

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item A-2**  
**November 17, 2009**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II**  
**Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.**  
**Commissioner Maria Anderson**  
**Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.**  
**Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Patrick Salerno**  
**City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez**  
**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**  
**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Kim Rومانer – Executive Director of Miami Dade Broadband Coalition**

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A-2

Mayor Slesnick: We have a presentation by Kim Rومانer, the Executive Director of Miami Dade Broadband Coalition. Kim, good morning and welcome.

Ms. Rومانer: Can you please put the Broadband Presentation up? Interesting the technology here, and we are going to talk about technology. My name is Kim Rومانer and I am Executive Director of the Miami Dade Broadband Coalition. I want to thank you Mr. Mayor and Honorable Commissioners for allowing me to share the mission of the Miami-Dade Broadband coalition. We are here specifically, and before I do that, let me just say also thank you very much to the Commission for voting last month to be a member of the coalition and also thank you to Mr. Gee Chow and the City’s contribution of his participation. He has really helped to shape the vision of the coalition and also helped us through the arduous task of filing a large federal grant application for stimulus funds in the broadband category. So we appreciate your participation and support. This is the statistic that is really at the core of our mission, this is from Scarborough Research and we think that number is actually low, that 30 percent of Miami-Dade Citizens have no access to the internet, the national average is 40 percent, Scarborough’s primary research technique is by survey, by landlines, telephone, so you can see how that might leave out quite a large number of citizens. Right now in the state of Florida to be an unsuccessful member of society, you have to have internet access. The only place you can apply for welfare is online, or unemployment benefits. So as our Cities, as our Healthcare Institutions, as our Educational Institutions attempt to streamline the delivery of services to our Citizens using technology, we will only be able to reap the benefits of those efficiencies to the extent at which our citizens can

access that technology and access the services that we provide thereby. If we don't, we are always going to have a bifurcated system, one system for those with access and another system to deal with those that don't. It is very expensive. Here are some of the ways that this digital divide impacts our citizens, although all of these groups are important, our children are probably the most important to us because this generation that is coming up behind us has the internet embedded in their lives as Debbie Karcher, the Chief Information Officer of Miami-Dade Public Schools says kids with internet access are different then kids without internet access; so that divide between "haves" and "have-nots" will be magnified through their lack of access to the internet. The fact that U.N. recently stated, "that for citizens to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century access to the internet is as critical as access to water and electricity." So this is who we are, we are a non-profit technology and broadband buying consortium for public institutions with the goal of reducing costs for institutions, while increasing capacity and allowing them to collaborate in unprecedented ways. We believe that if we can connect our community via technology, we will cause connections to occur that otherwise we would never be able to make happen in this community. As we provide that service we intend to invest the proceeds from that service in digital inclusion programs, so that we bring the rest of our citizens with us, as we embark in this adventure. So when you think of infrastructure, which traditionally we think as roads, electricity, etc., we would like you to add broadband technology to that definition. As I mentioned, the U.N. said it is as critical as water and electricity, and if we intent to be a smart community, and I think we do, then we need to use the infrastructure of the future and the truth is the future is here now. It is just not very evenly distributed, right now in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the United States out of those 30 countries is 20<sup>th</sup> in broadband penetration, which is a travesty considering that we invented the internet and our ranking has been dropping like a stone. This time next year, we will be in the bottom third. So this community has a unique opportunity to differentiate itself by making a significant investment in the technological infrastructure of our community, but it is not just about the fiber in the ground or the wireless signal in the air, it is about all of these components as well, awareness, engagement, training, provisioning etc, and there are organizations around this County that are taking bites out of this mission and we hope as the coalition comes together and as we pull these public institutions together that we will be able to pull all of those community based organizations together as well and we will find the synergy between their efforts and really amp up the effect they have on the community. So if we want to create such a technological ecosystem, this is what we have to do, we have to have a collection of significant stakeholders across sectors in this community. So I am happy to say that we do in this coalition, these are our members and partners and they have been engaged now for, well they actually, most of them became engaged back in 2006, when Mayor Alvarez attempted to launch a wireless network in this County, and I think that was a very valid mission and a worthwhile mission, and I think we still need to pursue it, even if that particular circumstance didn't work out in our favor, but as you can see we have many government institutions, healthcare institutions, community based organizations, educational institutions, all of whom have been participating now very heavily with me for over a year. So, as you know, in this County we have been talking about revenue diversification throughout South Florida for what a couple of decades now, and we have made some inroads I think Biotech for example, entertainment and film we have made some inroads, but still our economic engine is tourism. If we intend to really diversify, technology is an excellent choice because it is so very doable for us and as we look at our global positioning when we think about what differentiates us as a community and given the situation that the United States finds itself in now with broadband

technology, we could really be significantly differentiated using broadband technology, and when you use technology, you attract high technology companies and this would be a business attractor. So, our vision is to create a connected community that advances education, economic development, individual empowerment and quality of life. We believe that broadband technology can be the basic infrastructure that underpins all of that, and to do that we are going to build a high-speed, shared network that all of our public institutions can be members of by joining the network, connecting the network, they will reduce costs just by joining the network to create positive transformational change in our community. So, how will we fund it? We have submitted a \$64 million dollar stimulus fund request for the broadband technology opportunity program and we are still in round one. The grant has been delayed due to some review process that they are going through right now, but we hope to hear that we are moving into the due diligence phase in December. There is also a round two funding available to us, if we are not fortunate enough to be honored in round one. FPL FiberNet has been a member for the last year or so, and they have worked very hard with us to come up with the business model that we were able to submit with this grant and also agreed to contribute the 20 percent matching funds, that is \$16 million that we requested or that the government requested. Also the Knight Foundation has awarded us a \$900 thousand seed grant to get us started with the core infrastructure of this network and to do some digital inclusion pilots in Overtown. Those monies will be in our hands in the next couple of weeks so we can begin to build out that core infrastructure. We also of course once the members are on the network will have subscriber revenues because they will be buying their services through the coalition. Those revenues again we can reinvest in digital inclusion programs and we intend to pursue other local, state, and federal grant funding; to that end we are in the process of filing our 501(c)3, we are incorporated as a non for profit and this is underway. As you may know, this takes a little bit of time to get done, the pilots will be launching over the next year, and this is really the key thing that we need to be doing, and why I am here with you today, is we need to educate the community about the value proposition of investing in collaborative broadband technology, so we will ask the City of Coral Gables and the Commission to help us with that educational mission and spread the word about the benefits that we hope bring to the community; and if you have organizations that you are involved in where we could speak and share this message we would love to do that; and if we do succeed in this mission we will have a very unique facility that will differentiate us as a community that will be a business attractor. In fact the Bookings Institutions says that for every percent broadband penetration they see economic growth of 2 to 3 percent so it can be quite a significant driver for our community, a very significant competitive advantage. As you will notice my last name in that slide is Marcille, I was just married on September 26<sup>th</sup>, so thank you very much for your time and attention here today, I appreciate it, I will answer any questions if you have them.

Mayor Slesnick: Well thank you very much Kim, and I am very excited to be part of this effort, now go back if you can, can you go back?

Ms. Romaner: Sure, how far?

Mayor Slesnick: To the participants.

Ms. Romaner: Yes, the list is long and it is small, sorry about that.

Mayor Slesnick: That is alright, so we have the University of Miami which of course is a major Coral Gables institution and that helps tie us there, Human Services Coalition very good. Have you attempted to reach out to the Coral Gables Community Foundation, I see you have the Dade Community Foundation.

Ms. Romaner: Not Yet.

Mayor Slesnick: If you would do that, that would be another player in our community.

Ms. Romaner: Ok.

Mayor Slesnick: Are you reaching to chambers or are they not in the description of...

Ms. Romaner: Yes, and actually I did meet with your Chamber probably about I want to say a year ago when we were first getting started, we need to loop back around with them. We have as you might imagine just a small staff, but yes we would love some more connectivity with the chambers and we are talking to Barry Johnson at the Greater Miami Chamber of course and so on.

Mr. Slesnick: Great we also have a Business Improvement District here who are going to be presenting in a few minutes and that is another organization which deals in the life and the time and you were talking about driving economics, well they are the key to our economic coalition for downtown merchants as well as the chambers.

Ms. Romaner: Yes, I look forward to their presentation.

Mayor Slesnick: OK well good thank you very much for being with us.

Ms. Romaner: Thank you I appreciate the opportunity.

Commissioner Anderson: I have a quick question, I see all of the participants, what are the benefits of membership other than to be in a really good spot in order to diversify and amplify the role of the internet and information to society, are there ways where cities or participants to also share in the revenue?

Ms. Romaner: Yes, actually, first of all it is a cost savings opportunity as we go out and buy in bulk these services, we will be able to reduce our costs just right off the bat for doing that, by joining forces, then we can begin to share services things like security systems, data centers, applications like Enterprise Resource Management Systems, all of these things that we are paying in duplicate ways in the various municipalities, counties, hospitals, I mean we are all using basically the same tool sets and we get our volume discount, but if we were asking for a Miami-Dade Community volume discount we would be leveraging a really vast buying power that could make a significant difference in how we use our dollars today and then we can repurpose those dollars back into the community, so those are the beginning benefits; but yes if some of the constituents or the members of the coalition have resources that they could bring and

provide service to the coalition as a whole, then definitely yes we would have revenue sharing opportunities. Great question thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: It is a wonderful mission, and I hope that at some point when things are further along that you will come back and share the successes.

Ms. Romaner: I will be happy to, thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you very much.

Mayor Slesnick: Thank you very much. And I presume Mr. Manager, that Gee Ming Chow is still our representative to this?

City Manager Salerno: That is correct Mayor.