

Communications Committee Meeting  
June 9, 2021  
Minutes

**Staff**

Martha Pantin, Communications and Public Affairs

Michael Rocha, Communications and Public Affairs

Antonella Nakfour, Communications and Public Affairs

**Board Attendance**

Connie Crowther - Present

Derrek Space - Absent

TJ Villamil - Present

Diana Arellano - Present

Caroline Blumberg - Present

After achieving a quorum, the meeting started at 8:33 a.m.

Board members introduced each other and welcomed new members.

The meeting date was confirmed to take place the second Wednesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. Next meeting will take place Sept. 8. As is customary, there will be a hiatus for the July and August meetings.

As the Mayor's appointee, Crowther is the new Chairperson of the committee.

Crowther went over the process of approving the minutes and a quorum was achieved. Pantin mentioned the meeting minutes once approved are sent to the City Commission as part of their agenda.

Crowther suggested that committee members acquaint themselves with the City Commission agenda so they can better advise the commission on communications matters.

Pantin discussed the Hurricane Preparedness Guide, she mentioned that we are reworking the evacuation guide. Pantin said she reached out to Miami-Dade County because they have a great guide, and she did not think we should spend City resources recreating one.

The County guide is sent to all households in Miami-Dade. In the past the City has developed its own guide before and one of the major purposes is to demonstrate the

flood management zones. Public information is critical regarding this issues and communities that received a better rating mitigate the cost of flood insurance for homeowners. However, in researching the issue the flood zones and the guide need to be posted online and made available in at least five public places, i.e., City Hall and the library. Villamil asked how much we would save by not sending it out. Pantin said about \$12,000.

Crowther brought up the senior citizens that might have special needs. Pantin mentioned that she met with the Senior Citizen Advisory Board and Disability Affairs Board. She presented them with the flyer regarding the Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program (EEAP) to get their ideas.

She received good suggestions from the two boards including placing flyers on the Publix bulletin boards. Pantin mentioned that at the Senior Citizen Advisory Board she learned that as part of the application there is an option for a wellness check which means if someone that you know that is 65 or older and lives alone this is an option for the Fire Department to reach out to them following a storm to check if they are ok. Pantin mentioned she is redoing the flyer. Important to note that the evacuation program does not apply to people living at Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) such as The Palace. ALF's are required to have individual plans.

Pantin asked the two new board members to sign up to eNews which provides weekly city news. Last August there were some 7,000 subscribers and it was distributed bi-weekly. Since October it is now distributed weekly and currently there are more than 11,000 an increase of 30 percent. The goal has been to reduce stories and increase subscribers. Currently the click rate is about 30 percent. Crowther mentioned it is an excellent newsletter with all the information you need to know.

Villamil said he recently read an article that as more and more media organizations go through a mandatory paywall where you need to subscribe to read the article, traditional PR is diminishing in its power and where it is increasing is with own audience so increasing the direct line of communication by 5,000 subscribers is fantastic.

Pantin mentioned she will not go through with the Hurricane Guide since the County is so easy to read and full of information. Crowther and Villamil agreed. Pantin reached out to the Director there regarding the art for us to use. Crowther also advised having copies of them in case a senior citizen asks for them. Crowther advised to supplemented with the zones if it becomes necessary. Pantin said the flood part of it is something she is working with Economic development because how we get the most points you need to have a committee that includes a realtor, someone in insurance. Just

a committee for that because is a FEMA rule and do surveys. This means something incredible for residents if you go from a 4 to a 3 because it changes how much you pay. That's a tangible you can say as a result of this work and public affairs is an important part of that.

Crowther said she went online to look up her flood zone and said it's very easy to do.

Crowther brought up the 100th anniversary of the City which is in four years. While it might seem some time away for planning purposes the city should begin the process immediately. There is a need to create a public committee as well as a staff committee to work on this because it is a massive undertaking. She mentioned that her consulting agency had handled the 75th anniversary of UM in 2000-2001 and that they will also be having their 100th anniversary at the same time. Crowther asked for thoughts and ideas on how much the City should be involved. She mentioned the UM 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary took three years to plan. Crowther mentioned she had started working on a list of possible committee members for the centennial celebration.

Villamil said it is at least a three-year endeavor and that the major question will be the governance of the committee. Regardless of how the city proceeds, it is imperative to have public participation.

Crowther mentioned that Mayor Lago is currently doing a 100-day Listening Tour and encouraged members to meet with him and introduce themselves and share their thoughts.

Villamil made a motion, seconded by Arellano to recommend that the City Commission establish a committee to begin working on the Centennial Celebration in 2025. There was unanimous support for this motion.

Villamil made a motion, seconded by Arellano to pause the committee meetings until September. There was unanimous support for this motion.

Crowther mentioned that the committee formally thank former Chair Sandy Gonzalez-Levy for her dedication and service. That her voice had been instrumental in locating communications and Public Affairs in the Police and Fire headquarters. Villamil made the motion to formally recognize Gonzales-Levy, seconded by Arellano and passed unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:06 a.m. Committee members were invited on a tour of the building led by Officer Denham.

