



**Joseph M. Centorino**, Inspector General

TO: File  
FROM: Joseph M. Centorino, Inspector General  
DATE: January 5, 2021  
RE: Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct Against Ms. Lilliana Martinez Regarding Political Activity at the City's Food Giveaways in North Beach  
OIG No. 21-08

Complaint:

The OIG received a complaint from Mr. Bob Evan-Silnicki' s alleging that Ms. Lilliana Martinez, a paid political consultant, had been hired by "politicians and developers" for outreach purposes while coordinating the City's free food giveaways in North Beach. In support of his allegation, Mr. Evans provided two Campaign Treasurer's Reports from the YES for Marina Park Committee. The reports cover activity from September 1, 2020 through October 9, 2020 and show that Ms. Martinez was paid \$1,000 on two occasions for outreach. Mr. Evans suggested that Ms. Martinez was campaigning at the food distribution events she coordinated for the City.

Inquiry:

The City and Commissioner Richardson host two food distribution events in North Beach. One is a walk-up and the other is a drive through. They occur in partnership with Seniors in Action. The logistics for the food distributions are performed by Commissioner Richardson's aide, Luis Callejas with assistance from the office manager at Seniors in Action. Farm Share and Feeding South Florida donate the food but do not sponsor the events.

Special Agent Singer spoke with Mr. Callejas who stated that he is familiar with Ms. Martinez and has worked with her in the past. According to Mr. Callejas, she is neither a City employee nor a volunteer involved in the coordination of the food distributions. He believes that Ms. Martinez is a paid political consultant who is very well known and active in the North Beach community. According to Mr. Callejas, Martinez has helped him disseminate information about the food giveaways by distributing flyers and posting on social media. When there is left over food from the distributions, she helps him deliver it to various buildings in North Beach where elderly

residents live. Mr. Callejas said he has developed his own relationships with residents in North Beach and no longer relies on Martinez to help him distribute food or information.

Mr. Callejas said that he has seen Martinez come to food distributions in campaign shirts. He has never seen her distributing campaign material. Mr. Callejas also said that in the past when they have warned her about wearing campaign advertising gear at the food distributions she has covered up the advertising.

Special Agent Singer interviewed Ms. Martinez. Ms. Martinez stated that she is aware of the rule against campaigning and never shows her campaign shirts at food drives. She stated that on November 3, 2020, election day, she was at the polls in her campaign gear. She walked to the North Beach bandshell where Commissioner Richardson was distributing food. She stated that she remembers the day because it was the first time in months that she needed to get food for herself and her family. She stated that she collected her food, got on the bus and went home. Ms. Martinez claims that Commissioner Richardson told her to cover her shirt because she was not allowed to wear it near a food distribution event. Ms. Martinez produced photographs of herself with the Commissioner. In the pictures her campaign shirt is covered by a second shirt so it cannot be seen.

Her statement is inaccurate. The walk-up food drive did not occur on November 3<sup>rd</sup> for two reasons. First, it was election day and the Commissioner had notified the community there would be no food distribution. Second, the Commissioner was recovering from Covid-19 and could not attend.


Conclusion:

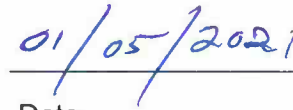
On May 13, 2020, the City adopted Resolution 2020-3127. The Resolution states that the Mayor and City Commission "prohibit candidates for City elected office (including incumbents seeking reelection) from hosting or campaigning at any charitable or not for profit food distribution event in the City of Miami Beach, held during the period of time between the last day of the election qualifying period until the earlier date of when the candidate is elected, defeated, or becomes unopposed; and further prohibit charitable or not for profit food distribution events from taking place within 200 feet of any polling place located within the City during the voting period for any elections, including early voting period, beginning when the polls open for voting and ending when the polls close or the last voter has voted, whichever is later." The Resolution is silent with respect to political consultants.

In this matter, neither Farm Share nor Feeding South Florida were sponsors of the food distributions in North Beach. Ms. Martinez is not a City employee nor involved in the coordination or planning of the food distributions. Nevertheless, the OIG thinks it is important to remind elected

officials and their consultants that these events, when sponsored, must not be politicized as it jeopardizes the not-for-profit status of Farm Share and Feeding South Florida. The policy is that any campaigning must be 250 feet away from the feeding event so as not to politicize it. Special Agent Singer discussed this with Ms. Martinez and advised her that her future campaign activities had to take place at least 250 feet away from the food distributions. This matter will be closed.

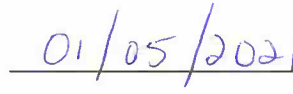
Approved by:

  
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Joseph Centorino, Inspector General

  
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Date

Completed by:

  
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Jani Singer, Special Agent

  
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Date