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FDOT Clears Galt Mile

Construction Quagmire



construction delays for the next year. FDOT has two projects in store for the roadway. The \$10.2 million project commenced on March 10th to add a second left turn lane from eastbound Commercial to northbound I-95, add lanes to the northbound and southbound Interstate 95 exit ramps to Commercial and a left turn lane in both directions at Andrews

Article by Eric Berkowitz

The Barrier Island offers two alternatives to Galt Mile residents with intentions of heading west. Recent FDOT information seemed to suggest that those interested in using them for the foreseeable future had best build extra time into their scheduled travel plans. FDOT (Florida Department of Transportation) plans on painting the Oakland Park Boulevard Bridge, the closest exit to the mainland south of the community. Responding to input collected from area residents, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission opted for a plan to complete the project during a continuous 18-day stretch. The bridge will be closed to all traffic, except underlying boat traffic, for the entire period. When explaining the two alternatives, FDOT stated that the other (unselected) plan would have restricted traffic for a ninety-day period that "includes the total closure over the July 4th holiday week-end" and that "it may conflict with the Air & Sea Show". Community residents surmised that the project was scheduled for this spring or summer.

Commercial Boulevard, the Galt Mile's northern mainland access, will be plagued with

Avenue. The second construction component entails repaving Commercial Boulevard from Powerline Road west to Northeast 19th Avenue. A lane will be closed in each direction on the major east-west thoroughfare from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. FDOT also plans on lining the repaved roadway with new street lights and traffic signals. The lane restrictions will initially run from Powerline Road to Northeast 6th Avenue. Ultimately, they will extend to Northeast 19th Avenue, just west of Federal Highway. The majority of construction is planned to take place at night.

It appeared as if both Barrier Island egresses would be restricted or blocked by the construction. The prospect of both the Oakland Park Bridge painting and the Commercial Boulevard projects running simultaneously evoked claustrophobic paranoid delusions as community residents envisioned being penned in by the projects. FDOT was laying siege to the Barrier Island. Fear not - we are not going to be trapped on the Island by FDOT. Light was recently shed on our concerns through the efforts of Monique J. Damiano, one of Public Information Director David Hébert's bright young lights.

Continued on page 5

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Twilight Zone..Continued

middle of a 6-foot by 10-foot canvas canopy 8 floors below. Centered exactly between two of the thin metal pipes that comprise a frame designed to support nothing heavier than the canvas covering, she hit the awning in the one spot capable of fully mollifying the impact. The canopy frame broke her fall and bent just enough to absorb the force of her body's momentum. Instead of tearing, the canvas served as a cradle, stopping her a few feet short of the deck.

Upon reaching the scene, Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue Lieutenant Shari Marshall scaled a small ladder to the canopy, which shades a bocce equipment storage area, and found Jummati lying on her side... safe! Supervising the effort, she had rescue workers cut the canvas and lower Ms. Jummati a few feet to a waiting backboard and stretcher. Attempting to reconstruct the incident, Marshall said, "Angels had floated her down. That was pretty much all we could come up with." Declining to speak with clamoring media types, Jummati limited her comment about the incident to, "My shoulder hurts." Fort Lauderdale Fire-Rescue Division Chief James Sheehan said of Jummati's incredible precision landing in the center of the canopy, "It definitely saved her life." Treated at Broward General Medical Center for a minor shoulder injury, the incident's serendipity wasn't lost on Sergeant Andy Pallen, spokesman for the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. He suggested that she purchase a lottery ticket.

Over the past few days, life on the Galt Mile has borne an eerie resemblance to episodes of the "Twilight Zone". In fact, if you squint, ubiquitous Police Department spokesman Sergeant Andy Pallen - who epilogues each incident for an anxious public - is beginning to look and sound like Rod Serling!•

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The Galt Mile News is the official newsletter of the Galt Mile Community. Published 12 times a year, this publication is designed to educate the Galt residents of neighborhood-oriented current events and issues, and to offer residents Galt-specific discounts from various local merchants.



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THIS MONTH AT-A-GLANCE

JUNE/JULY 2005



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
5 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985	6 Commissioner Teel: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center Info.: 954-828-5033	7 Art Express Main Library Info.: 954-462-8190 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.	8 Stomp Through 6/12 Broward Center Info.: 954-462-0222 Mid-Century Modern Architecture in S. Fla. Through 10/30 MOA	9 Marlins v SEA Dolphins Stadium 7:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	10 Marlins v TEX Pro Player 7:35 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	11 Marlins v TEX 6:05 p.m. Reef Sweep & Beach Cleanup Ft. Lauderdale Beaches 9 a.m. to noon Info.: 954-467-1366
12 Marlins v TEX Dolphins Stadium 1:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	13 Summer Day Camp: Serengeti Safari Museum of Discovery & Science Through 6/17	14 Summer Story Mornings with Miss Gail Ages 6 to 8 Stranahan House 10 a.m.	15	16 Galt Mile Community Association Meeting Nick's Italian Restaurant 11 a.m.	17 Starlight Musicals Through 7/22 Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m.	18 Sea Life Photo Exhibit by Marc Furth Wine & Cheese St. Lawrence Gallery 6 to 9 p.m. Info.: 954-566-8011
19 Sunshine State Games War Memorial 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Father's Day	20 Commissioner Teel: Pre-Agenda Meeting Beach Community Center Info.: 954-828-5033	21 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall 6 p.m.	22	23	24 Starlight Musicals Through 7/22 Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m.	25
26	27 Marlins v ATL Dolphins Stadium 7:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	28 Summer Story Mornings with Miss Gail Ages 6 to 8 Stranahan House 10 a.m.	29 Rumpelstiltskin Through 7/2 Broward Center Tix.: 954-462-0222	30 Marlins v ATL Dolphins Stadium 7:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	1 Starlight Musicals Through 7/22 Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m.	2
3 Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985	4 Independance Day Marlins v MIL Dolphins Stadium 6:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	5 Marlins v MIL 7:05 p.m. Summer Story Mornings with Miss Gail Ages 6 to 8 Stranahan House 10 a.m.	6 Marlins v MIL Dolphins Stadium 7:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	7 Marlins v MIL Dolphins Stadium 1:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com	8 Marlins v CHC 7:35 p.m. Starlight Musicals Through 7/22 Holiday Park 7 to 10 p.m.	9 Marlins v CHC Dolphins Stadium 6:05 p.m. Tix: florida.marlins.mlb.com

A l o o k a h e a d

- July 10 Marlins v CHC Dolphins Stadium, 1:05 p.m., Tix.: florida.marlins.mlb.com
- July 12 American Idols Live Office Depot Center, Tix.: ticketmaster.com
- July 23 Michael Bubl  Broward Center, Tix.: 954-462-0222.
- July 29 - 31 Disney Live! Winnie the Pooh Broward Center, Tix.: 954-462-0222.
- August 26 Green Day Office Depot Center, Tix.: ticketmaster.com



Construction...Continued

This eerie scenario prompted our communicating with the City's Public Information Office. Public Information Specialist Monique Damiano braved the halls of FDOT to solicit some clarity about the Oakland Park Boulevard Bridge painting. As per Mr. Jos  A. Quintana, P.E. from DOT's Structures and Facilities Office, "The Bridge's structural steel will be painted beige as per the City's request. We will need to meet at some point with the City and decide on the specific color. The bridge closure is still scheduled to be 18 days. Letting is scheduled for 2/3/06 and we anticipate construction to begin in May or June, 2006."

What? Beige? Letting? Construction? Ms Damiano wrote back, "Can you please clarify the bridge painting date for Mr. Berkowitz? Your previous response makes reference to 'construction.' Does this include the painting as well?" Mr. Quintana explained, "Even though it is mostly a painting project, we refer to it as a 'construction project', because of the type of funds that are associated with it. Aside from the paint work, we intend to install a maintenance platform inside the bascule piers. We still have a projected 18 day closure, however the contract duration may be closer to 90 (estimated) days. Once again, the only traffic disruptions are expected during the 18 day closure. The contractor will work under & around the bridge during all other times." He continued, "The schedule has not changed. I still do not have an exact date for start of construction, but we still expect the contract to start sometime next summer. We will make sure that the closure does not interfere with any of the summer holidays or major events (Ex: Air & Sea Show)."

OK! That's the deal. While the project is scheduled for 90 days next summer, the bridge will only be closed for 18 days. They will avoid closing the bridge during the Air & Sea Show and the 4th of July weekend. They will install a maintenance platform inside the bascule piers. No kidding! Best of all, the Commercial Boulevard project is slated for completion by the summer of 2006, when the Oakland Park Boulevard Bridge painting is scheduled to start. Thanks to Monique and Jos , we learned that FDOT's projects are scheduled to run consecutively, not simultaneously. Of course, if the Commercial Boulevard Project suffers delays, there may be an unfortunate overlap. However, in view of the alternative, we remain optimistic.

For additional information please contact Monique J. Damiano - City of Fort Lauderdale Public Information Specialist, 101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 300 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 at Phone: 954-828-4743, FAX: 954-828-4745, email: MDamiano@fortlauderdale.gov. Alternatively, contact FDOT directly through Jos  A. Quintana, P.E. of the Structures & Facilities Office - D4, 3400 W. Commercial Blvd., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309 at (954)777-4162, email: Jose.Quintana@Dot.state.fl.us. •

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| The Galleon #1102
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| Fountainhead #11D
(2/2)
\$460,000 - closed 5/2/05 | L'Hermitage #2001
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\$1,050,000 - closed 5/10/05 |
| Commodore #1208
(2/2)
\$485,000 - closed 5/6/05 | Southpoint #1208N
(2/2)
\$525,000 - closed 5/6/05 |
| L'Hermitage #PH2803
(2/2.5)
\$1,000,000 - closed 5/15/05 | Plaza South #2B
(2/2)
\$570,000 - closed 5/6/05 |



Beach...Continued

Peter Foye confirmed that the 13,000 tons of recyclable bottles generated annually wouldn't be adequate for a full scale renourishment. However, it would be perfect for emergency beach repairs resulting from storm damage or to provide continual small scale replacement at bypass areas.

Dania Beach's Vice Mayor Pat Flury stated that she was, "excited and grateful for the renourishment of the County's beaches." Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper - whose town's beaches are scheduled to receive the first renourishment - was accompanied by Vice Mayor William Julian, Commissioners Joe Gibbons, Dorothy Ross and Francine Schiller, the city's Chief of Police and the head of the Parks Department. Obviously delighted that Hallandale's beaches will again be adequately enlarged for residents and visitors, she expressed relief that the project was finally underway. Hollywood Mayor Mara Giuliani, in addition to thanking Senator Nelson and Representative Sobel, paid a compliment to State Senator Steven Geller for helping to get the project moving. Referring to the televised news reports during Hurricanes Frances and Ivan in which she stood on the beach while huge chunks of Surf Avenue floated by behind her, Giuliani described the ordeal that Broward shoreline municipalities underwent as a "Hurricane Reality Show". A channel 10 news clip of the Mayor exclaiming, "Well, the situation is extremely dangerous because there is no beach to buffer us from the effects of the storm," apparently was viewed in Tallahassee. The next day, Governor Bush repeated the Mayor's desperate call to action. Not surprisingly, the project suddenly grew legs. All three Mayors pledged to support an impending bypass project which will help preserve the County's beaches. The project will allow the sand to move down the coast instead of losing it out to sea through tidal erosion.

The southern part of the project, Segment III, will renourish 6.2 miles of Broward County's shoreline, from the Broward County line in Hallandale Beach to the John Lloyd State Recreation Area in Hollywood, just south of Port Everglades. It involves the placement of approximately 1.7 million cubic yards of sand on South Broward's eroded beaches in Hallandale Beach, Hollywood and Dania Beach, widening their current width by up to 200 feet. Sand extracted by Hopper Dredges from North Broward borrow sites in Deerfield and Hillsboro is transported to pumpout moorings in south Hallandale which pump the sand through 30-inch pipes to the beach. The project will quickly move north in 300-foot increments of shoreline until Sea turtle Nesting Season, after which it will continue north to John Lloyd State Park. To avoid damaging coral reefs and other



Continued on page 8

House Speaker Alan Bense, Senate President Tom Lee and Gov. Jeb Bush at Special Session

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Beach...Continued

By July of 2004, the delays became so overtly political that Hollywood Statehouse Representative Eleanor Sobel asked Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist to investigate their source and intent. "It seems like it has been an issue for quite some time," said Crist, "We're just looking into the whole issue, and the delays; we're going to see what's going on." While the spurious claims seemed to dissipate, the State continued its "sleepy" progress despite the County's cry for help. Hurricane Frances was their "wake-up call". As depicted by Hollywood Mayor Mara Giulianti, watching the ocean claim large sections of South Florida real estate on the nightly news while listening to reporters describe the danger to barrier island voters unnerved State officials. Governor Bush, Senate President Tom Lee and House Speaker Alan Bense called for a special session of the legislature to address Hurricane matters. State officials expeditiously compiled the 2004 Hurricane Recovery Plan for Florida's Beach and Dune System. Although it acknowledges that Segment III should address the problems facing South Broward beaches, it recommends additional funds for the pre-Segment II monitoring effort and the subsequent Segment II (Fort Lauderdale) permit costs. State policy clearly conceded that the impact of coastal damage is directly connected to the health of the area's protective beaches. The political see-saw again tilted in favor of rapid renourishment.

Mayor Jacobs introduced Pio Ieraci, Chairman of the Galt Mile Community Association Presidents Council and the Broward Beach Coalition, who blamed the unnecessary doubling of project costs on the shadowy political coalition that haunted Mr. Higgins. In early 2002, neighborhood residents were invited to attend a public hearing to elicit their true feelings about losing their beach. Over a hundred Galt Mile residents attended the hearing at the Hollywood Beach Community Center to offset the false claim by a group of anti-beach vested interests that they "spoke for area residents." While the event clarified that local support for the project was overwhelming, anti-beach proponents continued to exert pressure on state officials in Tallahassee to block participation by Fort Lauderdale in Segment II. In response to concerns by Broward officials about the anti-beach group again misrepresenting themselves as "community spokespersons", a group of Galt Mile residents flew to Tallahassee in support of Fort Lauderdale's inclusion into the overall project. Donned in red t-shirts displaying, "Save Broward Beaches" while addressing the Governor and the Cabinet, the group gave lie to the assertion that area residents opposed the project. On May 13, 2003, a vote by the Florida Cabinet to permit the Segment II (Fort Lauderdale) part of the plan following an 18-month "monitoring period" put the project back on track. Ieraci pointed out that "without the participation of these residents, the County's effort would have been unrequited and futile."

Mayor Jacobs thanked Project Manager Jackie Larson from the Beach and Ecosystem Management Section of FDEP's Beach Erosion Control Program (BECP) and Florida Atlantic University for its watershed study of The Impact of Beach Restoration on the Economics of Florida Beaches. Broward's Mayor finally announced that the pumpout moorings would be in place and ready to start feeding sand to the beach on May 7th, the next day. In a discussion with area residents, Steve Higgins confirmed that the first sand was scheduled to be pumped onto the hotel's beach within a few days. When asked about the 18 month monitoring period

Continued on page 11

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GMCA Appraises LORI PARRISH

Eric Berkowitz

On April 21st, Broward County Property Appraiser Lori Parrish reviewed her first 100 days in office during a luncheon meeting for the Galt Mile Community Association's Advisory Board. Accompanied by her Director of Media and Governmental Relations, Bob Wolfe, Ms. Parrish painted a picture of a department in dire need of reorganization. Accordingly, she developed an effective organizational chart. Her "team" is headed by Chief of Staff Henry Templeton. Bob Wolfe works for Administration chief and former campaign manager Ron Gunzberger along with Community Outreach coordinator Steven Cisneros. Ron Cacciatore, a former Broward Sheriff's Office detective, heads Training, Investigations and Homestead Verification. Ms. Parrish told Board members that the condo and coop honcho is Robert Scherer, who works in Joe Zdanowicz's Real Property Department.

Upon taking the reins of Property Appraiser from Rocky Rodriguez, Parrish described the Department as needing an attitude adjustment. She said that many department personnel didn't take their jobs seriously. Property Appraisal Departments are often a repository for political "repayment". In exchange for "helping out" in a tough campaign, a grateful office-winner might reward boosters with a government job, preferably involving difficult-to-track field work. As such, a new Property Appraiser's first order of business is to separate the "wheat from the chaff". The department was plagued with "no-shows". Parrish credits tough Department of Tangible Personal Property chief Jack Gruber with curing the rampant absenteeism.

Apparently, there is a critical shortage of Property Appraisers. William Markham was the longtime Broward Property Appraiser whose untimely passing led to the interim appointment of Rocky Rodriguez. Ms. Parrish explained that while she found 81 Appraisers listed on Bill Markham's roll, there were actually only 18. Parrish said, "The Department needs 20 new Property Appraisers immediately." To help rebuild a shaky relationship with constituent-consumers, she insisted that Property Appraisers answer their own emails and phone calls. "For the department to be effective,"

Continued on page 13

Beach...Continued

that Fort Lauderdale's barrier island residents would have to endure before being eligible for the protective renourishment, Higgins stated that he thought it was excessive. If the experts at Nova Southeastern University and the County can agree on an expedited review period without sacrificing diligent oversight, Galt Mile residents may dodge the complete elimination of their disappearing beach if hit by another 4-hurricane bullet. 19th century iconic French novelist Alexander Dumas may have had a project like this in mind when he stated, "All human wisdom is summed up in two words - wait and hope."



Worker welding 30" pipe for carrying sand to the beach

Higgins conveyed that Broward County set up a special web site to keep the community posted on the project's progress. The site explains the technology behind the construction in "user-friendly" lay terminology, easily understandable by the average resi-

dent. The municipalities whose beaches are being salvaged naturally installed links from their official web sites to the Broward Beach renourishment page. The official Broward Beach renourishment site offers an up to the minute Weekly Update. An Online Beach Renourishment Brochure is a pictorial essay that was published by Broward County to explain the project to its residents. A Segment III Beach Renourishment Plan Map lays out the southern part of the project. The coolest part of the site is undoubtedly the access it provides to a live beachcam. The camera is mounted atop the Westin Diplomat Resort facing the beach to capture a current picture of the beach as it is rehabilitated. Residents who have been put through an emotional wringer awaiting the project start will stare at the pictures in disbelief. IT IS ACTUALLY HAPPENING! Check it out for yourself!

To access the project's entire route prior to the advent of the County's celebration, go to the Galt Mile Community Association web site (www.galtmile.com) and click "Issues" on the horizontal navigation bar located at the top of every page (below the logo). Scroll down to "Shore Protection" and click. In addition to a complete history with graphic support, there are links to every document, report, permit and impact statement.



From left to right: GMCA Presidents Council Chair Pio Ieraci with Broward County Commissioner Sue Gunzberger, Broward Mayor Kristin Jacobs, and Hollywood Mayor Mara Giuliani.

[By the way, we'd like to thank Broward County photographer Scott Medvin for providing some of the pictures used in this report. - editor]

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Beach...Continued

marine resources, the dredges will be constantly monitored as they follow designated corridors. To "lock-in" the sand and slow future erosion along the southern part of the project, a spur will be installed on the south jetty of the Port Everglades inlet and 2 T-head groins will be constructed at the northern end of John U. Lloyd State Park beach. Segment III will be completed either by October 2005 or February 2006, depending on the speed with which the project moves north and when it is interrupted by Sea Turtle Nesting Season. Once complete, an 18-month monitoring period to evaluate the project's impact on the marine environment will begin. If Segment III cannot be completed before Sea Turtle Nesting Season, the 18 month clock won't start ticking until after its resumption and final completion in February. Pending a clean bill of health from marine and coastal ecology experts at Nova Southeastern University, the beaches in Fort Lauderdale and nearly non-existent beaches in adjacent communities to the north (Segment II) - such as the Galt Ocean Mile - will finally be renourished in late 2007 or early 2008.

Also at the celebration was the County official responsible for most of the project's heavy lifting, Steven Higgins. As Administrator of the Biological Resources Division of the Broward County Environmental Protection Department (EPD), Higgins started the ball rolling more than six years ago upon learning that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection considered Broward's beaches to be "critically eroded". Citing the dangers to people and property, Higgins contacted the Army Corps of Engineers to compose the "Broward County Shore Preservation Project". He clearly demonstrated the economic dangers attendant to the beach erosion. The impending disappearance of world famous South Florida beaches would undermine the County's (and the State's) tax base. South Florida's huge tourism industry and protection for billions of dollars in property value is contingent on the health of its beaches. After creating a viable plan to save the County's beaches while protecting the environment, Higgins ran into a political minefield designed to sabotage the project.

Beach Administrator Higgins acknowledged that it was important to accommodate legitimate environmental concerns. Higgins addressed hundreds of environmental issues as framed by dozens of mainstream Environmental Agencies and groups. His Division has developed a mountain of authoritative scientific data, mitigation plans and redundant safeguards in support of the project's successful outcome. Unfortunately, he has also had to respond to capricious requests designed only to delay the project and drain precious resources. Self-appointed "protectors of the environment" crawled out of the woodwork, intimating that the project would wreak havoc on the environment. Skittish politicians had official agencies look into the claims, all of which were successfully addressed in detail. Higgins characterized his frustration at having been made to wade through this bureaucratic swamp by stating, "Somehow our project has gotten more scrutiny from agencies and activist groups than any project I've ever seen." Despite the statement by every mainstream Environmental agency that delaying the project was the real threat to the environment, Tallahassee fell into a dilatory trance.

Continued on page 9

Parrish...Continued

Parrish explained, "we need to have excellent communication both with our constituents and one another." Parrish continued, "I don't allow locked doors," illustrating her policy of "openness" and "easy access" to and between appraisers. She also confronted what appeared to be disparate treatment of women and minorities. For filling the same job title, they would stereotypically receive less remuneration and/or fewer opportunities for promotion. To fulfill a promise made following her January 4th swearing in, she is intent on obliterating the discriminatory "glass ceiling" and racial barriers, the traditional byproducts of racial and sexual politics.

Parrish stressed the importance of the Department's fraud unit. When initially reviewing her available resources, she was surprised to find that the fraud unit was operated by two staffers on a part-time basis. Their casual attention to tax fraud was reflected in the units' disappointing productivity. During Parrish's first 17 days, she developed 131 cases. Her first 60 days yielded \$12 million in fraud related recoveries. Fraud represents an enormous potential offset to our property tax obligation. Her Department is empowered to go back ten years, adding 50% penalties and 10% interest to cases of illegal evasion. From fraud alone, Parrish expects to harvest "a half \$billion currently buried in the tax rolls." Property Appraiser Parrish anticipates that her crusade will bear fruit by next year, stating, "The tax rolls will be accurate by June of 2006."

Another major obstacle Parrish faces stems from the Department's technological deficiencies. "We were battling with antiquated computer and phone systems." Her Department of Information Systems head is Erik Reed. She explained, "We plan on taking advantage of the internet to provide improved access to services. Residents can now apply for exemptions online. Our web site (www.bcpa.net) is multi-lingual, communicating in English, Spanish and Creole." Parrish pointed out that, "all the forms used by the department can be downloaded from the web site."



Inviting questions from the Board, Lori responded to an inquiry from Presidents Council Chair Pio Ieraci. Addressing the tax impact of skyrocketing property values, Ieraci inquired about the department's use of actual sales prices to form the basis for determining tax obligations. He asked if they would, "create a formula that residents might use to estimate the tax consequence" of the market reappraisal inherent to newly purchased properties. Acknowledging an inequitable drawback to the area's superheated real estate market, Parrish answered, "Unfortunately, these can only be accomplished on a case by case basis. Each property must be evaluated on its own merits." She pointed out that the appraised value for tax purposes is not the same as the appraisals used by lenders to evaluate collateral equity. She suggested that he contact Bob Scherer, the condo and coop specialist in the Real Property Department.

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Beach...Continued

and accommodations of every stripe, the Hotel's beach is arguably its single greatest asset. After navigating the cavernous lobby and wading through assorted media types and their equipment, a trip to the back patio revealed the reason for the hotel having been selected as the backdrop for this event, its skeletal beach. The thin strip of beach stands in stark contrast to the hotel's impressive size and scope. The threat to Broward's huge \$billion tourism revenue engine is well represented by the imposing establishment's bare bones beach.

At 10 AM, Broward Mayor Kristin Jacobs stepped to the podium to initiate the proceedings. Joined by Hollywood's District 6 County Commissioner Sue Gunzberger and officials from Hollywood, Hallandale Beach and Dania Beach, Jacobs ran through some of the obstacles that delayed the project for 5 years and effectively doubled its cost. A small group of self-serving political interests possessed of questionable environmental credentials succeeded in intimidating certain key state bureaucrats from proceeding apace with the project. Jacobs imparted some of the harrowing experiences that its supporters had to endure prior to nursing the project through to its ultimately successful kick-off. Jacobs and Gunzberger

described threats to the project on the local, State and national levels, including one that required the assistance of Senator Bill Nelson to successfully circumvent. They thanked Jacksonville District Commander and District Engineer Colonel Robert M. Carpenter of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for finally signing off on a plan that was both comprehensive and protective of the environment. Jacobs gave kudos to Broward Director of Community Services Lori Flynt, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Peggy Kaiser of Congressman E. Clay Shaw's office and Jacqui Spier (standing in for Hollywood Statehouse Representative Eleanor Sobel) for playing integral parts in overcoming a plethora of obstacles.

Mayor Jacobs briefly touched on an interesting experiment that should kill two birds with one stone. When the Florida Cabinet approved the project permit in 2003, Florida CFO Tom Gallagher inquired about alternative sources of sand, either imported or manufactured. Broward County officials promised to investigate and test alternatives to incrementally depleting existing offshore borrow sites. Inasmuch, Jacobs described a combination of sand and glass, a mixture of silicas, that will be used to stretch renourishment resources. Discarded bottles that represent a disposal nightmare are ground to smooth sand-sized grains and used to dilute the astronomically expensive sand. A successful experiment demonstrated that people and Sea Turtles couldn't distinguish between the pulverized Miller bottles and the \$10 - \$25 per cubic yard genuine article. Shells, coral and other silicates erode into the calcium carbonate sand that covers our beaches. Glass is made of sand, soda ash, limestone and other ingredients that are heated, melted, shaped and, if desired, colored. To replicate sand, different colored bottles could be blended into something close to the tan of South Florida sand and ground to an exact grain size.

Last year, Beach Administrator Steve Higgins explained, "It provides a green solution to the disposal of what might otherwise be a waste product and it provides for the sustainability of our beaches, which is an important piece of our economic and environmental infrastructure. We think it's possible, and we think the material that results will be practically indistinguishable from beach sand." More importantly, a key adjunct to the renourishment project is the ongoing replacement of lost sand at certain critical areas, obviating the need to repeat another full scale renourishment in a decade. Fulfilling the Cabinet mandate, ground glass provides the sustainable resource without further depleting existing "borrow areas". "It's a serious problem," Higgins said. "We're going to have to maintain that beach. We can't let it go critical like it has in the past. To do that, we're going to have to place sand at various places along the beach on a fairly frequent basis." Broward County recycling coordinator

Continued on page 7

Parrish ...Continued

GMCA Secretary Eric Berkowitz asked Ms. Parrish if she planned on, "supporting portability of the 'Save our Homes' protection afforded to homesteaded properties." The 1992 "Save our Homes" amendment limits increases in the "just value" of a property to the lesser of the percentage change in the CPI (Consumer Price Index) or 3 percent. Should an "empty-nester" decide to move to smaller, more affordable, surroundings, the protection evaporates. Berkowitz noted that legislative attempts to achieve limited portability have come up short, indicating the need for "a high profile champion to authoritatively address opponents' concerns." Ms. Parrish responded, "People were being trapped in their homes by the huge tax consequence suffered when attempting to downsize." Parrish claimed, "I was the first to describe the carry-forward of 'Save our Homes' protection as 'portability'. Representative Carl Domino is currently sponsoring a bill to submit an amendment to the Florida electorate that, upon favorable disposition, would make the Save our Homes protection portable." Domino's bill, House Joint Resolution 43, subtracts the difference between the appraised and market values of the old homesteaded property in the year of sale from the new property's first year tax obligation. A similar bill filed last year, HJR 417, died in the Committee on State Administration on April 30, 2004, the last day of the legislative session. Senator Mike Haridopolos advanced similar Joint Resolutions in the Senate; SJR 2300 was last year's entry and SJR 894 is currently filed. Parrish doesn't hold high hopes for the bills' passage, primarily due to legislators' misconceptions about the possible negative impacts on local budgets. Ms. Parrish termed Palm Beach County Property Appraiser Gary R. Nikolits as an ally in this struggle.

Advisory Board member Dr. Jim Comis from Ocean Summit inquired about, "the affects of leasing on the Homestead Exemption." Florida law affirms that you are entitled to a Homestead Exemption if, as of January 1st, you have made the property your permanent home or the permanent home of a person who is legally or naturally dependent on you. If you rent the property, you cannot claim the \$25,000 exemption. To the general surprise of most Board members, Parrish clarified that there was "a one-time exemption to this requirement." Within a single calendar year, the property may be leased once during the owner's lifetime without jeopardizing its Homestead status. By way of example, Parrish said, "a homeowner on vacation may rent the unit while abroad and still retain homestead protection. However, this can only be exercised one time and the exception ends on December 31st."

In addition to political savvy accumulated on the Broward Board of County Commissioners and business acumen gleaned working for the huge "Swap Shop" on Sunrise Boulevard, Lori Parrish brings explosive energy to her new calling. If successful at locating and infusing the missing "fraud dollars" back into the system and acting as "champion" for "Save our Homes" portability, she will substantially lessen our tax bite. Despite the Advisory Boards' wide divergence of political leanings, a majority of attending members left the meeting feeling that Lori Parrish is the right person in the right job at the right time. Given the tax ramifications of Broward's high-flying real estate market and the current anti-tax political climate, this confluence of opinion is remarkable.

For additional information about the Broward County Property Appraiser's office, the Homestead Exemption and the Save our Homes amendment, go to the Broward County page in the Issues section of the Galt Mile Community Association web site (www.galtmile.com). Also available are the "Ask Lori" Q & A's covering a wide spectrum of appraisal-related inquiries put to the Property Appraiser. Galt Mile residents are invited to "Ask Lori" any question, to which she will personally respond.

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COUNTY CELEBRATES BEACH RENOURISHMENT

Article By Eric Berkowitz

On May 6th, a long-awaited celebration took place in Hollywood. The immediate beneficiaries of the Broward County Shore Protection Project, the municipalities of Hollywood, Hallandale Beach and Dania Beach, joined Broward County in throwing a party to highlight the project's commencement. The State of Florida was represented by the Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) while the Army Corps of Engineers finally saw its six-year old environmental impact statement bear fruit. Civic and environmental groups that spent the past 5 years locked in a frustrating struggle to save Broward's beaches also attended. A group of Galt Mile residents were invited to participate in the festivities. As much as anyone, they were responsible for the project's implementation.

At 8:30 AM, Ocean Club President Rose Guttman picked up Regency Tower residents Iris and Joe Anastasi, Fern McBride and Eric Berkowitz along with Kathy Freismuth of Regency South to arrive at the Westin Diplomat Resort at 3555 South Ocean Drive in Hollywood by 9:30. They were met at the hotel by Broward Beach Coalition Chairman and Galt Ocean Club President Pio Ieraci. Invited by county officials, the Galt Mile residents represent the nucleus of a group that convinced the Florida Cabinet to include Fort Lauderdale in the critical project. The beachfront hotel was ideally suited to host this party. The 39 story, 998-room Resort & Spa is one of Starwood's premier properties. Despite sporting an enormous list of amenities



From left to right: Hollywood Mayor Mara Giuliani, Broward Mayor Kristin Jacobs, Broward County Commissioner Sue Gunzberger, Hallandale Beach Mayor Joy Cooper, and Dania Beach Vice Mayor Pat Flury.

Continued on page 6



It was a strange week for the Galt Ocean Mile. People ordinarily face personal crises every day ...quietly ...unnoticed. However, sometimes it is impossible to ignore our neighbors' plight. From time to time, disconcerting incidents come careening into our lives ...with a bullet. It was that way for residents of Plaza East and Coral Ridge Towers South. A tragedy juxtaposed to a miracle.

On Wednesday evening, May 11th at sundown, several residents of Plaza East - a luxury high-rise condominium at 4300 North Ocean Boulevard - noticed a body floating in the ocean behind the building. While ocean bathers are a common sight for the beachfront condo's residents, the "floaters" lack of movement began to stir curiosity. Concerned residents called 911 to report the immobile swimmer. Upon arrival, paramedics extracted a 61-year old Plaza East resident from the shallows. Fort Lauderdale Police Department spokesman Sgt. Andy Pallen announced that David Czelusniak, the owner of Unit 11 D in the Plaza East Condominium, was declared dead when retrieved by the responding paramedics. Although the initial examination revealed no suspicious injuries or evidence of foul play, the actual cause of death would be determined after an autopsy performed by the Broward Medical Examiner's Office.

On the following day, Thursday May 12th, the neighborhood would sustain another shock. Coral Ridge Towers South, the last of 4 luxury high-rise cooperatives constructed as part of the Coral Ridge Towers Complex in the Galt Mile neighborhood, played host to a miracle. Not the kind we generally characterize as such, like getting to work on time despite the Oakland Park Boulevard bridge getting stuck or finding your wallet on the gas pump where you inadvertently placed it three hours hence, but the real deal. If you believe in a higher power, this was an intervention. If not, this qualifies as a genuine short circuiting of the laws governing probability and statistics.

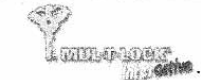
69 Year-old snowbird Gloria Jummati, owner of unit 903 in Coral Ridge Towers South at 3333 N.E. 34th Street - just west of A1A, planned on returning to suburban Chicago with husband Merle as the "season" came to a close. Shortly before 8 AM, she decided to straighten up the balcony of her north-facing ninth floor unit. Succumbing to dizziness, she fell over the 42-inch balcony railing, seemingly to certain tragedy over 100 feet straight down. Instead of the asphalt parking deck, she landed squarely in the

Continued on page 18



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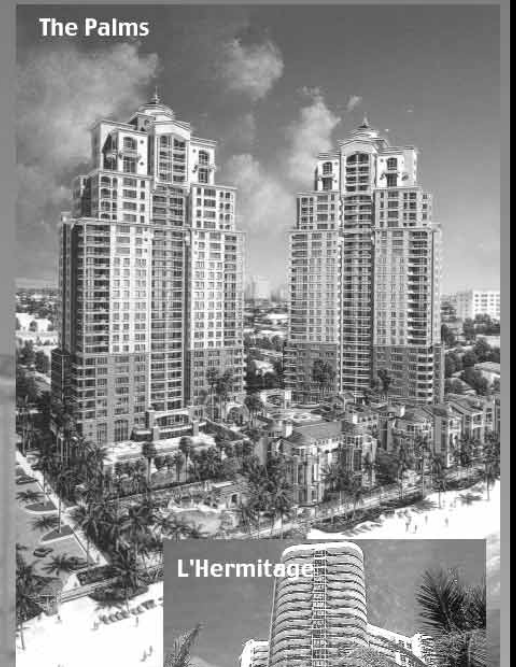
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