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ANTI-PANHANDLING ORDINANCE- A CRAP SHOOT?

By Eric Berkowitz



Whether sworn out by business people heading into work, students cutting through Stranahan Park to the Library or tourists returning to their hotels, the unprecedented number of panhandling complaints clogging City Hall finally reached a critical mass. The City of Fort Lauderdale's new anti-soliciting ordinance precludes panhandling in certain zones, ostensibly to protect the privacy rights of citizens while engaged in particular site-specific activities. While no one would dispute our vulnerability when banking at an ATM, why the City Commission felt compelled to shield people from beggars when entering a commercial building or eating an alfresco lunch is somewhat less clear. These seemingly random zones were selected for two reasons. First, vetting courts had previously deemed these public areas constitutionally worthy of protection from panhandling despite multiple challenges. More importantly, these particular prohibitions were handpicked to address a larger Commission agenda.

On July 20, 1993, the City of Fort Lauderdale passed Resolution 93-143, in which Beach Rule 7.5(c) prohibits panhandling, begging and soliciting on the Fort Lauderdale beach and nearby sidewalks (the area within 150 feet of Atlantic Boulevard or Seabreeze Boulevard). Since Fort Lauderdale was the nation's first city to prohibit people in a public place from begging in a nonthreatening manner, outraged constitutional watchdogs – spearheaded by the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) – heatedly beat a path to the courthouse (Smith v. City of Fort Lauderdale). As a rule, the courts perceive panhandling as a form of free speech, protected by the First Amendment. Years of legal wrangling in the lower courts had infused the case with a national profile. When ACLU celebrity co-attorneys Beverly A. Pohl and Bruce S. Rogow argued in June of

1999 that "Sidewalks are the quintessential public place" before the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (the highest federal court for Florida, Georgia and Alabama), the court dumbfounded the entire nation by upholding the City's ordinance. The decision was finally etched in stone on October 29, 1999, when the United States Supreme Court refused to hear an ACLU appeal.

The lawyer who successfully defended the City was Fort Lauderdale Assistant City Attorney Lisa Hodapp, better known as the singer/bassist for 80's Fort Lauderdale punk music legends Morbid Opera, the guitarist for 90's all-girl group The Gargirls and the anchor of a post-Millennial band called Fraulein – before succumbing to cancer at 49 in 2010. Ironically, just prior to upending these legal heavyweights to preserve the beach no-panhandling zone, Hodapp's Morbid Opera cut a landmark record entitled "Jesus Loves You So Give Us Your Money", which put the South Florida Punk music scene on the map.

In a second constitutional challenge to the City's beach no-panhandling law (Chad v. City of Fort Lauderdale), when a district court denied plaintiffs' motion for a preliminary injunction in 1994, both parties filed motions for summary judgment. After rejecting arguments by ACLU superstars Pohl and Rogow that the ordinance violated the First and Fourteenth Amendments and ordering the plaintiffs' motion denied, the district court granted the City's motion for summary judgment on May 27, 1998.

Until these decisions altered the legal landscape, the only anti-panhandling laws that survived constitutional challenges prohibited aggressive panhandling, or soliciting people at bank machines, in line at public transportation or at outdoor restaurants (all of which are included in the new City ordinance). While these were all narrowly tailored, Fort Lauderdale's Beach Rule 7.5, which states its intention to "eliminate nuisance activity on the beach and provide patrons with a pleasant environment in which to recreate," applied to a five-mile swath of public beach. The courts broke with precedent and upheld the broadly defined no-panhandling zone because the City successfully demonstrated that it served a larger civic objective. Since the public beach area is critical to tourism – one of Fort Lauderdale's main fiscal engines – City attorneys offered credible evidence that soliciting and panhandling threatened the municipality's economic underpinnings.

Ironically, the Beach Rule wasn't drafted to target the homeless. In the late eighties and early nineties, homelessness was a buzz word for drug addicted or alcoholic vagrants, yellow-sheeted drifters and mental patients who somehow dodged a butterfly net. Stereotypically pathetic to the general public and invisible to government, requests for spare change by the most chronic cases raised few eyebrows.

In contrast, the City was plagued by a seasonal swarm of collegiate lo-custs who annually transformed the beach area into a pay toilet. Teenagers who ran out of money in the first 24 hours of a three-week psychotic break financed the balance of their bender and the trip home by begging on the beach, stealing from one another or selling any loose furnishings from the hotel room they shared with a dozen other budding sociopaths. Police officers charged with enforcing the beach rule distinguished between the homeless and the visiting youths since Mom and Dad would reliably bail junior out while arresting drifters would simply clog the main jail. According to former Assistant City Manager Bud Bentley, "It was meant to crack down on rowdy Spring Break kids. You had kids out of control panhandling. How do you think they got home? They came and blew all their money on alcohol and girls." The Homeless were collateral damage.

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ANOTHER PIECE IN BROWARD'S INFRASTRUCTURE PUZZLE

Build It and They Will Come

By Chip LaMarco, Broward County Commissioner

When I campaigned against the sitting Broward County Mayor in 2010, I had a plan for my time as your County Commissioner. That plan was the 4/4/4 Plan and it included four strategic issues to assist in rebuilding our local economy. One of those issues was to work to bring a Convention Center Hotel to Broward County. I went on to point out the obvious to those of us who live here in South Florida: "We live in a perfect area for business conferences, annual meetings, and international expos."

My pledge was and remains this: "As County Commissioner, I pledge to you that I won't be 'up for sale' when it comes to voting for progress in our county. Projects like a convention center hotel are needed to bring jobs to the area as well as market Broward County effectively."

I restate this point because this is a key drawback when planning a business or international trade event in Broward County. We have been in a steady decline in unemployment numbers, which indicates that we are heading in the right direction. We remain lower than our neighboring counties and our state in this key indicator. At the start of this year, the numbers were this: Florida 9.9%, Miami-Dade 10.2%, Palm Beach 9.8% and Broward 8.5%. As of May, the numbers had improved throughout the state: Florida 8.7%, Miami-Dade 9.6%, Palm Beach 8.5% and Broward 7.2%. This shows that our number one industry has been helping to put people back to work. That industry is our tourism industry and the most prolific statistic is that the economic impact of tourism has increased for 29 straight months. This impact has been felt all around our county.

As the owner of a construction company, nobody understands the issue of unemployment better, but I like to look at every challenge as a project. In doing so I like to 'lay the groundwork' in creating a solution. The groundwork in this case is the momentum shown above in the positive direction of our local economy. The missing piece in Broward County being the first choice for many business or trade groups is our lack of a Headquarter Convention Center Hotel. This hotel in concept should be physically located at our Broward County Convention Center and be attached so that visitors can come and go from their meetings to their rooms and the amenities of such a facility. As a County Commission, we have started to make the Convention Center more user-friendly by putting a plan forward to move the Port Security Checkpoint past the Convention Center entrance. This will enable users to enter the building, without entering the secure areas of Port Everglades.

The concept of a Headquarter Convention Center Hotel is not a new idea. As a matter of fact, it has been one of the nagging issues before the Broward County Commission for many years. It was put forth in the early 1990's and included an International Trade Mart. After much deliberation and negotiation, this plan failed to move forward. The second attempt was just before the millennium and the county committed to providing \$11 million investment in a minority-owned and operated 500 room facility and was to be open by Halloween 2003. The scary part was in the financial details as the county learned that they would be on the hook if the developer failed to make the payments. The third time was recently in 2006

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and there were finally two excellent projects for the county to choose from. One was a project to be a \$506 million project that was 100% privately-funded and another was a project that started at \$398 million and quickly rose to \$460 million and was to be funded using the bed tax dollars to back the construction costs.

Although I was not a County Commissioner at this time, I was a City Commissioner in the relatively small but active City of Lighthouse Point. I watched this issue with hope that the decision makers at the county would pick the private deal, which happened to be financed by none other than longtime successful hotelier Marriott. The inside scoop was that this would have been the Marriott family's "flagship property" for their corporate business and would fit perfectly alongside their Harbor Beach Marriott resort property. The decision had been made, to pick the more risky option that relied more on our public funding and using the critical bed tax dollars brought in from all of our visitors. This was a decision that was clearly influenced by the "trusted advocates", or lobbyists hired by these two companies. As the years passed and the economy tanked, the inevitable happened. The developers could not afford to do the project and Broward County was stuck with a bill in the millions for negotiations and contractual issues and without a hotel at our convention center.

I go through this abbreviated history because people need to know the background of this project so that they can really understand what we have lost. According to Nicki Grossman, the President of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), we have lost some serious economic activity since these projects have failed. Nicki and her team have created a portfolio of hundreds of wonderful hotels in the Greater Fort Lauderdale Area. This portfolio of hotels has kept many large conventions coming back year after year. Unfortunately, we are now learning that some of our business cannot commit to returning to our sunny paradise. They cite our lack of a convention center hotel and a need for a larger convention facility. We have lost an estimated \$61M in 2006, \$47M in 2007, \$43M in 2008, \$54M in 2009, \$33M in 2010 and \$35M in 2011. One group in particular, ARVO-the Association of Vision in Ophthalmology was a client for dozens of years and booked 20,000 room nights annually. Additionally, we have lost business due to the size of our convention center. This impact has averaged \$8M annually.

The basis of these issues is different though. The hotel and tourism industry collects what is commonly called a "bed tax" from visitors to our hotels throughout Broward County. These business-owners put their lives into making their customers stay a memorable one. In return, they are looking for those important bed tax dollars to go into marketing and other efforts to bring these customers back and add new ones each year. Through many conversations with these important members of our community, I have learned that they understand that some of this funding may go into the expansion of the Broward County Convention Center, but they are hesitant to support the funding to build a competing hotel facility. Through many meetings and visits I have formed the opinion that our CVB funding could be a source of convention center expansion, but we need to think outside of the box for the hotel.

Much of this thinking has been done and it has been done successfully right here at Port Everglades. You might have heard about the ICTF, or the Intermodal Container Transfer Facility at Port Everglades. This is a new train system that is being built as a Public/Private Partnership (PPP). The deal was quite an easy decision for all nine of the County Commissioners. It proposed that the Florida East Coast Railroad invest the financial capital to build a train system within Port Everglades wherein a two-mile long train could be constructed to move cargo right from the cargo ships at the docks to the FEC railroad. These trains would be on the rail, with no cross town traffic interruptions that have been a source of much frustration. The beauty of the public investment in this arrangement is that the county did not have to invest a single dollar of public tax dollars from our general fund or any current funding stream. We contributed

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At the November 1, 2011 City Commission meeting, City staff responded to a prior Commission request to outline some "best practices" used in other jurisdictions to buttonhole soliciting. Since Fort Lauderdale first passed the pioneering 1993 ordinance protecting its beach, Miami, West Palm Beach, St. Petersburg, Orlando and Clearwater had all passed no-panhandling ordinances targeting certain areas or neighborhoods. As such, staffers made two recommendations. They suggested that the Commission take a second bite at the apple and prohibit panhandling in the downtown area and the core beach tourist district. Secondly, they urged development of a mass education campaign to discourage public support for panhandling.

This was a huge policy shift. Resources historically reserved for medical treatment, occupational therapy, housing or other forms of public assistance would also be used to teach guilt-ridden snowbirds that their conscience-clearing handouts often do more harm than good. In addition to appropriating \$26,350 for anti-panhandling public outreach, on February 21, 2012, the City Commission asked retiring City Attorney Harry Stewart to craft an ordinance forbidding solicitation in the downtown business area. Given the inherent First Amendment pitfalls, simply criminalizing requests for money would trigger the constitutional dogma that could judicially void the ordinance.

After researching case law, Stewart armed himself with a map and a red pen. By strategically stitching together a Chinese menu of disjointed prohibitions, he tailored an ordinance that placed every square inch of the City's business district off limits to begging. To conceptually unify the widely divergent prohibited zones, no-panhandling status was theoretically ascribed to areas where people are unable to avoid attempted solicitation, "like when you are on a bus," explained Stewart.

To pass a First Amendment litmus test, each prohibition in Stewart's regulatory Rubik's Cube would have to be content neutral, narrowly tailored to some significant governmental interest and insure the availability of alternative channels of communication to those impacted by the new law. At the April 17, 2012 Commission meeting, the first reading of Stewart's handiwork earned a thumbs up. At the May 1, 2012 second reading, it went into the books following unanimous approval by the City Commission. As provided in Ordinance No. C-12-10, the law was fully effective 15 days after approval, on May 16, 2012.

The ordinance prohibits panhandling at bus stops, in any public transportation facility or vehicle, within 15 feet (in any direction) of a sidewalk café, at any parking lot, parking garage, or parking pay station owned or operated by the city, in any Park owned or operated by the city, within 15 feet (in any direction) of an automatic teller machine or an entrance/exit of a commercial or governmental building. It also precludes panhandlers from soliciting on private property without the owner's express consent. Violations can be prosecuted as misdemeanors that carry a possible \$500 fine and/or 60 days in jail.

Since a citywide ban on "aggressive panhandling" that was also featured in the measure was vaguely defined, interpretation and enforcement will be left to the discretion of police officers who personally witness violations. For instance, enforcement could be triggered if a person is approached or spoken to in a manner that would cause a reasonable person to believe they are "being threatened with imminent bodily injury or the commission of a criminal act..." A violation could also be charged if a denied solicitation is followed by another request for money or if the solicited person is touched or blocked from passing. Lastly, infractions could accrue to panhandlers whose "conduct would reasonably be construed as intended to intimidate..." Since many of these behaviors are commonly exhibited by dysfunctional family members during an average holiday dinner, most violators should accelerate through the courts like balls in a Pachinko machine.

Not surprisingly, while Stewart explored circumventing First Amendment roadblocks, he aroused those pesky constitutional watchdogs. This time, the City ticked off the National Lawyers' Guild, long-time

advocates for the Homeless and their service organizations. Objecting to the City's use of a "constitutional subterfuge" to outlaw what they call "survival behavior", the Guild's South Florida Chapter Vice President Mara Shlackman warned that the new law would consequently throttle support to recognized charities like the Salvation Army or United Way, which will also be prohibited from harvesting donations on the fertile downtown streets.

While the City might have recoiled in the past when confronted by an organized mass appeal to the public conscience, the epidemic growth of panhandling over the past few years has prompted a reevaluation of personal and civic priorities. When the cost of tolerance suddenly included sacrificing the neighborhood's public park and rendered streets increasingly unsafe for families, local residents ramped up pressure on City officials to "contain" the problem. Newly armed with this mandate, Fort Lauderdale Mayor Jack Seiler explained "Families don't feel safe, people going to the library don't feel safe, people wanting to use public resources don't feel safe."

Passionately favorable to drawing a line in the sand, Mayor Seiler told reporters "At the end of the day, it's a quality-of-life issue for residents, visitors, and even the individual out in the streets." The Mayor was referring to a side of begging that most people never see. The homeless make tempting assault prey for thieves, robbers and other homeless persons. When the homeless are beaten and robbed, the perpetrators know that the assault won't be reported to the police. These unanswered crimes are an unavoidable consequence of street panhandling.

At a November 17, 2011 GMCA Advisory Board meeting, FLPD Major (and Police District 1 Commander) Raul Diaz told association officials that notwithstanding whether local residents give money to assuage some neurotic personal guilt, to gratefully share their good fortune with others or simply because they were intimidated, they are enabling an extremely dangerous lifestyle. While strongly recommending that donations be diverted to organizations that address the root causes of homelessness and its more severe impacts, Diaz admonished that when a community is reputed as a lucrative feeding ground; along with the additional homeless persons attracted by the easy money are cadres of those who prey on them. Drug addicts, muggers and other street punks that seek out and victimize mostly defenseless homeless people threaten every neighborhood resident. Diaz warned "If a homeless victim isn't conveniently available for an easy rip-off, anyone who appears vulnerable will suffice."

The controversial ordinance is the latest in a series of City efforts to address homelessness. Last December, the City took \$25,000 in confiscated dirty money (the Florida Law Enforcement Trust Fund is fueled by resources jacked from nailed slime bags) and bought bus tickets for any drifter with an identifiable support system at the end of the line. Decrying the City's motive, Executive Director Neil Donovan of the National Coalition for the Homeless commented "The nature of that is quite transparent, to move their problem onto somebody else's doorstep." An Indignant Mayor Seiler retorted "We're not pushing them out. If somebody has a network of support, a group of family and friends that will provide for them back home, that's probably a good place for them to be." Vice Mayor Bobby DuBose, who was on the short end of the 4-1 Commission vote that enabled the program, lamented using City funds to send panhandlers on a vacation. The Homeless Reunification Program, also deployed in West Palm Beach, New York, San Francisco and other municipalities with growing homeless populations, lost some credibility when several of its beneficiaries turned up again a few months later (including one of our Galt Mile benchwarmers).

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Developed by District 1 City Commissioner Bruce Roberts during his tenure as Police Chief, the City's current homeless policy funnels resources into a voluntary safety net that includes medical assistance, food and housing. Working with Homeless advocates, Police Officers participating in the outreach effort encourage bench dwellers to avail themselves of City-funded or privately subsidized charitable programs developed for their benefit. If arrested, a referral to the Broward County Social Service Outreach Team enables a post release contact by a social worker to formulate an appropriate assistance regimen.

When City Parks that long served as shared resources functionally evolved into homeless villages, unrelenting public pressure from every district forced City Hall to circle the wagons. With some 1600 guests of the city fluffing the bushes each night before nodding off in public parks (incremental to another 7000 squirreled away in shelters), the City Commission decided that a strategy to reclaim these resources for the general public would have to be integrated into the City's Homeless policy.

When Homeless advocates claimed that the City's new policy would irresponsibly divert resources from addressing the underlying causes of homelessness, City officials clarified that the current safety net would be neither withdrawn nor diminished. The additional no-panhandling zones were part of a new safety net – one that would protect the general public. Despite the passionate posturing by Homeless advocates and City officials, no one knows whether the new prohibitions will contain or inflame the problem. Of greater concern to our public officials – how the new policy will impact the City's image – will determine whether they expand the program or quietly pull the plug. •

Puzzle...Continued

the 40-acres of land within Port Everglades that was currently not in use by port operations.

It will be my effort to bring this issue forward again and in doing so I would expect to see a creative process like a PPP to make the Broward County Headquarter Convention Center Hotel finally become a reality. If we do not move forward with this project, then we will become an afterthought to our neighbors to the north and south. Palm Beach County has pledged to invest \$27 million dollars towards a \$100 million project and Miami-Dade has been in talks to invest nearly \$100 million towards a project that has estimates closing in on \$650 million. We can do this without leveraging any vital tax dollars because we have the most valuable asset to offer at Port Everglades...waterfront property. Stay tuned to see how this moves forward and pledge to speak out to your county commissioner as it does.

As always, it is an honor to serve you.

Chip LaMarca

Broward County Commissioner, District 4 •

COMMENTARY

"Any roadmap for Broward's economic recovery must include putting people back to work. People with pay checks pay taxes and purchase goods and services. When the Depression turned the United States into an economic basket case, the Administration morphed exploding unemployment lines into useful infrastructure. FDR's New Deal provided jobs and filled a dispirited nation with hope until the subsequent wartime economy fast-tracked a recovery."

In his July Newsletter, District 4 Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca reminds constituents of his campaign promise to expedite the County's recovery from the effects of the collapsed housing market. After repeatedly piling enough bad pork into the annual County spending plan to trigger a pandemic of political trichinosis,

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tanking property values finally prompted long overdue fiscal restraint by the same County Commissioners who fleeced Broward taxpayers for decades.

However, simply forcing the spending plan through an ever-tightening fiscal shredder won't reverse the County's decline. Until recycling the backlog of toxically submerged homes revives property values, the County's skull-blocked economy can best be awakened by stoking its economic engines. LaMarca and Statehouse Representative George Moraitis spent the past year working to upgrade the transportation hubs (Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport and Port Everglades) that enable Broward to successfully compete with neighboring tourism and shipping venues while providing hundreds of new jobs. Strategically located at Fort Lauderdale's Port Everglades tourism nexus, enhancing the County's aging Convention Center with a dedicated hotel and a facelift will plug a fiscal leak through which the County loses Stens of millions in new business every year.

Warehousing thousands of guests who attend the 280 annual Convention Center events in 50 different local hotels is a marketing nightmare. LaMarca laments the loss of longtime convention center customer ARVO (Association of Vision in Ophthalmology) — which will send their 13,000 guests to the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle in 2013, Orlando in 2014 and Denver in 2015. Following their annual gathering, Harley-Davidson said they would look elsewhere in the future for a Convention Center with a hotel. Scores of other convention customers, including the 9,000 attendees from an annual Department of Defense contractors' convention, warned that if Broward couldn't provide them with fully integrated lodging, they would not return.

Without an affiliated hotel, the Convention Center is precluded from even bidding on more than one third of the prospective convention opportunities — those that require dedicated lodging. Of the remaining client prospects, the Center must offset their lack of a hotel with a laundry list of expensive perks, further squeezing embattled profits. Since prior attempts to correct this competitive shortcoming were seemingly lifted from early episodes of the Three Stooges, fleshing out elements of LaMarca's context-driven "abbreviated history" is in order.

As outlined by LaMarca, when the Greater Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Convention Center opened in 1991, County attempts to build a related hotel flopped. Beginning in 1997, threats of an African-American tourist boycott prompted the County Commission to exclusively consider hotel plans submitted by minority-owned developers. Shortly after 49-year old real estate magnate R. Donahue Peebles was awarded the hotel contract, partnering hotel Management Company Wyndham International pulled out along with the National Baptist Convention, washing out the project while setting the stage for strike three.

On November 1, 2007, the Broward Commission selected a bid winner from two world-class hoteliers (and their partner developers), each of which presented plans for a 1,000-room Convention Hotel on 17th Street — next to the Broward Convention Center at Port Everglades. Rejecting a plan submitted by Marriott and developer Hensel Phelps Construction, a ten-person selection committee chaired by tourism Guru Nicki Grossman that included 8 Broward Commissioners instead awarded the project to Hilton Hotels and their developer FaulknerUSA by a close six to four vote.

Both teams planned on using hotel revenues to repay \$400 million raised from Broward-authorized tax exempt bonds. While Marriott declined any public backing, Hilton wanted an annual \$6 million pledge of hotel bed taxes as a guarantee against missed loan payments. Also, if the hotel went South, Broward taxpayers would pay down the debt service. Hilton's ace-in-the-hole was former Executive Director Christopher Romer of JP Morgan Securities, who pledged to purchase all \$398 million of Hilton's bonds, while Marriott would have to hunt buyers in the tight credit market.



District 4 Broward Commissioner Chip LaMarca

Since Marriott's plan was financially self-sufficient while Hilton placed every Broward taxpayer on the hook for their debt, President Mark Schultz of FaulknerUSA, Hilton's partnering developer, conceded that opponent Marriott's deal was far better for the County. When informed that the Commissioners ignored the risk to taxpayers and selected his team's less favorable project, a disbelieving Schultz declared, "I'm shocked!" Although compelled by years of Pavlovian conditioning to frivolously opt for expedience over prudence whenever managing tax dollars, our County Commissioners were primarily moved by enlightened self-interest as Hilton lobbyists offered committee members more valuable "incentives" than their Marriott peers.

It was no secret that Hilton banking partner JP Morgan Chase was also suing FaulknerUSA

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for \$6.1 million in defaulted loans from a similar project in Austin, Texas. Focusing on the questionable County decision, local media took a closer look at Hilton's builder. In addition to a \$6.6 million court judgment stemming from a hornet's nest of litigation over flooding problems in the Austin Hilton Convention Center Hotel, FaulknerUSA was facing \$millions more in liabilities from 17 lawsuits (and 68 liens) by irate condo owners, unpaid subcontractors and project organizer Austin Convention Enterprises Inc. Despite under-the-table "agreements" between project lobbyists and inappropriately vested public officials, the handwriting was on the wall.

After registering a very public demand for proof of FaulknerUSA's fiscal health in January of 2008, a supposedly surprised County Administrator Bertha Henry stoically announced, "There is nothing that says Faulkner is dropping out of this deal, but they have to respond to us that they have the wherewithal to do this project. We will not enter into a development agreement with a company that is not stable." In a frantic attempt to salvage their project, Hilton brought Hensel Phelps Construction, the partner of rival bidder Marriott to an emergency meeting with County officials, largely to hedge against an anticipated County maneuver to sever besieged FaulknerUSA from the project. The gesture proved futile.

On December 8, 2009, the County Commission officially pulled the plug on the \$400 million project, but not before frittering \$1.6 million in pork disbursements to LMN Architects; Hospitality Real Estate Counselors; the law firm of Siegel, Lipman, Dunay, Shepard & Miskel; the engineering firm Craven Thompson & Associates; the urban planning firm Hughes Hughes Inc.; the architectural firm Arch Alliance and the law firm of Squire Sanders - primarily for thinking positive thoughts. To avoid threatened legal action, intimidated Commissioners also refunded FaulknerUSA's \$2 million deposit - with interest.

Hopefully, the County Commission will avoid the pitfalls that plagued earlier attempts to fully develop competitive Convention Center infrastructure, especially since LaMarca has repeatedly demonstrated his willingness to expose the type of self-serving maneuvers that earmarked those failures. Since his election to the County Board, LaMarca's peers have come to understand that he takes his responsibility as Commission gadfly seriously... as do we. Read LaMarca's July 2012 update below... "Build It and They Will Come". - [editor]

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AUG/SEPT



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
12 Pet Adoption Fair 800 NE 8 Street 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Info.: 954-971-4432	13 	14 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: 954-563-7268	15 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063	16 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards Art Walk Las Olas Las Olas Blvd, 5 - 9 p.m. Info.: 954-258-8382	17 Monster Jam (Through 8/18) BankAtlantic Center Tix.: 800-745-3000	18 Bud Light Lime Volleyball Tournament (Through 8/19) 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Info.: 954-294-7705
19 Las Olas Outdoor Green Market Meet the Animals Museum of Discovery & Science Info.: www.mods.org	20 	21 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: 954-563-7268	22 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063	23 Volunteer Information Days for Prospective Volunteers Fairchild Tropical Gardens 10 a.m. Info.: www.fairchildgarden.org	24 Santana (Through 8/25) Hard Rock Live, 8 p.m. Tix.: 954-797-5531	25 Ft Lauderdale Bus Loop 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. Ft Lauderdale Bus Loop 300 SW 2 St., 6 - 11 p.m. Info.: 954-260-6194
26 Las Olas Outdoor Green Market Las Olas Blvd. & SE 12 St (Chemist Drug Store) 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	27 	28 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: 954-563-7268	29 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063	30 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards	31 Miami Fall Home Design & Remodeling Show Miami Convention Center Info.: 305-667-9299	1 Go Native in Broward County Plant Sale Secret Woods Nature Center 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Info.: 954-357-8884 North Beach Art Walk 32nd & 33rd Streets 7 to 11 p.m.
2 Las Olas Outdoor Green Market Sunday Jazz Brunch Riverwalk, Downtown FL 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5985	3 Labor Day Bird Festival 3750 S. Flamingo Rd, Davie 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Info.: 954-473-2955	4 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room Info.: 954-563-7268 Vice Mayor Bruce Roberts: Beach Community Ctr, 6 p.m. Info.: 954-828-5033	5 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063 Fort Lauderdale City Commission Meeting City Hall, 6 p.m.	6 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards Ban Cancer Outdoor Concert Huizenga Plaza 5:30 to 10 p.m. Info.: 954-260-9667	7 	8 Repticon War Memorial Auditorium Info.: 863-268-4273 Beach Sweep Cleanup 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Info.: 954-474-1835
9 Las Olas Outdoor Green Market Las Olas Blvd. & SE 12 St (Chemist Drug Store) 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	10 	11 BINGO Galt Towers Social Room (4250 Galt Ocean Drive) 7:30 p.m. Info.: 954-563-7268	12 BINGO Regency South Party Room 7 p.m. Info.: 954-547-4063	13 BINGO Southpoint's North Lounge 7 p.m. \$5/person for 3 boards New Times Pairings Broward Center, 7 p.m. Tix.: 954-233-1591	14 CAI-SEFL Annual Casino Night IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame 7 to 11 p.m. Info.: 954-816-0661	15 Great Prostate Cancer Challenge 5K Run Huizenga Plaza 7:30 a.m. Reg.: 305-466-9111

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

First Saturday of every Month: Beach Cleanup, Commercial Blvd & the Beach LBTS, 9 to 9:30 a.m., Info.: www.lbts.com

Second Saturday of every Month: Beach Sweep, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., Info.: 954-474-1835

Wednesdays: Yoga in the Garden, Bonnett House, 8 to 9 a.m., Info.: 954-563-5393 ext. 137

Tuesdays and Thursdays: Yoga with Ali Hecht, Esplanade Park, 6:30 p.m., Info.: 954-732-0517

Monday and Wednesdays: Cardio Mix with Josh Hecht, Esplanade Park, 6:30 p.m., Info.: 954-732-0517

Sundays: Tour-the River Ghost Tour, Stranahan House & Water Taxi, 7:30 p.m., Tix.: 954-524-4736

Sundays: Urban Gourmet Market, 1201 E. Las Olas Blvd., 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Info.: 954-462-4166

Fridays: Jazz on the Square, The Village Grille, Commercial Blvd. & A1A, 7 p.m.

OTHER EVENTS

8/12: 2012 South Florida Bike Expo, 10 a.m., BankAtlantic Center, Tix.: www.bankatlanticcenter.com

8/18-19: Florence and the Machine, BankAtlantic Center, Tix.: 954-835-7000

8/25: Gold Coast Derby Girls, War Memorial Auditorium, 7 p.m., Info.: 786-457-6788

8/25: Erectile Dysfunction: Kinsey Sicks for President, Amature Theater, Tix.: www.browardcenter.org

9/6-9: Disney On Ice: Worlds of Fantasy, BankAtlantic Center, 7 Tix.: www.bankatlanticcenter.com

9/14: 6th Annual Mutts and Martinis, Riverwalk at Downtowner Saloon, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Info.: 954-468-1541

9/26: Buckler's 22nd Annual Craft Fair, Americraft Expo Center - South Florida Fairgrounds, Info.: 386-860-0092

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- 2. Print gets noticed.** Print is particularly persuasive as direct mail. Why? Because people gravitate toward print. A study by the U.S. Postal Service® found that 83–84% of mail is either read or

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