THE SUNNY ISLES BEACH REPORTER

***********WHY, MR. MAYOR? ********

It's time to take back City Hall this November! Look at what the Mayor and Commission have DONE to us, the taxpayers, without opposition, until now.

WHY, MR. MAYOR, ARE OUR REAL ESTATE TAXES RISING NEXT YEAR?

SPENT <u>\$20 MILLION</u> of your tax dollars to purchase the land for a parking garage for primary use by the Ramada Hotel, when the same sold for \$1 MILLION only 10 years earlier! Does this sound a little "fishy" to you? Did someone make a windfall profit on that with the knowledge of City Hall? WHY, Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money!

DO YOU KNOW the City could have taken that property by "eminent domain" for <u>MILLIONS LESS?</u>

Does it sound a little "fishy" to you? ME TOO! WHY, Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money!

THE UNSIGHTLY GARAGE/PARK the Mayor has "championed" will cost an additional \$17 Million, and 450 out of the 500 parking spots will be for the <u>SOLE USE OF THE RAMADA ONLY!</u> Together, the land and garage will cost taxpayers \$37 Million? Sound a little "fishy" to you? ME TOO! WHY, Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money!

The Mayor <u>did</u> take by eminent domain the strip mall at 163rd Street for nearly \$20 Million borrowed from Bank of America when he had no set final plan for its use. Developer J. Milton, who owns the St. Tropez across the street which is 40% EMPTY, told *The Miami Herald* that development of that property "would help him sell units!" WHOM DID THE MAYOR AND COMMISSION HELP WITH THAT ONE? You the taxpayer, or his Developer/Contributor/Partygiving friend? Sound a little "fishy" to you? ME TOO! WHY Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money! Please visit sibreporter.net to view the party invitation.

THE MAYOR AND COMMISSION plan to partner with yet another developer to build an <u>AQUARIUM</u> with retail space on that site for \$50 Million, and YOU --- the taxpayer --- will become the landlord for this risky venture. Sound a little "fishy" to you? ME TOO! WHY, Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money! Please visit sibreporter.net for more information.

THE CITY purchased 3 strip malls adjoining Atlantic Isles for \$14 Million, to be used for parks and placed near the entrance to where the Mayor and some Commissioners live. Sound a little "fishy" to you? ME TOO! WHY, Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money!

THE CITY took ownership of the historic Sunny Isles Pier adjoining the Newport Hotel from the State. They plan to spend up to \$4 Million for "renovation." WHY DIDN'T THEY LET THE STATE OF FLORIDA, WHICH OWNED IT, RESTORE IT AT NO COST TO OUR TAXPAYERS? Sound a little "fishy"? (no pun intended at this location). ME TOO! WHY, Mr. Mayor? It's Our Money! Please visit sibreporter.net for more information.

The City purchased property behind Walgreen's for \$2.2 Million for another parking lot people did not want and is empty most of the time except weekends when used by non-residents to go to our beach. WHY, MR. MAYOR? IT'S OUR MONEY!

TAXPAYER MONEY THE MAYOR HAS SPENT TO DATE

Ramada Garage/Park	\$37 Million
163rd Street Strip Mall/Properties	\$20 Million
SIB's Liability if Aquarium Fails	?? Million
3 strip malls adjoining Atlantic Isles for parks	\$14 Million
Newport Fishing Pier Renovation	\$ 4 Million
Parking Lot Behind Walgreen's	\$2.2 Million

TOTAL MILLIONS SPENT TO DATE:

\$77 Million

So, Mr. Mayor, having spent \$ 77 MILLION on your pet projects, the central question is: Are citizens' lives any better because of what you have spent? Have the citizen's seen any meaningful change that makes these MILLIONS justifiable without community support? Voters believe the answer is NO.

Voters of Sunny Isles Beach --- VOTE on November 2nd to TAKE BACK our City from arrogant bureaucrats who think they can do whatever, and spend whatever, they want!

Michael Schnitzer, **Mayor**

Jeanette Gatto, **Commissioner Seat #2**

Jeniffer Viscarra, **Commissioner Seat #4**



SUNNY ISLES BEACH/HAULOVER CULTURAL PARK EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

As Mayor, one of my goals will be to increase Sunny Isles' city limits to include all of Haulover Park, which was offered by Dade County to be included within our city limits 12 years ago, but was refused by SIB's first Mayor, Dave Samson. As mayor I will revisit these talks with Miami-Dade County and look into the feasibility of making the almost 3 mile strip of pristine beachfront and intercoastal park part of Sunny Isles Beach.

There is no denying the potential of such an addition to our city. My plan as mayor, with the support of voters and my fellow commissioners, is to transform Haulover into one of the greatest cultural and income-producing centers in all of South Florida. It will also satisfy our state requirement to have a certain amount of green space to compensate for the development that has occurred in Sunny Isles. Furthermore, it allows for growth and revitalization without the disruption of construction in our residential areas. What follows are some of my ideas for the Sunny Isles Beach/Haulover Cultural Park Expansion and Development.



A Cultural and Performing Arts Center

The performing arts center would host performances from all over the world,, including concerts for all ages, Broadway shows, operas, ballets, comedy, and lectures. The performing arts center would also feature an outdoor amphitheater for concerts under the





A Multiplex Cultural Museum

A cultural museum made up to include a fine arts section and a decorative arts division for a collection spanning hundreds of years of art. The goal for the museum would be for it to become part of the national museum registry, which would open the doors to traveling art exhibits from other large and important museums. As a permanent exhibit, explore the possibility of an antique cars and motorcycle museum spanning over a hundred years of automotive design and creativity.

SUNNY ISLES BEACH/HAULOVER CULTURAL PARK EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT

CULTURAL MUSEUM





A Seaside Promenade/Beach Boardwalk And Boat Marina

Haulover would feature a beautiful landscaped promenade along the three mile stretch of breathtaking turquoise intercoastal waterways lined with boat slips, cafes and restaurants, retail shops, and art galleries for nights and days of pleasure with family and friends. On the beach side there would be a boardwalk for jogging, bicycles, rollerblading.





A Sports Arena

A multi-sports arena featuring soccer, baseball, minor league affiliation, etc.



Friends, if elected our plans for Haulover Park will enrich our lives, increase property values and bring many new, and much needed, homebuyers to our area. Our vision of Haulover will also be a great source of **revenue** to our city and will allow for reduced real estate taxes in the future. Many of the projects we are suggesting can be funded by federal and state grants as well as private sponsors and contributors.

The Sunny Isles Beach/Haulover cultural park project will enrich all of our lives as well as those of future generations.

AN ATTACK BY CITY HALL ON PROPERTY RIGHTS OF A JEWISH HOUSE OF WORSHIP

by Sharon Elster, Executive Editor

As this is being written and Jews around the world celebrate the Jewish New Year, Sunny Isles Beach's Mayor and three Commissioners made a highly controversial decision to designate Temple B'Nai Zion as an historic landmark. This decision was reached after a contentious battle waged by the City against the Temple's leader.

There are extremely disturbing facts that go beyond this particular case, and straight to the heart of the Mayor's attack on religious freedom, separation of Church and State, and the illegal taking of private property for public use at the Mayor's initiative.

In the mid-2000's, the Temple began offering learning programs to children which were so successful that classes for adults were added. The synagogue, infused with new energy and purpose, began to thrive. However, when plans to build a charter school became known to the Mayor, he was against it and a curious chain of events began to occur.

Sunny Isles Beach Code Enforcement, apparently at the Mayor's direct orders pursuant to a former Code Enforcement Inspector, bombarded the Temple with fines, violations, and restrictions that had not been cited until then. This caused intolerable expense to the Temple. The testimony of Robert Solera, a former 10-year City employee and Code Enforcement Inspector (in a written document now filed at City Hall) testified to comments and direct commands of Mayor Edelcup to look for and do anything to cite B'Nai Zion. Solera took a grave risk becoming a whistle-blower and telling the truth under deposition. Our citizens owe him a thank you.

Rabbi Aaron Lankry met with Mayor Edelcup, hoping to mediate. Instead, he stated, the Mayor was hostile and antagonistic, and the Rabbi was stunned when the Mayor said, "THIS COMMUNITY IS A BUNCH OF PIGS!" When asked if the Mayor wanted to be quoted saying that, he said "I DON'T GIVE A F**K WHAT YOU DO".

Mayor Edelcup's alleged remarks were publicly disclosed by the Rabbi at a televised Commission Meeting on September 2nd, 2010, and also at the prior hearing in June. THE MAYOR DID NOT DENY MAKING THESE OUTRAGEOUS COMMENTS. A former New York Special Fraud Prosecutor and Judge (and son of concentration camp survivors) made a public televised statement at the September 2nd meeting asking the Mayor to either explain the comment, deny he ever said it or apologize. THE MAYOR DID NOT DENY MAKING THE OFFENSIVE REMARKS. The Judge told him, "SHAME ON YOU."





AN ATTACK BY CITY HALL

(continued)

According to Commissioner Bud Scholl, the only Commissioner to oppose what the Mayor was doing, the City hijacked the property rights of a house of worship in an improper manner. He correctly felt that "historical designation" of the Temple effectively ended their right to use their home in any legal way they chose, ending future expansion plans for the synagogue. The fact that the City used the 2004 City Holocaust Survivors Event is appalling, since one solitary event does not an historic site make. A school would have had a far more lasting and beneficial effect for City residents. This will now NEVER happen.

Mayor Edelcup, with a very heavy hand, stepped outside his boundaries as Mayor. Illegal landmarking of private property has been tried before and has been defeated on apppeal in Federal Courts in other cities, costing taxpayers millions of dollars. It is expected this will be the case in Sunny Isles Beach and will cost you, the taxpayer, millions of dollars in legal fees.

How can citizens trust a City government and Mayor to act in good faith and in their best interest, when such abuses of power are committed behind closed doors at City Hall? Isn't it time for a change in City Hall?

STATEMENT BY CODE INSPECTOR ROBERT SOLERA

Good evening members of the Board, my name is Robert Solera, and for those of you who do not know me, I served for approximately 10 years as Staff for the City of Sunny Isles Beach. When I left in 2009 I was serving as the Community Development Director. As part of my duties, I also served as the Director of Code Enforcement. I am also a certified Code Officer.

I am not getting paid for being here tonight and I am not receiving any other consideration. I am here simply because I was extremely troubled to hear that the City was going after Temple B 'Nai Zion again and attempting to designate the Temple's property, generally located at 200 178th Street, as a historic site.

In approximately the mid-2000;s, the City had several meetings discussing long term plans. During these meetings it became well known that the City had an interest in acquiring the Temple's property in an attempt to create a Town Center concept and also to prevent competition for a proposed Charter school. The Temple, however, had other plans, and did not want to, as the City called it: "cut a deal". In approximately 2006, Kobe Karp met with the City Staff to unveil plans to develop a building to contain the Temple's growing population.

During this exact same time something also happened between the Temple and the City's current Mayor. The Temple switched to a more religious sect. There also appeared to be some other differences they had.

Shortly thereafter, the Mayor came to my office to advise that he believed that the Temple had been committing multiple code enforcement violations that immediately needed to be investigated. The Mayor ordered myself and Clay Parker, the Chief Building Official, to inspect the Temple's

property and to cite the property for: Seating that had been placed outside; Rickshaws that had been placed outside to help transport infirm congregants during the Sabbath; grass overgrowth; and some electrical work. Upon getting the list from the Mayor, I immediately sent a Memorandum to the City Manager advising what I had been asked to do. Shortly thereafter, my officers inspected the property and cited the property as instructed. The Mayor was at the Code Enforcement hearing to ensure that the orders had been followed out. In fact, if I recall, the minute the Mayor walked in, this matter was moved up to the top of the agenda.

Going after properties that the City had alternative plans for was not unusual. The City utilized similar tactics when it desired to acquire the Lagoon Restaurant (also a Jewish owner) under the 163rd St. Bridge. Also, it became apparent that the Mayor had issues with other Orthodox Temples and I was asked to investigate the Orthodox Temple in the Ramada as well as another one off 174th. It was always strange to me that I was never asked to visit St. Mary Magdalene Church or other houses of worship. The current attempt to designate the Temple's property as historic is just another tactic that the City is attempting to utilize to devalue the site, to prevent the temple's expansion and to eventually "cut a deal" so that the City can acquire the site.

I urge you to end the abuse and to vote no to the Temple's Historic Designation. Thank you.

June 22, 2010

WHY, MR. MAYOR, DID YOU HIRE THIS MAN TO MANAGE OUR CITY?

BY JENIFFER VISCARRA

Based on a **Public Record Request**, the City disclosed that the **Mayor and Commission** not only hired, but also *promoted* a city manager who has in his short time in this position triggered an investigation regarding his alleged abusive behavior towards eight women employees. According to the public records, most of the women are foreign and range from being fairly entry level to being supervisors themselves.

According the **public records**, the Assistant City Manager and Finance Director filed a complaint in June of 2009 alleging that **City Manager Rick Conner** committed the following offenses against women employees:

- Reducing a woman to tears for not ordering enough coffee.
- Making yet another woman cry by forcing her to write the number "4" over and over because he did not like the way that she did it.
- Screaming at a woman in a meeting for no apparent reason, when she was merely listening to the comments from the other participants and not actively engaged in the conversation.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Pointing his fingers at a woman's head as if holding a gun and shouting BANG BANG several times.

 Ordering a woman employee to issue a check in excess of \$700,000.00 with only a postit note as documentation while the Assistant City Manager was on vacation.

The **public records** also reveal that the independent investigation conducted by an outside law firm found that two of the women recalled Mr. Conner inappropriately touching them. One of these incidents actually occurred in March of 2007 when Mr. Conner was with SIB Public Works, **prior to being promoted** to acting City Manager. The independent report notes:

"There was a consistent pattern throughout the interviews where many of the women expressed that they felt Conner was rude and verbally abusive towards them. Most said that Conner spoke down to them and was disrespectful to them....A few of the women said they felt belittled and patronized by him....The women gave fairly consistent descriptions of Conner and the manner in which they were treated by Conner." (Please note that the ellipses

(Please note that the ellipses (....) indicate missing text between sentences, which are quoted in their entirety).

At the time of these alleged incidents and independent report, Mr. Conner was acting City Manager. The current mayor and commission have since made him the permanent City Manager and Director of Human Resources. Why Mr. Mayor would you reward and keep such unacceptable behavior in our City Hall?

As a former supervisor at Florida International University, I devoted a lot of time and energy creating a positive and culturally sensitive work environment. I encouraged communication, learning, and growth with the goal of providing excellent service. Why Mr. Mayor is this not vour model? I believe that a supervisor must lead by example. Why Mr. Mayor are you setting this example? Actually promoting the City Manager in light of the investigation and its conclusion only serves to highlight what the mayor and commission truly value: Exercising their power at everyone else's expense. Sunny Isles Beach residents deserve better.

When elected, I will use my training and experience in law to ensure ethical use and interpretation of the City Charter, city ordinances and guidelines, and I will draw from my years of service at FIU to support and promote excellence, respect, and diversity because, unlike the mayor and his chosen team, I understand that when human potential is stifled, more is lost than is gained.

Please visit our website to review the public record referred to in this article: www.sibreporter.net

THE CITY'S HANDS IN YOUR **POCKET**

by Michael Schnitzer

If you happen to run a business or serve on the board of directors in a condo in Sunny Isles Beach, you know that our current Mayor and Commission take code enforcement to a new, and often unreasonable, level.

Sunny Isles has a code **enforcement** division whose function is to look for code violations of homes or businesses, and issue fines. In many cases, the property owners are given little time to bring the violation to code. When owners are unable to comply, they are issued stiff fines. The City has been very successful at raising funds with this tactic. Code compliance is important and usually a good thing. The problem arises when the city forces businesses, homes and condo owners to bring sound, older structures up to today's code, as it becomes very expensive for the homeowners and businesses to fix. In most cases the homeowner must file for permits to fix the violation. This is one of the city's favorite ways of creating revenue.

As you can imagine, in a city where the west side of Collins is older than 20 years, most of the buildings and homes do not comply with the current building codes, though they still stand strong. These buildings should not be made to comply with new standards of building codes. New ordinances have been passed at commission meetings making it mandatory that we upgrade our condos to meet these new standards. Having no way around it, condo

boards have been forced to impose sizable assessments to be paid by unit owners.

The City is also finding ways into residents' wallets on smaller matters. For example, last year I was able to negotiate for Winston Towers a contract with Total where all homeowners would pay a flat fee per month which was incorporated into the maintenance. The service includes extended plumbing and electric and covers all kitchen and bathroom appliances. I also arranged for a Total appliance satellite office to be opened in the Winston towers 300 building for the convenience of all Winston Towers residents. This program has worked out great and saves homeowners lots of money. However, the city of Sunny Isles Beach code enforcement and building departments require permits for practically all plumbing, air conditioning and electric work. So, if coffers, which were overflowing. So an air conditioner needs to be removed and parts replaced or repaired, Total Appliance must file for a permit. That costs more than the monthly payment, and Total cannot absorb the cost. As such, it gets passed on to the homeowners, many of whom are struggling just to stay afloat in this economy.

The city may argue that permitting is protection for the homeowner since their inspectors come out to check the work to make sure it is done safely. That's not a bad thing. However, Total is a fully licensed and insured company that has been in business since 1970 and has qualified and licensed people doing repairs. Their first and foremost responsibility is to make sure the

work is in compliance with the current codes and is done correctly.

It seems the building department in Sunny Isles Beach is funded not from your real property taxes but rather from your permit fees.

In other words, for this department to stay funded it must go out and make sure you file for your permits. In fact, Total Appliance has been approached by the city of Sunny Isles Beach and told they will be watching the company very closely to make sure they file for all permits. Otherwise, they will be fined and not allowed to service residents in Sunny Isles Beach. My fellow residents of Sunny Isles, the city's conduct and position affects all our lives and finances

During the last few years when developers were building their beautiful buildings, they were paying exorbitant permit fees to the city the homeowner was not a real concern for city inspectors. That's not to say permits were not necessary, but inspectors had their hands full and many things went under the radar. Now that large construction has stopped, inspectors have to get the money from somewhere in order to fund their salaries and keep their department funded. And that's why they are so intrusive in their practices.

If I am elected mayor of Sunny Isles Beach, I will find other methods, which meet state statutes, of funding the building department in order to alleviate the high cost of permits in the City.

Hospital Medical Center or Aquarium? 163rd Street

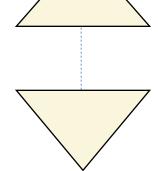
Did you know that the current city mayor and commissioners have taken out a \$20 million dollar loan from the Bank of America to purchase the 163rd strip mall property? Apparently, the idea is for the city to enter into a partnership with a developer who wants to erect an aquarium and retail space costing another \$50 million dollars. The city would then become the landlord of this development project and be on the hook if the aquarium is not profitable.

There are other more appropriate uses for the land in question. For instance, if elected we will enter into negotiations with either Mt. Sinai or Aventura Hospital to build an emergency room medical facility and adjoining medical building for doctors and specialist to serve our community's health needs Along with serving our medical needs, this project would bring much needed jobs to our area without creating the kind of congestion and debt risk that an aquarium represents.

This November, Sunny Isles Beach voters have the chance to elect a team that is less interested in misguided projects and more concerned with serving the community's real needs. With your vote we can get our city back into the hands of people who care about you.

WHAT WE NEED





WHAT WE'RE GETTING

AQUARIUM



WHY, MR. MAYOR?

CHABAD ON 163RD

STREET

by Michael Schnitzer

Sunny Isles Beach is home to a large and growing Jewish congregation who belong to the Chabad on 163rd Street. Rabbi Alex Kaller heads up the Chabad, which has provided a place of worship for our many Jewish residents and which recently had nearly 700 congregants for Yom Kippur. However, Rabbi Kaller's congregation is located in a strip mall that Mayor Edelcup and his Commission plan to demolish in order to build an aquarium. Unfortunately, Mayor Edelcup and the Commission have been big big supporters of this project but have not taken the time nor shown the desire to discuss its impact with those most directly affected.

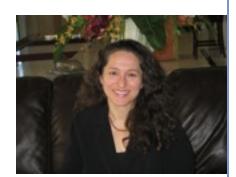
Because we believe that leaders of Sunny Isles Beach must represent their citizens needs first and foremost, we will do everything in our power to ensure that the Chabad on 163rd Street continues to serve their congregants either in its current location or a new location within the area.



THE COMMISSIONERS' RACE

<u>VOTE FOR JENIFFER VISCARRA – (Seat 4)</u>

- A graduate of Barry University (B.A. in English) and Florida International University (M.A. in English)
- A graduate of Yeshiva University's Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.
- Interned with the City Bar Justice Center Immigrant Women and Children Project helping battered women with immigration.



- Volunteered at Catholic Charities helping battered women with immigration, and with Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Began her legal career as an immigration attorney with one of the most prestigious immigration law firms in Florida
- Practices immigration and Family Law
- Teaches Legal Writing at Florida International University
- Is on the Board of Directors of her condo association

JENIFFER WANTS TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF SUNNY ISLES.

Why vote for the Isaacs?

- According to his advertisement, Isaac Aelion has the endorsement of the current commission, which has favored overspending, overreaching, and overt disregard for the people's voices. If you condone business as usual, vote for this Isaac.
- Isaac Feldman's primary home is not in the district for which he is running. He rented an apartment in the district in order to qualify as a candidate for Seat #4. If Isaac Feldman is willing to manipulate the rules to qualify as a candidate, imagine what he would do if elected. If you don't have a problem with that, vote for this Isaac.

THE COMMISSIONERS' RACE

VOTE FOR JEANETTE GATTO – (Seat 2)

- Extensive management experience at several high profile companies in the marketing and communications industry
- Senior Vice President for the largest, independent ad agency on the West Coast
- Named Director of the New York and Chicago satellite offices
- As a department head, responsible for financial reporting, personnel/staff and new business/revenue opportunities
- Superior work ethic and business practices
- Excellent skills in leadership, decision-making and problem solving

JEANETTE IS COMMITTED TO WORKING VERY HARD FOR THE PEOPLE OF SUNNY ISLES BEACH

MY OPPONENT

*At the time he announced his candidacy, Bob Welsh stated that he was aligned with the Mayor and the City Commission, and is in favor of the direction this Commission is taking the City. A vote for him is a vote for four more years of the same.

*When asked why he resigned his position as a Board Director of Winston Towers 400 earlier this year, he stated (as the primary reason) that he had never run a company before, and was no longer interested in continuing on the Board. Strangely, he was Vice President for three years and a Board Director for approximately another three. Why did he step down now after all those years?

- * Under Bob's tenure at Building 400 the pool was closed for two years and the balconies were sealed off by the City of Sunny Isles Beach Code Enforcement due to structural damage as a result of neglect, creating life safety issues.
- * If he could not succeed in obtaining results as a Board Member for his building, what does that mean for the citizens of Sunny Isles Beach if he were elected Commissioner?



<u>A NEW LEADERSHIP SEEKING A BETTER TOMORROW</u>

ELECT MICHAEL SCHNITZER, MAYOR,

JEANETTE GATTO, COMMISSIONER

JENIFFER VISCARRA, COMMISSIONER

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Sharon Elster, Executive Editor Ieniffer Viscarra, Editor

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