



**Joseph M. Centorino**, Inspector General

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission  
FROM: Joseph M. Centorino, Inspector General

DATE: October 26, 2021  
RE: Interim Report on Permitting Issues at 310 Meridian Avenue  
OIG No. 21-40

This is in response to a request from the City Commission that the Office of Inspector General conduct an independent review of permitting and related issues in connection the conversion of the property located at 310 Meridian Avenue. The request included the hiring of an independent outside counsel, due to the fact that there were certain legal issues to be addressed in the review that the Commission believed would be best handled by an independent counsel.

The Inspector General, after duly considering a number of qualified attorneys to assist in this project, engaged Attorney Edward A. Dion, Esq., shareholder in the law firm of Nabors, Giblin & Nickerson, which maintains offices in Plantation, Tampa and Tallahassee, as outside legal counsel to consider the legal issues. Mr. Dion is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Miami College of Law. He and his firm specialize in municipal law, including land use and real estate law. He is a former County Attorney for Broward County and has represented and advised state and local government entities since 1987. His associate, Valerie Vicente, is a graduate of Florida International University and University of Miami College of Law. She previously served as Senior Assistant City Attorney for the City of North Miami Beach.

Mr. Dion's engagement letter for this project was approved by the Inspector General and also approved as to form and legal sufficiency by City Attorney Rafael Paz. Neither Mr. Dion nor Ms. Vicente has other personal, business or professional interests in the City of Miami Beach. Their resumes are attached to this memo.

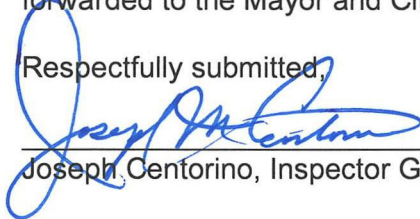
The OIG can report at this time that its review of the facts, circumstances and procedures involved in the issues at hand has been completed, and a draft report will be completed this week. Mr. Dion and Ms. Vicente have completed a draft report covering legal issues involved in the assignment, which will be attached to the OIG draft report.

As you are all aware, the OIG is governed by its enabling ordinance, Section 2-256 of the City of Miami Beach Code. Subsection 2-256(h) of the Code provides that, "...whenever the Inspector General concludes a report or recommendation which contains findings as to the person or entity being reported on, or who is the subject of the recommendation, the Inspector General shall provide the affected person or entity a copy of the report or recommendation, and such person or entity shall have thirty (30) working days to submit a written explanation or rebuttal of the findings before the report or recommendation is finalized, and such timely submitted written explanation or rebuttal shall be attached to the finalized report or recommendation."

The OIG has determined, in consultation with its legal counsel in the Office of the Miami Beach City Attorney, that the latter provision governs the substance of the draft report on the issues raised in the 310 Meridian Avenue project. Accordingly, the draft report will be provided to the parties in interest, including the City Administration and City Attorney, as well as the Attorney who has been engaged to represent certain residents in the area, the President of the South of 5<sup>th</sup> Street Neighborhood Association, and the owner/developer of the property for their review and comments prior to finalization of the report.

Inasmuch as the Commission, as well as certain of the affected parties, have indicated that time is of the essence in the presentation of this report to the City Commission, the OIG will make every effort to encourage the parties to respond as promptly as possible in order to minimize any delay in finalizing the report pursuant to the requirements of Section 2-256(h). However, there is no way for the OIG to compel any party to submit comments prior to the end of the thirty working day period granted by the ordinance. Upon finalization of the report, it will be immediately forwarded to the Mayor and City Commissioners.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Joseph Centorino, Inspector General

10/26/2021  
Date

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## Edward A. Dion

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Edward A. Dion | Shareholder | [edion@ngnlaw.com](mailto:edion@ngnlaw.com)  
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954-315-0268 Tel.

Mr. Dion is a 1978 graduate of the University of Miami's College of Law and a 1975 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania. After serving as the General Counsel of the Broward County Sheriff's office since 2004, Mr. Dion joined the Firm in October 2007. Mr. Dion served as Broward County Attorney from 1999 through 2004; as General Counsel from 1994 to 1999 and as Deputy General Counsel from 1987 through 1994 for the Florida Department of Labor; and was in private practice specializing in real estate and litigation from 1979 through 1987. Mr. Dion has represented and advised state and local government entities since 1987, including before the Florida Legislature, state and federal courts, and administrative agencies. Mr. Dion's area of practice includes

employment law, legislative consulting, local government law, and litigation and appellate law.

- Represented and advised state and local government entities since 1987, including before the State Legislature, state and federal courts and administrative agencies.
- Provides innovative problem solving to local governments and special districts.

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### Prior Professional Experience

- General Counsel, Broward Sheriff's Office, 2004-2007.
- County Attorney, Broward County, 1999-2004.
- General Counsel, Florida Department of Labor, 1994-1999.
- Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of Labor, 1987-1994.
- Private Practice specializing in real estate and litigation, 1979-1987.

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### Professional, Civic & Community Involvement

- The Florida Bar, Member.
- Former Executive Council Member - Florida Bar Section of City, County and Local Government Law.
- Secretary, Florida Association of County Attorneys, 2003-2004.
- Admitted to practice in Florida and in the United States District Courts for the Southern District of Florida, the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, and the United States Supreme Court.
- City, County and Local Government Law -- Legal Ethics and Professionalism Award, 2006.
- South Florida Legal Guide Top Government Attorney, 2004.
- Past President, Florida Jaycees, 1986-1987.

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### Education

- J.D., University of Miami, 1978.
- B.S., Economics, University of Pennsylvania, 1975.

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### Areas of Practice

- Employment Law
  - Land Use and Real Estate Law
  - Local Government Law
  - Litigation and Appellate Law
  - Public Utilities Law
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## Valerie Vicente

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**Valerie Vicente | Associate | [vvicente@ngnlaw.com](mailto:vvicente@ngnlaw.com)  
8201 Peters Road, Suite 1000 | Plantation, Florida 33324  
954-315-0269 Tel.**

Ms. Vicente is a cum laude graduate of the University of Miami College of Law, and a summa cum laude graduate of Florida International University. Ms. Vicente joined the Firm in 2019 where she concentrates her practice in the areas of local governmental law, land use, real estate, litigation and appellate law. Ms. Vicente provides representation to clients on litigation, procurement issues, public records law, ethics matters, contract and construction disputes, and land use issues. Prior to joining the Firm, Ms. Vicente served as a Senior Assistant City Attorney for the City of North Miami Beach. Ms. Vicente also has extensive litigation and jury trial experience having practiced at the firm of Clark Robb, PA, as a litigation

associate, and having served as an Assistant Public Defender in Miami-Dade County.

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### Prior Professional Experience

- Senior Assistant City Attorney for the City of North Miami Beach, Florida, 2017-2019.
- Litigation Associate, Clark Robb, PA, Miami, Florida, 2012-2017.
- Assistant Public Defender, Law Offices of Miami Dade Public Defender, Miami, Florida, 2009-2012.

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### Professional, Civic & Community Involvement

- The Florida Bar, Member.
- Cuban American Bar Association, Member.
- Admitted to practice in all courts of the State of Florida, and the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

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### Education

- J.D., University of Miami, College of Law, cum laude, 2009.
- B.A., Florida International University, summa cum laude, 2006.

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### Areas of Practice

- Local Government Law
  - Litigation and Appellate Law
  - Land Use and Real Estate Law
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