



Commissioner Marc D. Sarnoff News

News from District 2

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Neighborhood Beautification

Miami resident Brad Knoefler had a vision to transform his neighborhood. "We had trash and drug paraphernalia littering the ground, and vagrants calling this area behind my building home."



697 N. Miami Avenue (Before)

Brad has more than ten years experience as a

Dear friends,

There are a lot of exciting things going on in our district. The Coconut Grove Arts Festival brought in thousands of visitors, despite a shaky economy. As you'll read below, a major waterway is free of dangerous debris thanks to a strong team effort. We even saw one local resident take the lead on a massive project that will reshape an entire neighborhood. But it was the city's recent Marlins' Stadium vote that has dominated much of the conversation over the past few weeks. I am often asked about my position and I feel it is important that all city and county commissioners are open and up front on this important issue to our community. Please allow me to share a letter I recently sent to a local newspaper regarding my stance on the current stadium vote.

Date: February 25, 2009

To: Miami Herald Editorial Board

As an attorney by profession, and as one of five commissioners for the City of Miami, I draw on my professional experience to protect the taxpayers of Miami. I take this

specialist in adaptive reuse. He has put his experience to work in addition to his own own money, effort, and time to reshape his block. After getting permission from the Florida East Coast Railroad, Brad hired crews to perform the massive clean-up process.



697 N. Miami Avenue (After)

"I am very happy to see the positive impact this work in having on the community. My hope is that others will see this can be done, and little by little we can all make Miami a more beautiful place to live," says Knoefler. As a commissioner, It makes me proud to see residents take action to beautify our city. Brad has done a tremendous job and my office and the City's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) is committed to assisting Brad and anyone

responsibility very seriously.

I fully support a stadium for the Marlins- that makes financial sense for the taxpayers of the City as well as the County.

We now know as a result of the recession the bed tax money to be utilized to pay for the financing of the stadium is down 12% this year. We simply do not have a crystal ball to project when the recession will end or when the financial markets will embrace the purchase/sale of bonds based exclusively on the revenue stream of the bed tax. In her interview with Florida Trend, Chief Financial Officer Alex Sink stated, "The credit crisis has caused the tax-exempt bond market to cease functioning for all practical purposes." As the projections presently stand, the general fund will be exposed to pay the costs of the stadium (and the inevitable overruns), competing with police and fire budgets.

The projection by the County Manager demonstrate a 2% reduction in bed tax on an annual basis for 2 years, followed by flat years, progressing to 5% increases on an annual basis. We know the February 13, 2009 projections are already wrong, clearly demonstrating a 10% shortfall in the first year. The County Manager has allegedly fashioned a creative financing plan to meet the downfall of bed tax revenue by issuing interest only bonds. To most this is analogous to not paying the principal on your home mortgage for years. This results in approximately \$600 Million in bonds, costing the taxpayers more than 3 times the bond amount or \$1.8 Billion, and that is without the inevitable cost overruns.

My 3 changes to the Contract requires the Marlins to shoulder the cost overruns, allow the City and County to receive the naming rights revenue to expeditiously retire the bonds (reducing the interest payment or \$1.8 Billion amount), and most importantly, not allow the Marlins, L.P. to flip this team for a profit upon receipt of the stadium rights.

else with similar ideas for their own neighborhood. Congratulations Brad!

Quick Links

[My personal Website](#)

[My City Commissioner Website](#)

Join Our Mailing List!

Volunteer's Corner



Jonah Pruitt III exemplifies what it means to be an active member of our community. He tirelessly continues to touch the lives of thousands of people. Most notably, Jonah

If the Marlins want the County and the City as partners, then they should act as fair and equitable partners. If the taxpayers' investment increases the value of the franchise and the Marlins sell the franchise (appreciating the team is still obligated to remain as a tenant), the increased value created by the taxpayers' investment must be returned to the citizens to retire the debt, removing the exposure to the general fund to pay for this stadium.

Let me close by dispelling all rumors of grandstanding....the County Manager's Memo detailing the terms and conditions of the stadium financing is dated February 13, 2009. I only became aware of it on the date of the Friday, February 13, 2009 hearing. The better question is why wait to issue the 25-page memo the day of the hearing. The details of the financing should have been clearly laid out by the administrations of the City and the County - this is their agreement they having been working on and all issues should have been thoroughly vetted.

Whether to vote for the stadium if it only is paid for by the bed tax revenue, is a policy decision for each Commissioner. To vote for the stadium, not understanding the financing, is exposing the General Fund to stadium payments - this is a failure to exercise a Commissioner's fiduciary obligation to the public.

I make no apologies for standing up for what I believe is right, especially for the residents in my district who have entrusted me to make the tough decisions when needed. I can't think of a more necessary time than now.

Commissioner Marc David Sarnoff

City of Miami-District 2

volunteers as the Co-Chair of the South Florida Urban Ministries Black Tie & Blue Jeans Benefit Dinner and Auction. Jonah actually helped create the event six years ago and has proudly overseen its growth into a premier program. In addition to his work with the Urban Ministries, Jonah is also on the board of the Community Partnership for the Homeless. Thank you Jonah Pruitt for making a difference in our community.

Protecting American Jobs



Unbelievable as it may sound, a federal program may be actually keeping South Florida workers out of a job. The H2B visa program is designed to allow companies to bring in foreign workers for temporary jobs, but only if they are specialists and there are no American's able to do the work. But one local TV station discovered some South Florida construction projects are abusing the system to hire cheap labor from other countries---while Miami workers remain unemployed. That is simply unacceptable. Click on this link to watch Jim DeFede's story.

[CBS 4 Investigative Report: Giving Away American Jobs](#)

At the February 26th Commission meeting I proposed a resolution, which was passed unanimously by my fellow Commissioners, that is designed to protect our workers. Any company that wishes to do business with the City of Miami must first

Hometown Heroes



Firefighter Val Sanchez epitomizes the word hero. While driving to work on

January 30th, FF Sanchez was startled by a woman who was trying to throw herself in front of passing cars on the Venetian Causeway. Val jumped out of his car to assist. A few seconds later, a highway patrol trooper arrived and told Val he could be on his way. Val never identified himself as a Firefighter. As he started to leave, the woman ran to the side of the bridge and jumped off. Val quickly alerted his station that he was going to aid a drowning victim. Without any regard to his own safety, Val dove off the bridge and swam to the victim as she was being pulled away by a strong current. Val now found himself swimming against the current, while struggling with the victim who was trying to slip away and harm herself. Val eventually latched onto a nearby sailboat and pulled the victim to safety. Fire Chief William Bryson is recommending Val for Firefighter of the Year. I second the motion! Congratulations Firefighter Sanchez for an amazing job well done.

detail how many, if any, H2B visa workers they plan to use, and why they are specifically needed? Let's put the accountability where it belongs---on us, your elected leaders. If taxpayer money is being used to pay companies who choose not to hire American workers---for whatever reason---our residents deserve to know.



There must be transparency in the process. We will also press the issue with President Obama and his administration to keep tighter reigns on the current H2B visa program. The former administration cut back on oversight which has made it far too easy for companies to abuse the system. We must stand up for working families. With our economy at historically dismal levels, the time to act is now.

**Abandoned Barges
Removed**



Miami Police Officer Jeffrey Giordano is recognized by his peers as being one of the most resourceful officers in the department. Jeffrey spent the last 16 years as a community policing officer---basically pounding the pavement making contacts and sources within the community. Officer Giordano has earned the respect of citizens on his beat and recently was named the Policing Officer of the Year for the entire MPD! After becoming a familiar face in his patrol area, Jeffrey will now become a familiar face on television as the newest member of the department's top notch Public Information Office. Jeff will now respond to media and public requests and handle interviews on major cases. Chief Timoney and PIO Commander Delrish Moss have found an excellent



Three abandoned barges lurking perilously underneath the water of Miami Marine Stadium will soon be cleared from the area---at no cost to the city.

The barges, seen in the above image from Google Earth, have been blamed for multiple boating accidents and have endangered local rowers.

A contracting company working with the Fish and Wildlife Commission will begin removing the hazardous debris within the next month.

My office has been pushing for this project to happen and I'm very happy to see this area will once again be safe for those looking to enjoy a day on the water.

It's been an exciting month with much more excitement to come in March. I am very grateful for all your support and look forward to

representative for the department. There is no doubt, Officer Giordano will fit in well with the excellent staff already in place.

continuing to make strides in our community. There are great opportunities to get involved in our community. In fact, we are looking for two residents in District 2 to be part of a new Neighborhood Stabilization Program taskforce. The NSP is designed to address community needs. Please let my office know if you would like to be nominated for this important program. You can respond to this newsletter or email me at msarnoff@miamigov.com.

It is an honor to serve as your District 2 Commissioner.

Yours very truly,

Marc D. Sarnoff



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