CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 182-2004

To: Mayor David Dermer and Members of the City Commission

Date: July 16, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

Subject: **WEEKLY UPDATE**

The purpose of this LTC is to provide you with an update describing some of the areas the Administration has recently been focusing on:

Fourth of July Celebration – Staff worked to implement the City's Major Events Plan (MEP) to ensure that the annual Fourth of July Celebration was a success. The event, which included the swearing-in of new U.S. citizens, a concert featuring Julio Iglesias, Jr. and a fireworks show, generated several positive media stories and attracted thousands of visitors to our City. Plans are already underway for next year's event scheduled to take place in North Beach.

Watson Island – Representatives from the Administration, along with the Mayor, attended the Florida Cabinet meeting in Tallahassee on June 16 and the City of Miami City Commission meeting that same day to deal with issues involving the planned development on Watson Island. In addition, staff and I met with Miami City Commissioner Teele on July 6 to continue discussing the issue before the Miami City Commission took its final vote on July 8, 2004.

FY 2004/05 Budget – I continue to work with staff from the Office of Budget and Performance Improvement and staff from all City Departments on finalizing the proposed FY 2004 / 05 Budget. Commission Workshops to discuss the details of the budget and solicit input from the Commission, were held on July 12 and July 16. The final budget workshop is scheduled for July 20.

Union Negotiations – Staff from Labor Relations and I continue to work with members from the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Union to reach consensus on a contract. Negotiations and discussions were held on July 2 and July 7. As a result of these meetings, substantial progress was made on both sides. The Administration has made a reasonable offer and we are awaiting CWA's response so that we may continue with our negotiations. Significant discussions have been had with representatives from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Union, and we await their response on the latest agreed upon terms of a new contract.

Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club – I had an opportunity to meet with members of the Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club on July 13 to update them on a number of issues the City is working on.

Miami-Dade County General Obligation Bond – Various meetings and discussion were held related to the Countywide General Obligation Bond for the November ballot. The proposed bond issue will total $2.6 billion, to be issued in seven installments over a thirteen-year period. Ten percent of the funds ($260 million) have been identified for municipal projects in the various cities and unincorporated Miami-Dade County. The Board of County Commissioners will consider the bond issue on Tuesday, July 20 at their Commission meeting. The County Manager is recommending that the Board approve eight questions for the bond issue on the ballot, where the projects are broken up by category. At this point, including the Miami Beach Convention Center, there are $81.454 million of projects in Miami Beach on the list of recommended projects that the Board of County Commissioners will consider.

Miami-Dade County - On July 15, representatives from the Administration attended an Intergovernmental Roundtable Meeting between the County Manager and City Officials representing the various municipalities in Miami-Dade County. At this meeting, the County Manager updated the cities on the People's Transportation Plan, the General Obligation Bond, Article V, and DERM issues.

Emergency Preparedness Plans – Staff continues to update the City's emergency preparedness plans, particularly as they relate to hurricanes. Staff from my Office met with Emergency Management Chief Carlos Castillo at the Miami Dade County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on July 16 to discuss this year's plans in the event the City needs to set up our command center at the County EOC.

Article 5 – Staff from my Office, Police and the City Attorney's Office met to discuss the implications of the recent change in the law that the State of Florida no longer will prosecute violations of municipal ordinances unless that prosecution is ancillary to a State prosecution or the State Attorney has contracted with the municipality for reimbursement for services. Details are still being ironed out and once we come to an agreement on how to best handle this issue, the details will be shared with you. In the interim, we intend to fund as a placeholder an amount of $100,000 in the FY 2004/05 Operating Budget to ensure prosecution of violations.

Nightlife Industry Task Force Meeting (NITE) – The NITE members met on July 13 and discussed several issues, including the City's occupational license revocation ordinance, upcoming major events including the MTV Music Awards on August 29 and the Labor Day weekend taking place September 3-6, and an update on the Washington Avenue Streetscape outreach / construction schedule.

Police Department – On June 30, I met with representatives of the Police rank and file in a meeting coordinated by the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Union to discuss ongoing issues within the Police Department. I continue working with the Police Chief in resolving some of these issues. The Junior Police Academy, a summer program for children run by the Police Athletic League (PAL), started on July 9 and will run through July 30. On July 15, a promotional ceremony was held that included the promotion of Major Patricia Schneider as the City's first female Assistant Chief of Police. On July 20, Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist will attend the Senior's vs. Crime Storefront Office initiative. The primary goal of this program is to reduce the victimization of senior citizens who are often targeted for specific crimes based on their age. An LTC with additional details was sent on July 15.

Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) – Staff and I met with representatives from the GMCVB to continue discussing the development of the strategic plan which is scheduled to be adopted by the GMCVB Board on July 21. A formal update will be provided to the Mayor and Commission in a report on the July 28 City Commission agenda.

Washington Avenue - A Community pre-construction kick-off meeting for the Washington Avenue Project has been scheduled for Thursday, July 29 at 5:30 at the Police Station. All property owners and businesses along Washington Avenue, and other interested parties will meet the contractor and his team, and they will be thoroughly briefed on construction plans for the street prior to project commencement. Each of your offices have already been notified of the date and time in case you are interested in attending this meeting.

Cultural Arts Council (CAC) - The CAC recently completed their grant cycle and recommendations. FY 2004/05 grants awards totaled approximately $603,000. This is a 20% increase from FY 2003/04. Artistic Disciplines, Arts & Cultural Education and Cultural Presenters Grant Categories were increased by 40% from the panel recommendations. These grant recommendations will be going before the City Commission in September during the budget process for final approval. Additionally, the CAC's Facilities Task Force reviewed programming of cultural facilities citywide and made a number of recommendations. These recommendations will be forwarded to the Commission via LTC shortly.

Tourism and Cultural Development – The City was notified that the first-ever recipient of the State of Florida's Entertainment Industry Incentive grant is a movie set to film partly in Miami Beach. An LTC with additional details was sent on July 15. The Office of Film and Print served as host to Film Florida from July 14-16. Film Florida is a group of representatives from the production industry, film associations, labor unions and film commissioners. An LTC with additional details was also sent on July 15.

Organizational Development – Several training opportunities have taken place during the past few weeks to provide staff at all levels with leadership development. On June 29, approximately 50 members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) collective bargaining unit and the Administration attended a seminar conducted by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) with the assistance from the Office of Labor Relations. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, created in 1947, is an independent agency whose mission is to preserve and promote labor-management peace and cooperation. This was the first of several seminars planned for the City of Miami Beach this year which will focus on strengthening labor-management partnerships, effective tools for conflict resolution and enhancing organizational effectiveness. On July 14-15, staff from Fire, Public Works, SMG and Risk Management attended a forklift certification program that is required every 3 years by OSHA. A "Supervision in Government" series, specifically designed for new supervisors in the City, was held on July 8. Follow up sessions of this training are scheduled for July 22, August 5, and August 19.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) - CIP is working on several important construction related issues essential to the preparation of neighborhood right of way construction documents. These include waterline relocations and identification/relocation of encroachments. As a result, project consultants and CIP staff are meeting individually with affected residents to provide thoughtful recommendations to determine how best to meet design objectives in a sensitive and reasonable manor. The demolition of Fire Station No. 4 began on July 12 and has continued throughout this week. Courtesy notices were hand delivered to the neighborhood and area residents advising them of the demolition. The Belle Isle Community Design Review meeting for the 90% construction documents has been scheduled for July 27 at 7:00 PM at the Costa Brava, 11 Island Avenue.

City's New Financial System – A meeting was held with representatives from all City Departments to introduce and discuss the implementation of the City's new financial software, Eden Enterprise System, which is scheduled to take place before the end of this fiscal year.

Holocaust Memorial – Staff met with Avi Mizrachi, Executive Director of the Holocaust Memorial, regarding the Holocaust Memorial Committee's proposal to build a classroom/lecture hall to accommodate its patrons during holocaust related lectures and similar gatherings. The proposal would entail encumbering the westernmost portion of the municipal parking lot adjacent to the Memorial. Additional discussions will be held with representatives from the Holocaust Memorial Committee regarding this issue, although a cursory review of the Charter reveals that all parking lots in the Convention Center area are subject to the referendum. An LTC with additional details will be sent to you so that you are award of the details.

New World Symphony (NWS) – Staff from the Planning, Public Works, Tourism and Cultural Development, and Finance Departments and I continue to meet to discuss issues regarding the NWS in preparation for a meeting with representatives from the NWS on July 29, 2004.

South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – On July 16, The Mayor and I were guests on the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's cable program that airs on the cable public access channel 36. The show's purpose was to provide the audience with an update on the different initiatives the City is focusing on.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

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