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BROAD COMMUNITY TEAM BUILDS CASE TO HOST DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION, pg. 3



SLOWLY EXPEDITING: It's been more than 2½ years since a request was submitted, but the word "expedited" is still being used to describe Homestead Air Reserve Base's efforts to allow for civilian use on its premises. Miami-Dade commissioners on Dec. 1, 2015, directed Mayor Carlos Gimenez to negotiate a joint use agreement with the federal government allowing for limited civilian use of the base, with an estimated timeframe of one to three years. Since then, the request has moved slowly through the necessary channels, and this month, Miami-Dade Aviation Department spokesperson Greg Chin told Miami Today the request had reached the desk of Air Force Secretary Heather Wilson, whose approval would allow negotiations to begin. However, a June 19 memo from Mayor Gimenez states the request is still pending review from the Federal Aviation Administration, to which it was forwarded by the Air Force Headquarters of Operations in June 2016. Homestead Air Base, Mr. Gimenez wrote, is "trying to expedite the approval process."

HEALTHCARE SALES INFLOW: Nine Florida healthcare businesses reported more than \$18 million in actual and projected exports from Hospitalar 2018, the world's third-largest annual medical trade show held May 22-25 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Hospitalar draws about 92,000 attendees and more than 1,250 exhibitors from 54 nations. Brazil is the largest economy in South America with the highest potential in the healthcare market. The nine companies that the state's economic development agency, Enterprise Florida, took to Brazil are Advanced Instruments Inc., Atlas Specialty Lighting Inc., Acasoma Technology Inc., Buhtronics, Durotech Corp., Gaumond Scientific Company Inc., Infusium Medical, Medas Inc. and Proenta Healthcare Solutions, LLC. "Our mission is to register our portfolio with wholesale distributors in different states of Brazil," said Rafael Celli, president of Advanced Instruments in Miami. "Enterprise Florida's team helped us to explore and develop new alternatives of business in the region."

FREE WELCOME TRAINING: The customer service training that 60,000 members of Miami-Dade's visitor industry have taken is now available online and free to community members, complete with graduation certificates, attendance passes and discounts, and entry into a drawing for a cruise for two. The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau has put its "Miami Begins With Me" training online, with information on the economic impact of tourism, Miami's history and key neighborhoods, local attractions and customer service training. The course is available anytime. Details and registration: www.visitmiami.com

THE ACHIEVER



Joanne Li
FIU business dean seeks more community, global ties
The profile is on Page 4

Term limits retained for commission

By Jesse SANCHEZ

Miami-Dade commissioners opted Tuesday not to ask voters to remove their term limits in a 5-6 vote at a meeting to discuss county charter changes.

"No one has ever told me that term limits were a bad idea," said Chairman Esteban Bove Jr., who cast the tiebreaking vote.

Joining him in shooting down the resolution were Jean Morezime, Danielle Levine-Cava, Javier Sosa, Eileen Higgins and Rebecca Sosa, who reversed her position as the resolution's co-sponsor.

Mr. Sosa, who served in both state legislative chambers, said the county should reflect the Tallahassee model.

"I'm one of the guys that started the 'Eight is Enough' movement in Florida," he said. "That's what they like; that's what they get."

Dennis Moss, Sally Heyman, Barbara Jordan, Audrey Edmondson and Joe Martinez voted to throw out term limits. Xavier Suarez and Jose "Pepe" Diaz weren't present.

Conditions have changed since 2012, when 77% of voters ordered term limits that will unseat some commissioners in 2020, said Mr. Moss, the resolution's primary sponsor.

"The economy was in the tank, somebody had to pay, the county commission was in the crosshairs and the voters thought term limits were the answer," he said. "Today is a different time."

Echoing the findings of Robert Cuevas, who led a task force that recommended charter amendments, Ms. Edmondson argued that limiting commissioners' service would reject experience and leave the commission vulnerable to special interests. "This commission, without experienced people, will be run by the lobbyists and staff," she said.

Having to work within eight-year confines also would prevent commissioners from seeing issues they work on come to fruition, Mr. Martinez said.

"For eight years in this county, there's very little you can get done," he said. "I'm widening a road — just permits alone, that's five years."

Who commission pay hike, pg. 17

Feds say port's deeper harbor isn't deep enough

By Jesse SANCHEZ

Port gets A bond rating with caveats, pg. 13

After three major upgrades to Port Miami's channels to handle ever-bigger ships, including a \$205 million project that ended in 2015, a fourth round of digging may be needed because the improved harbor is outdated, federal officials say.

The US Army Corps of Engineers will study improvements to PortMiami, with a public meeting highlighting alternatives and a plan expected by 2020, spokesperson Susan Jackson told Miami Today.

The 2018 Work Plan for the Miami Harbor Safety and Navigational Channel Improvements Program at PortMiami includes \$556,250 to start the study, which adheres to the corps' rule requiring completion within three years, no more than \$3 million in federal cost and concurrent review of the corps' district, division and headquarters levels.

Total project costs aren't yet known, Ms. Jackson wrote.

Pilots assisting ships navigating the harbor are having trouble maneuvering larger ships — some with cargo capacities of 11,000 TEUs (20-foot equivalent units), according to Ms. Jackson. With freighters of up to 14,000 TEUs

now on the seas, she said, these troubles will only worsen.

Cruise liners are also constrained, she wrote. Many can't pass container ships docked while being loaded, causing delays. Improvements would increase efficiency, cruise industry growth and allow more numerous cruise vessel berths, she said.

Visiting vessels now demand to schedule weeks in advance to determine arrival conditions, and their greater size requires precise accommodation for nautical measurements, she said.

"As the port continues to increase its capacity, this feasibility study... is another important step to further serve our current customers and respond effectively to the next generation of cruise and cargo business," said Port Director Juan Kurlya.

On March 26, Mr. Kurlya requested the corps study, including deepening and widening the outer channel, widening the Lummus Island turning basin and widening the south shipping channel.

The corps would conduct and manage expansions, he wrote, complementing upgrades

that began in 2012 and concluded in September 2015 and cost \$205.6 million, according to corps documents. That project deepened and widened the Fisher Island turning basin, relocated the west end of the main channel and deepened and widened Fisherman's Channel and the Lummus Island turning basin. At that point depths were cited as 48 to 52 feet.

A corps initial appraisal found federal interest in the current study and, after speaking with the Biscayne Bay Pilots chairman, Capt. Jonathan Niklin, used ship simulations for research. A month later, the corps' higher headquarters approved the appraisal.

Improvements to PortMiami began in 1990, when Congress authorized deepening and expansion to 42 feet, a project completed three years later.

A \$40 million upgrade of the south harbor was completed between June 2005 and July 2006.

In February 2004, the corps used the Svanen, a 1,140-foot, 6,600 TEU freighter as its model to determine optimum depth. The Svanen's minimum clearance between the deepest point of the ship and the bottom of the port was set at three feet.

Many larger vessels today, Ms. Jackson wrote, exceed that depth.

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Millennials lead population boom in Miami's downtown

By **REBECCA SAN JUAN**

James Verney recalls living in Brickell after college about 20 years ago. The area became a ghost town after 5:30 p.m., with residents leaving to find bars and clubs.

The senior vice president and residential lending manager at TotalBank now has returned to the area, swapping a daily hour commute to and from the Gables for a five-minute walk to work. He lives for the first time in his adult life without a car after realizing his backyard provides everything he wants and needs.

Millennials lead the residential boom in Miami's core. Men constitute the majority of the population at 50.6% with women closing in on the gap. Downtown's population has increased 38.1% since 2010, with 92,235 residents this year and a forecast of 109,617 by 2021. Brickell shows the most promising growth alongside a changing industrial landscape.

Brickell continues to be the fastest-growing downtown neighborhood. Over 28,000 more residents call the community home than in 2000. Data from the Miami Downtown Development Authority predict the total of 41,337 residents to become 51,921 in three years. Women residents continue to catch up to men in downtown. They now stand at 49.4% of the population, up from 47.4% in 2010.

The downtown residential boom mirrors an expanding professional landscape. The US Census Bureau and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) note in 2015 the largest employments by industry were educational services with 32.5%, public administration with 20.4%, and scientific as well as tech-related jobs with 9.1%. Although other industries are gaining more traction, the financial and insurance sector stands strong in the area with over 60 banks, accounting for 21% of the county's financial and insurance sector.

The change in the balance of professionals might alter how younger generations remember the neighborhood. Ken Russell chairman of the DDA and vice chairman of the Miami City Commission recalls looking out the window from the backseat of his father's car as a child in the '70s.

He said, "I always thought of it as a financial district. One of my



Brickell's new residential supply is running dry, said Santiago Vanegas.

earliest memories — the first sign I read — we were driving in the car in downtown and it was the Mutual of Omaha Insurance building."

He thinks a 6-year-old today might remember the area differently: "If someone were to drive and their child were to look out the window now, I imagine the sign they might read would have to do more with retail and restaurants."

Outlets for a night out help developers like Ryan Shear, principal at Property Markets Group, sales mastermind behind apartment X Miami in downtown and condo Echo Brickell, which had a \$6 million sell.

Mr. Shear said, "American Airlines Arena changed downtown. Bayside is getting redone. Every block there's a story to it."

The continuing residential growth motivates developers to snag one of the few remaining parcels of land. Mr. Shear credits the Florida tax law, steady South American immigration and Florida tax law for making the city as a whole a safe bet for development.

"Population growth is off the charts," he said. "I don't see that changing anytime soon."

Miami 21 Zoning Code plays into the equation with clear boundaries. Mr. Russell said, "Our zoning code is quite predictable, and that's what's attractive to development. When there's a lot of open-ended variables it makes it difficult to plan ahead and know what's possible. We laid the city out in a way where we do anticipate development."

Visionaries area taking advantage

remaining demand.

He said, "It's a fantastic opportunity to make an investment on Brickell because the land is gone. There is not going to be more cycles in the future. Compared to downtown, you have land for more than 50,000 units. You have a lot of potential supply in downtown. Same thing in Edgewater. But not in Brickell."

The lack of new options and competition works in his advantage, he says: "In the next cycle, Brickell is going to be very difficult to generate more supply. That means the price should go up."

Prices are growing more competitive to meet the increasing demand. Madeleine Romanello, broker associate for Compass, says downtown dwellers purchase an outdated property for about \$500,000, while turnkey condos range from \$750,000 up to \$1 million.

But most big spenders are skipping new construction for buildings that have proven themselves, the experts say. The Carbonell, Four Seasons, Jade and Santa Maria secure top dollar, selling at \$3.7 million upward and higher.

Ana Grimaldi of real estate agency Snitzhans Grimaldi, a Brickell Key resident, can't picture her family living elsewhere. Her two boys are among the 11% of Brickell residents who are school-

age children, and, like other kids, take advantage of the playground for impromptu soccer games and race their bikes and scooters around Brickell Key. Brickell City Centre and the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science take planning out of her hands for weekend outings with scheduled programming and changing exhibits.

Traffic, especially over the Brickell Avenue Bridge, remains an issue souring downtown living.

Mrs. Grimaldi said, "This was the reason we changed the school, because to deal with that every morning and then on the way back it was just impossible. We schedule all of our meetings and everything around that schedule to the bridge."

Others also cite traffic as a drawback and see potential solutions in mass transit.

"As more people adopt using Uber and mass transit it will alleviate some of that, but we're going to have more residents over time," Mr. Verney said. "That should cancel each other out. To improve how pedestrian friendly it is will be a big positive in the area."

The population growth in Brickell proves traffic has yet to drive folks away. The chance to live in a community that offers a live-work-play lifestyle in close proximity seems to outweigh the negatives.

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

- Drastically cutting your daily commute
- Reducing congestion on your local and neighborhood roads
- Connecting you to other highways and modes of transportation, including an express bus lane
- Offering you transit hubs with more mobility options
- Offering you a 14-mile nature trail for biking and jogging
- Improving your quality of life so you can do the things you really want to do!
- Providing safeguards to protect the environment

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT
YOUR VOICE WAS HEARD AT THE COUNTY COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.mdxway.com/kendallparkway

Ross Report

Real Estate by Audrey Russ

What You Should Know about Homeowner's Insurance When Buying a Home During Hurricane Season

Summer season is here and November 20th. Therefore, it's important to take note of some crucial information about homeowner's insurance, especially when purchasing a South Florida home this summer.

Check Your Policy & Deductible

Ask your policy covers the full value of your home and not just a percentage. Additionally,

check your deductible to know how much you will be responsible for in the event of a hurricane. Some deductibles in Florida can be up to 10% of the value of the home.

Homeowner's Insurance is Not Flood Insurance

When purchasing insurance for your new home, make sure you also get a policy for flood insurance. Homeowner's insurance will not cover damage done by rising water. Hurricanes can produce flooding in neighborhoods that aren't designated flood zones, so it's

important to make sure your home is protected.

Do Not Rely

Flood insurance companies can suspend coverage of policies in the days leading up to a claim, so it's essential that you ensure your policy is in place even in absence of a storm.

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COMPASS

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