, said the market for commercial real estate in Fort Pierce is "hot" right now, and that we should take advantage of that trend.

City Manager Nick Mimms outlined an 18-month timeline for a fresh RFP process. One of the first tangible steps, Mimms said, will be a community planning forum slated for July or August. That is the community's chance to be heard (again), to tell city staff and prospective developers what we want to see on the King site.

As Commissioner Tom Perona noted, "we need a clearer message. We should have three or four absolutes we have to have in place." I'd go one step further. We need more than a list of major components for the site; we need a vision, a picture of how it all could look. I recall then-

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Commissioner Becht speaking from the dais in 2005 about shortcomings in the city planning department.

While then-Planning Director **Ramon Trias** had transformed downtown with some truly imaginative architecture and streetscape additions, other "nuts and bolts" planning regulations and an update to the city's comprehensive plan had gone neglected. "I need a planner," Becht said. "I've got a world-class urban designer, but I need a planner."

It wasn't long before **Trias** left the city. He's now planning director for the city of Coral Gables. We have a planner now, the competent Rebecca Grohall, and no disrespect to her abilities, but Fort Piece needs an urban designer again, even temporarily. We need someone who can articulate the community's vision for the King site, put it on paper to inspire developers who want to buy the land and fulfill the city's dreams.

The visionary could be a consultant, it could be a team. In the past, designers from the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council re-imagined Harbortown Marina as a Mediterranean fishing village. They illustrated ideas for the wastewater treatment site on South Beach. Maybe we should ask them back?

Having a do-over on the King site can be a very good thing for Fort Pierce. I don't think it sends the message to the development world, as a couple of commissioners feared, that we can't make up our mind. I think it says just the opposite: We have a very special place here and we insist on only the best. We've been given another chance to get the King site right. Let's utilize all the talent we can muster to make it a crown jewel that truly dazzles.

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
January 27, 2017

What sort of college dorm can \$155 million buy? UM students will find out.

Author: Andres Viglucci and Lance Dixon

The University of Miami plans to spend around \$155 million on a major new dormitory complex on Lake Osceola, further cementing the institution's transition from a college with a majority of commuting students to a school increasingly centered around a traditional on-campus undergraduate experience. Construction of the elaborate 1,100-bed dorm would also carry side benefits for residents of surrounding Coral Gables by markedly easing auto traffic into and out of campus, long a sore point in the City Beautiful, UM and city officials say.

The dorm plan, which is now under review by the city but is expected to be greenlighted, is also designed to reduce automobile use on campus. It would convert a nearly nine-acre expanse at the center of the UM campus that's now occupied mostly by parking lots, a roadway and lawns into an activity-filled, pedestrian-friendly hub for student life, planners say. At ground and mezzanine level, the plan, which encompasses 23 interconnected buildings, includes retail space, a "launch pad" for student businesses, a 200-seat auditorium and a flexible "curated warehouse" that could accommodate special programs such as exhibits or dramatic productions.

The plan, designed by Miami-based architectural giant Arquitectonica, would in addition advance the greening of the UM campus by creating an expansive lawn and a tropical garden on the lakefront. The dorms, raised on thin columns and arranged in the shape of a lasso, would be set amid green-bedecked courtyards, plazas and outdoor spaces. Green roofs — that is, roofs literally covered by cooling green grass — would top the dorms. "As the institution continues to attract brighter and more talented students, the living space in this new facility is being designed to meet the needs and expectations of the next generation of University of Miami students," said Jim Smart, director of UM housing, in a statement. "By adding programming space to the lower levels, the village will serve as a gathering space for the greater UM community."

After a meeting at the city's Development Review Committee on Friday, UM representatives and Gables officials said they were happy with progress on the dorm blueprint, first envisioned under a campus master plan approved by the city in 2010. That broad plan gave UM significant flexibility in building inside the campus in exchange for strict controls by the city along the campus borders. The dorm complex would be approved by the Gables' planning director and does not require a city commission vote. "I think the University of Miami is doing an outstanding job with the functional aspects of the project and the design aspects of the project," said Gables planning director **Ramon Trias**. "It's going to completely transform the area around Lake Osceola, and the buildings will contribute to the overall aesthetic of the campus."

The dorm complex, which also requires approval by UM trustees, would open in fall 2019, the university said. It's only the latest in an ambitious series of expansion and improvement projects launched under now-retired UM President Donna Shalala, who raised more than \$3 billion in

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donations during her 14-year tenure at the university. The unveiling of the dorm plan comes just as UM completed the new Lennar Foundation Medical Center to provide consumer health services by its doctors on the campus edge on Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The medical center will hold its grand opening on Sunday.

The dorm project better positions UM, which has a reputation for older, cramped dorms that lack the snazzy amenities today's undergraduates expect, to compete for students who rate schools in part on dorm quality. The last big new dorm project built on campus was the University Village apartments on Red Road in 2006. Since then, developers have built apartment complexes near UM in part to lure students. UM also plans to soon begin renovating its older housing facilities. "As the University of Miami continues to rise as a top-tier research institution, so too do students' expectations for a comfortable, secure and supportive living and learning environment," said Patricia Whitely, UM's vice president for student affairs, in a statement released by the university.

The new complex would substantially boost the campus residential capacity. Only 4,000 of its 10,500 undergraduates now live on campus, UM says. Freshmen, with the exception of those whose parents live nearby, must live on campus and are not allowed to have cars on campus. But UM said it wants more of its undergraduates sleeping on campus, in part "to foster a stronger sense of on-campus community," according to an explanatory letter in its permit application.

The new dorms would have scads of amenities, from the auditorium and innovation spaces to study lounges, a bike room and outdoor recreation decks, as well as a distinctive look. In keeping with UM's design ethos — the main campus, developed mostly after World War II, was the first U.S. college built entirely with Modern architecture — the dorm complex is contemporary in style, updating the climate-friendly Miami Modern aesthetic.

The dorms would have slanted roofs, ranging in height from 50 to 70 feet, and three different facade designs — one in wood, another in metal, and a third in concrete and stucco. Planning documents promise lots of natural light and interconnecting, shady breezeways and airy colonnades at ground level. The project would entail the loss of parking, some of which would be replaced with the addition of parking lifts at UM's Pavia Parking Garage, as well as the closure of a roadway, eliminating some vehicular traffic in favor of a pedestrianized "car-free zone" connected with the surrounding campus by a network of new walkways, the application says.

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
May 16, 2016

New plans proposed for Coral Gables' North Ponce area at community meeting

Author: Lance Dixon

As more change, modernization and development come to Coral Gables, city staff is working to find a balance between the old and new in the North Ponce neighborhood. The city is considering the creation of two zoning overlay areas that would both encourage commercial development on Ponce de Leon Boulevard and preserve the residential character of the neighborhoods around the road. Gables staff welcomed about 25 residents to the St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church for a community planning meeting May 5 to present them with the proposed zoning changes and receive their feedback. Similar meetings held last summer partly shaped the latest plans for the area. The North Ponce neighborhood is bounded by Alhambra Circle, Southwest Eighth Street, Douglas and LeJeune roads. "We would really like to see this remain a residential community of a scale that is very livable and walkable," Commissioner Patricia Keon said.

Staff's proposal is for a conservation district in the two neighborhoods off of Ponce, on the east and west sides. The city would then create a North Ponce mixed-use overlay for the land along Ponce and in the city's business district. The conservation district would encourage the development of small businesses like bed and breakfasts and home offices. Buildings in the area would be capped at 20,000 square feet and three stories high. The district also includes proposals like matching every car parking space with a bicycle parking space and providing a bicycle rack for each new building.

Meanwhile the mixed-use district along Ponce would encourage larger buildings with a minimum of 20,000 square feet and mandatory step-backs from both the main street and the residential district. In addition to the potential zoning changes, the city hopes to do additional studies and create pedestrian and bicycle mobility plans for the area while also exploring the creation of residential permit parking. Staff is also considering the addition of new park spaces in the area and the use of vacant lots to develop community civic spaces or build larger apartments along Ponce.

Residents at the meeting seemed encouraged by the idea of protecting the residential areas, but some expressed concern about large development on Ponce. "Once you have everything going up you can't tell one developer no if you did it for the other one," Mayra Diaz said.

Staff said that the plan is a work in progress and finding a balance between new commercial growth and conserving the residential feel of North Ponce will be their challenge. "I do think when we get done, this area is going to be very similar to what it is now," planning director **Ramon Trias** said. Staff will take the residents' feedback and present an updated plan to the City Commission at a future meeting.

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Hurricane
April 13, 2016

City Commission of Coral Gables hosts public hearing for Gifford Arboretum

By David Ufberg

After nearly two hours of discussion Tuesday morning, the City Commission of Coral Gables approved the University of Miami's request to alter the plans of the internal road to be built through the northern part of campus so that it does not run through the Gifford Arboretum. The City Hall hosted a public hearing on Tuesday regarding the construction of the road through the arboretum areas. The decision is not yet finalized and is subject to change before final approval. In the current plan, the proposed road would connect the two parking lots adjacent to the arboretum, connecting the northeast side of campus to the northwest by road. UM's request for the road, however, entails the pavement being laid around the arboretum as opposed to through it, preserving it in its entirety. The proposal for the road first arose in 2007 due to a large amount of complaints from nearby residents about traffic and was subsequently postponed.

City of Coral Gables Planning Director **Ramon Trias** spoke to the commission about UM's proposed redesign of the construction project, which would include not building through the arboretum. "The [primary] condition is the improvements around Campo Sano ... The ones that enhance the aesthetics around the campus," **Trias** said. "The University has committed to fund \$1 million in public projects for the neighborhood [should its request for the internal road be fulfilled]."

One of the potential resolutions includes UM's funding of \$1 million worth of public works projects to benefit the neighborhood. Another would see an expansion of the arboretum.

Maria Cruz, a representative of the residents around UM who are concerned about student traffic in their neighborhood, questioned why it took so long for "the neighbors" to get what they want and deserve. "[In 2007], we felt that we needed the internal road to alleviate the traffic in our area. We fought it and fought; we finally got the city to give us an agreement that it would be built," Cruz said. "Somehow, the university found ways to postpone, extend ... to not have to complete it. And this is where we are today. It should have been completed years ago ... It's very hard to walk on San Amaro and look at cars parked there, where you felt that the area should be open."

Stephen Pearson, the director of the arboretum, explained how crucial the area is to the community. "We have programs throughout the school year; every single one of these programs are free and open to the public," he said. "We fought very hard to reciprocate to the community and to educate the community."

Commissioner Vince Lago agreed with Pearson that the garden is a mainstay of the community; he lives on San Amaro Drive and sees the arboretum every day. On Wednesday night, Pearson and approximately 50 people gathered in the arboretum to observe Arbor Day as part of Earth

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Week and to celebrate the Coral Gables campus's designation as a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation. The designation honors universities that effectively manage trees and engage students in doing so. The jazz ensemble from the Frost School of Music, the Zack Zebley Trio, performed at the event. At the event, Pearson, who has been director for four years, said he knows many residents who are in favor of expanding the arboretum rather than constricting it.

The video of the public hearing at the commission meeting will be available on the City of Coral Gables website on Thursday or Friday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
July 5, 2015

Redevelopment wave to hit Coral Gables

Author: Andres Viglucci

Until now, Coral Gables - unflashy, uncool, a Mediterranean-themed bastion of affluent suburban stolidity - seemed a bulwark against the wave of redevelopment that's swept through neighboring Miami and Miami Beach, turning derelict areas from South Beach to Brickell and Midtown into dense urban enclaves a-glimmer with the young and hip.

Not that anyone in the City Beautiful was complaining. And not that there wasn't the occasional big new residential and commercial project downtown, or some hot restaurants opening amid the bridal shops, to enliven the worn sidewalks of Miracle Mile, its once-sleepy main street. But wander a couple of blocks off the Mile, especially after office hours, and the Gables still seems more City Quiescent than City Beautiful. That may be about to change.

An avalanche of high-density projects, some with towers pushing up against the limits of the city's famously stringent zoning rules, could reshape the landscape of central Coral Gables, filling in its downtown and surrounding neighborhoods with new hotels, hundreds of condo and apartment units, and an array of office, restaurant and retail space that measures out in the hundreds of thousands of square feet.

The roster of projects, many approved and some already under construction, has stirred impassioned debate among Gables residents and elected officials. Some fear the surge imperils the city's proud tradition of meticulous planning and tightly controlled development - a regime well known for regulating construction down to the color you may paint your house. Others say it will bring welcome growth and rejuvenation while hewing to city father George Merrick's picturesque vision of a subtropical Mediterranean Eden, thanks to those strict rules and a series of planning and quality-of-life initiatives by the city that include a total makeover of Miracle Mile. One thing's for sure: This is not your grandfather's Coral Gables.

Earlier this month, after three years of intensive review and revision, Gables commissioners approved the biggest single development in the city's 90-year history - the Mediterranean Village at Ponce Circle, comprising more than one million square feet of hotel, condos and shopping layered into 6.7 acres of long-vacant land three blocks south of the Mile on Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

In embracing the project blueprint, which contains nearly as much retail space as exists along the entire Mile, commissioners broke with longstanding Coral Gables practice: They allowed a significant markup in density even after trimming the project's size. And, by a narrow 3-2 vote, they approved a controversial restaurant above the hotel tower's 19th floor, up to now the strict cap for habitable space in the city. Only the cupola above the city's fabled Biltmore Hotel will top the tip of the Mediterranean Village's 297-foot-high spire, and just by a couple of feet.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Ramon Trias***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

That's hardly the end of it. Some 16 projects of substantial size are in the city development pipeline. They range from an outpost of the budget-friendly, youth-oriented Aloft Hotel chain now under construction on busy Le Jeune Road to a proposed 16-story residential tower, 33 Alhambra, that would occupy most of a city block behind Coral Gables Elementary School, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Gables Mayor Jim Cason acknowledges that's quite a bit for a city of 50,000 that he says had seen just 13 major new developments since 1999. But he's not sure all the contemplated projects will actually get built or go as big as proposed. Speculators and inexperienced developers often give up when they run into the first critical design review from the city, he said. "There's lots of people who say they want to build in Coral Gables," Cason said. "People say the tall buildings are coming. Well, maybe, maybe not."

It's not just tall buildings, though. Developers have filed applications for more than half a dozen infill residential projects, mostly rowhouses and small apartment buildings, that would replace modest and sometimes rundown duplexes and apartments dotting neighborhoods west of downtown. The wave extends to the old industrial section surrounding the upscale, 13-year-old Village of Merrick Park shopping mall, an area south of downtown that's being gradually transformed into a high-density mixed-use district. Ugo Colombo, owner of The Collection auto dealership on Bird Road, purchased the adjoining block and, with developer Shoma, recently won approval for the Collection Residences, a 10-story building with 270 luxury condos and 40,000 square feet of ground-floor retail. That's just one of six large projects approved or proposed for the district.

Developers are even looking to build tall on South Dixie Highway, the strip-mall-dominated corridor that bisects Coral Gables. A contentious proposal to replace the old Holiday Inn across from the University of Miami with two towers, a 15-story residential building and a 13-story hotel, has divided residents of the single-family neighborhood behind it. The project would feature shops and restaurants on the ground floor and a pedestrian passage connecting to the adjoining neighborhood. City officials insist they're equal to the challenge.

They've put the brakes to the Holiday Inn project while they study its impact and develop a broader vision for the Dixie corridor - one of two such planning efforts now underway. "We're not going to allow anything to get out of hand." Cason said. "We want to preserve Merrick's vision. There's always people who want to build more than we want. But we're never going to be Brickell. We don't allow buildings that tall." But the stream of plans has strained the resources of the city's small planning department and raised concern among some residents over the ability and willingness of administrators and elected officials to protect Coral Gables' historic scale, look and feel. Many also worry about the impact on traffic, which already becomes congested at peak times.

Downtown Coral Gables, a regional corporate and employment center that attracts tens of thousands of commuters, is certainly no stranger to height or density. Most developers working there today already take advantage of zoning bonuses that allow them to build bigger if they

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adopt the city's trademark Mediterranean look. But, like the approved Mediterranean Village, many of the proposed new developments result from big lot assemblages and may require rezonings, variances or special large-area plans that strike some as more go-go Miami than conservative Coral Gables. Critics say it would be unwise for the city to stray from the plan Merrick developed in the 1920s. The city founder adopted the tenets of the late-19th Century City Beautiful movement, which sought to bring elegance to gritty American cities by erecting grand civic buildings in a garden-like setting of squares, fountains, boulevards and plazas - a template Gables leaders have mostly preserved and enhanced in the decades since. "The people who want to come in and get exemptions ought to be building according to our code," resident Jim Hartnett told city commissioners as they debated the Mediterranean Village plan. "Sooner or later, it will not be Coral Gables, the City Beautiful, but Coral Gables, the city of concrete."

Recently installed Gables commissioner Jeanett Slesnick, who ran on a slow-growth platform, contends the city had become too lenient in granting what she called "spot zoning" to developers seeking to supersize projects. "It's why I ran for office," said Slesnick, whose husband, Don Slesnick, preceded Cason as mayor. "I got angry that this was happening in my town. I want people to take a second look at what they're doing. You have to have some change. But you need quality change, change that reflects the community."

The development pressure on the Gables, developers and city officials say, results from spillover from Miami's real-estate boom and a pent-up appetite among Millennials and empty-nesters for urban-style living in the suburbs. The central Gables, with its urban grid layout, a burgeoning dining and cultural scene, stable governance and a well-to-do population, but also antiquated, non-historic commercial buildings on small lots, is a natural draw for redevelopment, they say.

To be sure, nothing in the Gables development pipeline approaches the scale of the newest megablock skyscrapers in Miami. But dense Miami-style development has been creeping up to the Gables border at both Bird Road and Coral Way, where the municipal dividing line runs along or close to Douglas Road. "The whole market is hyperactive," said veteran developer Armando Codina, who has built several mixed-use buildings in the Gables in past years and has started construction on his newest, a 16-story residential building with a companion four-story office building, on an acre and a half at 2020 Salzedo Street. "What's happening inside the Gables is simply that the market is overheated."

Codina, who stressed that he has never asked for a variance from the Gables' height cap, said he believes the city's code for downtown has it about right, encouraging an urbane and consistent scale of development. "I think we have the right scale," he said of his new buildings, which will be separated by a broad, public interior courtyard for dining and lingering. "It's a very human scale. It's a Coral Gables scale. I like their code. I like their controls. I know someone's not going to come and build something crappy next to me."

City commissioners and planners have been at pains to stress that the Mediterranean Village, which supplants a never-completed Spanish Village development, presented unique circumstances because of its size, and set no legal precedents for other developers. They note the

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

city stood its ground when the Mediterranean Village developer, Agave Ponce, an offshoot of the Mexican family that controls the Cuervo brand of tequila, initially filed plans that many thought too big and mall-like. Planners and elected officials got Agave to scrub more than 100,000 square feet from the project, including an entire residential tower, a gym and a cinema, which the city said would have cast a shadow over a single-family neighborhood to the east and overwhelmed an important historic building that's to be incorporated into the village. Agave also reshaped the village to put pedestrian-friendly street-level retail and a pedestrian-only "paseo" entrance on Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

The result, the city says, is an urbanistically cohesive, well-designed set of buildings and public plazas and streets that will bring fresh commercial and pedestrian life to what's been a dead zone for too long. "That took three years and the developer was not happy, but that's what it takes," said **Ramon Trias**, the city planning director. "Every step of the way, it got better."

City planners have also scrambled to get ahead of the development wave, embarking on rapid studies of two broad areas of the city where development pressure is building - the South Dixie corridor and North Ponce, the mostly low-scale residential neighborhood that extends north from Alhambra Circle downtown to Southwest Eighth Street along Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

In North Ponce - a hodge-podge of historic apartment houses and nondescript buildings edging up to more-recently built residential towers on Ponce - the goal is to develop rules for congenial new development that preserves and enhances its urban-village texture and economic diversity, city planners and consultants say. No fewer than nine projects have been proposed for the North Ponce area, one of the few relatively affordable neighborhoods in the Gables. "We will set the parameters as to what we accept and what we want up there," Cason said. "We don't want spot zoning."

On South Dixie, where Merrick's zoning was changed in the 1940s to accommodate auto-oriented strip development, the idea is to set the table for a gradual transformation of what's now a funnel for cars into a more walkable, Gables-like boulevard - perhaps by returning to Merrick's original conception, which Gables planning director **Trias** says called for tall buildings. On the west side, the city is actively supporting plans for the Underline, a contemplated bikeway and linear park that would replace the bare-bones path beneath the elevated Metrorail line.

At the same time, the city will soon break ground on a long-contemplated, \$20 million streetscape makeover of Miracle Mile and neighboring Giralda Avenue, the popular but faded block-long restaurant row, that's designed to beautify and make both much more welcoming for pedestrians. Now in the last stages of planning and design, the project will expand the width of sidewalks along the Mile to 23 feet, from the current 15 1/2 feet, to accommodate pedestrians, outdoor cafes and a dense thicket of shade trees, all by slightly narrowing auto travel lanes and supplanting angled street parking with parallel parking, a controversial idea that will eliminate numerous spots. The restaurant row, meanwhile, would be rebuilt in a curbless European design so it can better accommodate events like the popular Giralda Under the Stars, a seasonal monthly event in which restaurants set up tables in the street. Retractable bollards would make it easy to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Ramon Trias**

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close the street for such special events. The draft plans for both streets, by noted New York firm Cooper, Robertson & Partners, feature artsy design elements - pavers tinted to resemble clouds and blue sky on the Mile and, on Giralda, a street design consisting of concentric circles that resemble ripples in a puddle, and above it, suspended LED lights shaped like raindrops. Thick copses of trees at either end of Giralda will create romantic, formal entranceways. A related city project would replace the two big obsolete parking garages on Valencia Avenue, just behind Miracle Mile, that create a dead zone for pedestrians. The city is looking for developers to build a total of about 500 parking spaces within architecturally fitting, sidewalk-friendly building envelopes, and with some mix of uses, possibly including condos or apartments. Merchants and property owners on the Mile say the streetscape improvements are long overdue, pointing to its stained, uneven sidewalks, cracked paving tiles, patches of bare dirt in open tree pits and the non-functional historic fountains at either end of the street.

They say the Mile needs to regain its luster if downtown Coral Gables is to hold its place in the increasingly competitive urban ecology of Miami-Dade, where new and resurgent neighborhoods like Midtown Miami, Wynwood, the Design District and even adjacent South Miami's downtown are drawing away well-to-do shoppers, diners and residents by amping up the pedestrian, dining and shopping ambience. "Miracle Mile is the absolute face of the city," said Stephen Bittell, chairman of Terranova Corp., a real estate firm heavily involved in the revitalization of Lincoln Road Mall in Miami Beach that now owns multiple buildings on the Mile. "It just needs to reclaim its glory and kind of go back to the future. To do that you gotta bring people to the street. That turns on everything else there."

Bringing people to the street, in fact, aptly sums up the city's development strategy and its response to the traffic issue. Mixing condos and apartments with offices, shopping and dining, attracts young professionals to boost commerce and helps keep a lid on auto traffic, officials say. "They can live near where they work and walk and bike," Cason said. The city is also installing new bike lanes routes and expanding its popular trolley-bus system. Under the Mediterranean Village approval, Agave will put up \$37 million towards neighborhood and street improvements and for expansion of trolley service. The developer will spend \$1.3 million to buy four new trolleys and \$626,000 annually for 25 years towards operations. The city also required Agave to incorporate significant bike-parking facilities and showers for bike commuters.

Such meticulously planned projects, supporters say, distinguish development in the Gables. The Mediterranean Village faced little resistance in the end because neighbors and Miracle Mile merchants and property owners, initially wary of its impact on homes and businesses, were won over by its benefits, noted Agave's land-use lawyer. Marcio Garcia-Serra. "At one point people were very resistant to change, but that's changed. They see that development done the right way can lead to benefits for their daily lives, such as a more walkable city," he said.

Cason said he intends to ensure that review of forthcoming projects will be exacting. "We want to preserve the great things in Coral Gables, and that means controlling what goes on downtown and in the residential neighborhoods," he said, before adding with a laugh: "No purple houses."

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Indian River Press Journal/Sebastian Sun/50 Plus Lifestyles/Florida Fairways (FL)
February 2, 2006

Vero panel to interview firms for zoning codes

Author: KEONA GARDNER

VERO BEACH -- Almost a year after the City Council approved a plan to help manage the future growth, city officials will interview firms to help direct the process. Starting on Friday and continuing on Wednesday, four firms from as close as Fort Pierce to as far as Jacksonville will vie for a chance to help write the city's future zoning codes.

The selection committee's suggestion will be given to the City Council for approval. The committee is composed of Deborah Daige and Keith Pelan, members of the Vision Implementation Team; Planning Manager Nancy Carter; Finance Director Stephen Maillet and Monte Falls, Public Works and Engineering director. The winning firm would be charged with rewriting the city's zoning code to mirror the Vision Plan and creating master plans for several of the city's commercial districts.

Pelan said Tuesday consultants are needed because the implementation process is a time-consuming task for city staff and the 21-member implementation team to undertake. "I don't have the expertise and the time and neither do they (the team) have the time," Pelan said.

The Fort Pierce-based **Trias** and Associates will be the first firm to interview. The firm's principal is former Fort Pierce Planning Director **Ramon Trias**, who facilitated September's community forum on design changes to the Twin Pairs. So far, the city has paid **Trias** \$15,000 for the forum.

If selected, **Trias** will work with local architect Michael Wangen, who is a city Planning and Zoning Board member, to rewrite city code. By working with **Trias**, Wangen -- who could not be reached for comment -- may create a conflict of interest because board members are prohibited from having any contact with any party that may go before the board on an issue.

Assistant City Attorney Wayne Coment said Tuesday he hasn't researched the issue fully, but the conflict could be avoided if Wangen recuses himself from voting on the zoning changes proposed by **Trias's** firm. What: Interviewing firms to help implement the Vision Plan.

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
January 16, 2005

DOWNTOWN FORT PIERCE SET FOR BUILDING BOOM

Author: Brandy Swartz

Recent building plan approvals might signify the beginning of a boom for downtown Fort Pierce. Cheryl Asklof's eyes light up when she talks about the condominiums that will be built behind her shop, Bangz, a hair salon in the historic P.P. Cobb building. "I cannot wait to see condos right there and over there," Asklof said as she pointed toward lots where future projects are in various site plan stages. She has owned the business for six years and said she chose the location because she believed in the downtown area. Four downtown projects are in different stages of development, including Marina Square, the city's JC Penney parking garage, the Renaissance and now One Marina Place -- the most recent to have its preliminary site plan approved -- and will allow people to live downtown. One Marina Place is a five-story project featuring 41 condominiums and retail space on a 1.2-acre lot. The lot is located in an area that allows the city to control development.

City commissioners approved plans on Jan. 3 for more units per acre and a taller building than other downtown structures, although they asked that the height be brought down from 84 feet to 75. The building is being developed by Location Development of Boynton Beach. "It's a long time coming," Commissioner Christine Coke said, adding the city's enthusiasm needs to be peppered with caution. Coke criticized the city at a commission meeting Monday night, saying its plans to have shops at the street level of the JC Penney parking garage would put private retailers at a disadvantage. "A lot of people have said that the retail will be competing with downtown shops," Coke said. "I don't think it's fair of the city to compete with local citizens" who own businesses downtown or are trying to rent out retail space.

The garage would be southwest of Marina Square on Indian River Drive and add about 300 public parking spaces downtown. There would be three stories of office space and one story of retail business use, according to **Ramon Trias**, city director of development. **Trias** said he hopes to begin building the parking garage at the same time as Marina Square.

Marina Square is a 2.5-acre site across from the city marina that would house a five-story building featuring hotel rooms and condominiums, office space, retail space, a 3,600-square-foot conference center and public and private parking. The cost is an estimated \$50 million and the project might take more than a year to complete, according to the developer, Catalfumo Construction of Palm Beach County.

The Renaissance is still in the early planning stages but architect Philip Steele of Steele Design Associates, Inc. said he has a finished schematic for the lot, just over one acre. His plans are for 56 condominium units, four stories of offices on the Indian River Drive side and commercial space on the Melody Lane side, "on top of and around" a two-story parking garage. The developer is Boca Ven Land of Vero Beach.

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Ramon Trias**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
November 6, 2000

Piecing together the future, students design hypothetical

Author: Carla Roccapriore

FORT PIERCE -- High wind, strong rain and safety alerts don't accompany all Hurricanes paying visits to Fort Pierce. Fifty-four Hurricanes swarmed the area this year, arriving from Coral Gables with a professor and guided by a local alumnus.

University of Miami students toured Fort Pierce in September, learning about its architecture and revitalization efforts from **Ramon Trias**, the city's director of development, who also traveled to the campus to speak to Dr. Joanna Lombard's students. As a result, future buildings in northwest Fort Pierce may someday be built thanks to the two-month-long efforts and creativity of several second-year UM architecture students. They built models from balsa wood and designed drawings of proposed structures for sites within three blocks of the Sgt. Willie B. Ellis Police Substation on Avenue D, **Trias** said.

An array of their work was put on display at the substation this weekend -- outlining imminent possibilities for northwest Fort Pierce. "The university has ways to test things better than the commercial market," Lombard said. "Students try to do research, legwork and test ideas. Then the professionals take over." Such concepts are common in many industries, she said.

Trias, who earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees in architecture at UM, led students through the city, taking them to older, historic buildings, such as the Seven Gables House and St. Anastasia School. He also took them down Avenue D, discussing possible plans -- the root of their recently completed class projects. "This is real exceptional work -- the question is whether we can learn from it and get the whole area [Avenue D] moving," **Trias** said. "They were being fairly realistic. Fort Pierce was a good laboratory for them."

Design proposals from students included a produce market, community theater, bakery, row house, apartments, music store, homes, bed and breakfast, professional offices, health clinic, community development center and a seamstress shop. The model buildings were all mixed-use - - some commercial, others Florida cracker-style, **Trias** said.

Students were graded on the general appropriateness of their proposals and how closely their plan would fit and work, Lombard said. Students also learned how building structures in urban and suburban areas differ.

Redevelopment in a city such as Fort Pierce is about architecture, mainly public space and public buildings, **Trias** said. Lombard said her students were excited about assisting the city and impressed with the high quality and quantity of urban architecture. She said she'd be interested in returning to Fort Pierce with future students.

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The work of the UM students opened many eyes. Avenue D was a "nice place" 30 to 40 years ago, **Trias** said. But to regain its once-vibrant spirit, help from the private sector is necessary, he said. "What we're missing are people who actually want to do it," **Trias** said. "Part of what needs to happen are people in this business need to discover Avenue D as a place of quality and opportunity."

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
September 3, 1999

PSL'S COOPER BLUNDERED WITH UNGRACIOUS REMARK

Dear Editor:

As a class member of Leadership XVII, I recently experienced the different municipal governments of St. Lucie County in action. Since this letter is coming from an individual, I cannot unequivocally say that the entire class agrees with me, but I would venture to say that at least 98 percent would concur with the following.

Kudos to Fort Pierce Mayor Eddie Enns, City Manager Dennis Beach and Director of Planning **Ramon Trias** for their professionalism, information and hospitality. They encouraged participation by the class and provided the overall picture of where Fort Pierce has been and is going. What teamwork and what a support system!

Much to my chagrin, I was incredibly taken aback by Port St. Lucie City Manager Don Cooper. I will cite only one of what I considered to be several blunders.

The most blatantly disturbing comment that I must address is when he said "my wife refuses to go to Fort Pierce for fear of being murdered."

During City Manager Cooper's presentation he provided numerous facts. He stated, "what Fort Pierce does affects Port St. Lucie and what Port St. Lucie does affects Fort Pierce." This is clearly evident to me, but I question how evident it is to Mr. Cooper and how it enhances the relationships between Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce. I see it as a step back, not forward.

Good luck, Port St. Lucie.
Betsy Haddock
Fort Pierce

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Ramon Trias
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
April 23, 1999

3 LOCAL HISTORICAL PROJECTS RECEIVE \$55,000 IN GRANTS

Author: Drew Dixon

"They're beginning to discover there's a lot of history in Fort Pierce." **Ramon Trias** Planning Director

City of Fort Pierce

Three historical projects - two sponsored by the city of Fort Pierce and one by St. Lucie County - have received more than \$55,000 in grants from the Florida Department of State Historic Preservation. The city received more than \$35,000 in matching grants; the county received \$20,000. **Ramon Trias**, director of planning for the city, applied for the grants and called the awards a coup for the area. "They're beginning to discover there's a lot of history in Fort Pierce," **Trias** said. "Historical people are starting to pay attention now."

Of the grant money earmarked for Fort Pierce, \$25,000 will go to the Seven Gables House, a cracker-style historic home that last year was moved next to the Manatee Observation and Education Center in downtown Fort Pierce and will serve as a historic museum showcasing local architecture and lifestyle. The restoration and preservation of Seven Gables House cost the city \$230,000, and the grant from the state will offset some of that cost, **Trias** said. The house is set to open to the public later this year. The city also received \$10,927 to be used for the Fort Pierce Architecture Education program, **Trias** said. The city's planning department has developed a coloring book designed for elementary students that features the architectural uniqueness in Fort Pierce.

A test sampling of the book was distributed to fourth-graders at F.K. Sweet Magnet Elementary School earlier this month, and **Trias** said it went over well with the youngsters. "It was way beyond my expectations," **Trias** said. "They were talking about architectural terms. They were ready to conduct a course." But the overall urban renewal of downtown is what is bringing the funding to the city, **Trias** said. A couple of years ago the State Department did help with some funding of Sunrise Theater restoration. "Now they realize there's a lot of historic buildings around it. The whole downtown is what makes Fort Pierce so interesting."

The St. Lucie County Archaeological Survey scored \$20,000 in grants for projects that would make Indiana Jones proud. "It will be (used for) a survey of prehistoric and archeological sites," said David Kelly, planning manager for the county. "We are aware of a number of archeological sites that are certainly pre-written history sites. They're prehistoric Native American sites."

Kelly said a consultant will be hired to survey the sites and search for new sites. And that, he said, could generate ecotourism and heritage tourism. Beside that, Kelly said, the county has a cultural obligation to identify historical Native American sites. "We have citizens of St. Lucie

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

County represented by these groups and I think it is important culturally." The county is kicking in \$32,000 from the general fund for the archeological research. A consultant will also be hired and the county plans to produce a video explaining the archeological significance of the area, Kelly said. The Florida Department of State distributed nearly \$1 million in grants as part of the historic preservation funding this year. In all, 58 historic projects in Florida received money.

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
June 5, 1998

GROUNDBREAKING SIGNALS START OF EFFORT TO REVIVE AVENUE D

Author: George Andreassi

To go along with the improvements, Fort Pierce officials have asked residents to cooperate with police on crime issues. "Needless to say, we could come in here and pave these streets with gold. That won't do any good if we can't remove the criminal element." Reginald Sessions

FORT PIERCE - Declaring a new beginning for a faded commercial corridor that has become synonymous with drugs and violence, city officials Thursday staged a ceremonial groundbreaking for a \$2 million rebuilding of Avenue D. "We're here today to remove that negative stigma on this particular corridor," said City Commissioner Reginald Sessions. "Needless to say, we could come in here and pave these streets with gold. That won't do any good if we can't remove the criminal element."

Sessions called for neighborhood residents to cooperate with police and refuse to tolerate the drug dealing and violent crime that have made Avenue D the most notorious street in the city. Avenue D has been the scene of many killings in recent years, including a fatal shooting Feb. 23. There also have been dozens of arrests this year on drug-dealing charges, according to police reports.

But city officials and neighborhood merchants hope the reconstruction of the road and the erection of a new fire station and police substation will provide the impetus for an economic revival of the once-thriving commercial strip. "Avenue D is everybody's problem," said Randolph Scott, president of the Lincoln Park Community Businessmen's and Women's Association and owner of Scotty's Deli, 1507 Avenue D. "We need to stop making Avenue D our excuse and start making it a solution."

Plans call for the reconstruction of Avenue D from U.S. 1 west to the city line at 33rd Street, said **Ramon Trias**, the city's director of planning. "It's going to be brand-new, a total reconstruction," he said. "The deferred maintenance of the last couple of decades is going to be completely taken care of."

The planning director said he could not find anyone who remembers the last time Avenue D was repaved. A roundabout is planned for 15th Street, similar to the traffic circle on Indian River Drive at Avenue A in downtown Fort Pierce, **Trias** said. He expressed support for a proposal by Scott to place a statue or monument in the center of the roundabout in honor of the black civic activists who contributed to the progress of the city's black residents.

Sidewalks also will be expanded to 10 feet wide and there will be brick crosswalks, **Trias** said. The street will be lined with cabbage palm trees and most of the overhead utility lines will be moved to other streets, he said. An important aspect of the redevelopment plan for Avenue D is

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Ramon Trias**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

the construction of a \$500,000 police substation at the intersection with Means Court, which is known as "Slay Corner." Construction is scheduled to begin in the fall.

Plans for Avenue D were formulated during a community planning session in May 1996 when city planners and community residents met to discuss their vision for the future of the Lincoln Park neighborhood, **Trias** said. But not everyone on Avenue D is happy about the way the city is handling the reconstruction.

George Porter, the owner of G&T Tires, said he thinks the city's offer of \$1.50 a square foot is too low for the commercial property it wants to acquire along Avenue D to accommodate the widening of the sidewalks. "It's not all roses," he said. "They're low-balling everybody out here. I want fair market value. It's a good location." Porter said he plans to establish a service station and convenience store on his property at Avenue D and 15th Street. He said he is negotiating with two major oil companies.

Sessions said some of the city's older residents told him about a time before desegregation when Avenue D was the heart of the black community in Fort Pierce. But as black and white people began to mix more freely, many merchants moved their businesses to more lucrative sites and Avenue D began to suffer from crime, vice and urban blight, he said.

Scott called upon the former residents and merchants who had made Avenue D a thriving commercial strip to help restore it to its former glory. "I came back to put my roots back where I came from, which was Avenue D and I'm not ashamed of it," he said. "We need the people of the community that have moved away - that grew up here, that went to the juke bars here, that danced on this street ... to come back and help us uplift the community because we need it."

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
April 29, 1996

Top planner remembers charrettes

Author: James L. Rosica

FORT PIERCE -- The meetings are over, the colored pencils put away, but **Ramon Trias** hasn't forgotten the importance of the city's recent community planning sessions. Residents and local business owners met last month with professional planners and designers for two separate planning series, one devoted to Orange and Delaware avenues, the other to Avenue D. **Trias**, the city's director of planning, pores over a large-scale map of the master plan developed for the Orange Avenue corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. "We want to keep the ideas alive," he said, pointing at the thin line that represents a two-lane Orange Avenue with on-street parking. Other groups, like the nonprofit Neighborhood Housing Services, have been getting residents together in brainstorming meetings.

The group's neighborhood coordinator said residents have formed work groups to check into the feasibility of rehabilitating the old St. Anastasia school or developing a neighborhood business incubator. They also sponsored the first few meetings that developed into the Avenue D Merchants' Association. "It was a wonderful process," said Linda Van Natta, referring to the planning sessions. "But we want to keep people excited" about the area's potential. But keeping up the excitement means seeing the work actually getting done. So **Trias** and other city officials met last week with representatives of the Department of Transportation about getting started on the proposed streetscape changes. The state oversees maintenance and construction on Delaware and Orange.

The DOT agreed to the changes but asked the city and county commissions for resolutions supporting them, according to City Manager Dennis Beach. Delaware Avenue between U.S. 1 and 13th Street should have two opposing lanes of traffic with on-street parking on either side, **Trias** said. Between 13th and 17th Streets, Delaware should have the same configuration with an added grass median.

Because of space limitations, bike lanes won't be built, he said. **Trias** earlier said the city wants to take over from the state the one-way section of Orange Avenue, in between Seventh Street and U.S. 1. It's possible the city could get the road within the year, state officials said. The transfer would need Transportation Secretary Ben Watts' approval. Even County Administrator Tom Kindred's interest has been piqued by last month's sessions, **Trias** said.

Kindred attended part of the meetings for the Avenue D corridor and told the audience about how his father would take him shopping on the strip when he was a young lad. Kindred was out of town and could not be reached for comment. But Philip Freeland, the county's community development administrator, said Kindred asked him to coordinate with the city on some of the road changes. Avenue D is a county road. "We certainly try to accommodate changes when it affects land within the city," he said.

**Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Ramon Trias**

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
October 4, 1995

Racial issues surround city's reorganization plan

Author: Maryanne Murray

[CB&A Note: Only the information relevant to **Ramon Trias** is listed below.]

In a separate action, commissioners voted 4-1 to confirm **Ramon Trias**, a staff planner for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, as the city's new Director of Planning -- a position Drummond said Smith should have been selected for. Smith's new job will pay \$55,000 a year, about \$5,000 more than her current salary.

Under the contract approved Tuesday, **Trias** will be paid \$57,500 a year. He will start work sometime in late November, Beach said. Last January, **Trias** led a community planning session known as a ``charrette" and helped craft a master plan for downtown redevelopment. ``He has spent a lot of time in our community," Commissioner Mary Ann Bryan said. ``He knows our problems -- /and/ our potential."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Stuart News, The (FL)
November 27, 1994

Creating a sense of place, White City historical

Author: Mark Schlueb

WHITE CITY -- Residents here want to make sure their memories don't become a thing of the past, and regional planners have taken the first steps toward helping them. The Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council this week handed over its preliminary recommendations to the county for turning White City into an historical district.

County and regional planners met with residents in September. During two brain-storming sessions, homeowners told officials they want to preserve and build upon White City's turn-of-the-century ambience. "I've been to other areas of the United States where they've been able to preserve parts of their heritage," resident Patricia Ferrick said. "I think it's possible for White City, too."

Regional Planner **Ramon Trias** said a historical district for the 6 1/2-square-mile unincorporated area is feasible but will take some hard work. "It's a very difficult undertaking. It's much easier when you have a city that's built-out with historic buildings," he said. "White City doesn't have that -- it has a lot of gaps." The recommendations **Trias** made to the county would help fill in those holes.

The most ambitious suggestion in the proposal calls for the county to establish zoning restrictions that would limit new construction in White City to certain architectural styles. Hoping to promote construction of the Florida cracker-style buildings common to White City, the proposal would require new homes to have a porch at least 12 feet long running along the front facade. Driveways would be prohibited in the front yards of new homes; automobiles would gain access through a rear alley.

Commercial buildings lining the town center would have porches that run the length of the front. Billboards would be prohibited, as would many types of businesses, including car dealerships, packing houses, scrap yards and kennels.

Officials say most residents favor turning the area into a historical district, but if architectural standards are established some might complain that the county is trampling their property rights. "I think there may initially be some opposition, but all you have to do is drive down to Stuart to see how well these districts work," Commissioner Cliff Barnes said. Barnes brought the idea for the historical district to his fellow commissioners several months ago after talking with members of the White City Historical Commission.

The draft proposal also urges the county to redesign Midway Road into White City's Main Street. The area between Oleander and Palmetto avenues would be the district's town center, with shops, offices, wide sidewalks, landscaping and on-street parking. Redesigning roads is typically

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Ramon Trias

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

expensive, but Midway Road already is scheduled to be widened. "The redesign of Midway isn't as radical as it might seem, it's just a matter of how you build it," Barnes said. Other suggestions in the proposal would be simpler to implement:

* Planners recommend placing signs, reading "Welcome to the Historic Rural Town of White City," at key intersections.

* Bike paths should be built to connect residential neighborhoods with White City Elementary School and White City Park, the proposal says.

* White City Park, which is the site of frequent arrests for solicitation of prostitution, needs additional supervision to make it safer.

Trias said the proposal is still in its preliminary stages. He worked on a similar plan for Lake Worth, and it was about 1 1/2 years after the proposal was completed that any historic ordinances were adopted. County commissioners have scheduled a work session to study the historical district on Dec. 12. "Right now it's just a matter of working out the technical details," **Trias** said. "It's a fairly long process, but one day you look around and say, 'We've got a nice place here.' "

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