

25. DISCUSS UTILIZING 7605 COLLINS AVENUE AS A POTENTIAL BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR OCEAN RESCUE.

Applicable Area:

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members
FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager
DATE: April 9, 2025
TITLE: DISCUSS UTILIZING 7605 COLLINS AVENUE AS A POTENTIAL BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR OCEAN RESCUE.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends designating the property at 7605 Collins Avenue as the North Building Department Location. Ocean Rescue has expressed interest in utilizing the building, they however have expressed that they would require full occupancy for their intended use. Utilizing this property as the North Building Department location would eliminate the need to rent the current North Beach office, eliminating ongoing rental expenses. With a larger space than the existing North Office, 7605 Collins Avenue can accommodate additional services and enhancing efficiency for both staff and the community.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

On March 13, 2024, the City Commission approved Resolution 2024-32945 for the purchase of the property located at 7605 Collins Avenue in an amount not to exceed \$6,530,000 utilizing reserves from the Building Department Fund for the use of the Building Department's North Beach satellite office / North Beach Permitting Center with possible associated City services such as cashing for parking and utility bills and Code Compliance and/or Parking Department staffing. Since the purchase the maintenance of the property has been paid by the Building Department and the department has allocated \$1,000,000 in a capital project to renovate / retrofit the building into office use.

On April 17, 2024, the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC") discussed referred item C4M, sponsored by Commissioner Suarez, to address best use for the property located at 7605 Collins Avenue. The PSNQLC discussed possible secondary use options.

On September 17, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez, a publicly advertised sunshine meeting and tour took place at the facility location to discuss what could be done with the property. The minutes of that meeting are attached as Exhibit A.

On October 30, 2024, a referral to the Public Safety & Neighborhoods Quality of Life Committee to discuss utilizing 7605 Collins Avenue as a potential base of operations for Ocean Rescue was sponsored by Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez and co-sponsored by Commissioner David Suarez. Refer to Exhibit B referral.

On November 20, 2024, the City Commission, sponsored by Commissioner Rosen-Gonzalez and co-sponsored by Commissioners Tanya Bhatt and Laura Dominguez, approved Resolution 2024-33390 appropriating funds in an amount not to exceed \$15,000 and designating space for the Surfrider Foundation's water testing facility at the 7605 Collins Avenue location.

On December 11, 2024 the City Commission, sponsored by Commissioner Tanya Bhatt, approved Resolution 2024-33425 directing the administration to host an open house event at 7605 Collins Avenue to facilitate community discussion regarding potential uses of the property and report back via letter to commission (LTC) with the results and feedback gathered during the

open house, along with any recommendations for next steps regarding the future utilization of the property. The open house took place on February 6, 2025.

On January 29, 2025, the October 30, 2024 referral item was heard at the Public Safety & Neighborhoods Quality of Life Committee and it was concluded that the location and space configuration was not optimum for Ocean Rescue as they would prefer to wait for their permanent North Beach Sub-Station location currently being designed at the south end of North Beach Oceanside Park and funded with \$5,000,000 of G.O. Bond funds.

On February 26, 2025, the City Commission, sponsored by Commissioner David Suarez, approved a referral to the Land Use and Sustainability Committee to discuss possible conversion of 7605 Collins Avenue into a Marine Science Education Center and Museum.

ANALYSIS

At the January 29, 2025, Public Safety and Quality of Life Committee requested that the Administration return to Committee with the results of the open house held on February 6, 2025, for further discussion including next steps.

Attached Exhibit C - LTC #118-2025 dated March 17, 2025 provides the detail of the results of the open house and the summary bullets below highlight the majority of the suggestions made by the Community that either attended and/or provided follow up emails to the Administration:

- Community Cultural Center: A space for local artists, musicians and organizations to host exhibitions, performances, and educational workshops.
- City Facility: Use for Building Department North Beach Expansion and other City Services in North Beach.
- Beach Club for Residents: A membership-based venue with reasonable fees, providing a gathering space for local residents.
- Events Venue: A rental space for weddings, retreats, and workshops to generate revenue while fostering local engagement.
- Environmental & Marine Science Center: A facility dedicated to sea turtle conservation and marine education, integrating with Altos Del Mar Park.
- Public Safety: An Ocean Rescue and/or Police Substation.
- Library Integration: Enhancing or expanding North Shore Branch Library by incorporating 7605 Collins Avenue.
- Art & Cultural Programs: Dedicated space for art classes, ceramics, poetry readings, and cultural programs for seniors and adults.
- Tourist & Community Welcome Center: A hub offering visitor information, cultural programming, and shared office space for local nonprofits.
- Public Space Improvements: Suggestions to remove the security wall, re-purpose the pool area, and create an outdoor event space.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

TBD

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

The Administration continues to recommend establishing 7605 Collins Avenue as the new North Building Department Location as it supports the operational and long-term sustainability needs of the department. Moving forward with the transitions will allow for the city to increase services to the community in a cost-effective manner.

Applicable Area

North Beach

| <u>Is this a “Residents Right to Know” item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?</u> | <u>Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?</u> |
|---|--|
| No | No |

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Building

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

Co-sponsor(s)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Condensed Title

Discuss utilizing 7605 Collins Avenue as a potential base of operations for Ocean Rescue.

EXHIBIT A

MIAMI BEACH

7605 Collins Avenue Property Future Uses Sunshine Meeting
7605 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL 33141
September 17, 2024
3:30 p.m.

Attendees, in alphabetical order:

Members of the City Commission:

- Rosen Gonzalez, Kristen - Commissioner.

City Staff:

- Atencio, Luis – Aide to Commissioner Magazine.
- Barbou, Regis – Assistant City Clerk.
- Budin, Jacquelin – Aide to Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez.
- Carpenter, Eric – City Manager.
- Curitore, Thomas – Code Compliance Assistant Director.
- Llanes, Javier – Operations Manager for Property Management.
- Miro, Elizabeth – Interim Director Facilities and Fleet Management Department.
- Murillo, Sara – Aide to Commissioner Bhatt.
- Premdas, Charles – Facilities Zone Manager.
- Sanchez, Kevin – Administrative Officer Public Works Property Management.
- Singer, Jani – Office of the Inspector General Investigator.

Members of the public:

- Shafer, Larry.
- Weiss, Sharon.

AFTER ACTION

The meeting began at 3:45 p.m.

Attendees gathered on the first floor in the now vacant living room of the house.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez welcomed everyone. The reason she called this Sunshine Meeting is to see what can be done with the property they are visiting today located at 7605 Collins Avenue. She would like to have a tour of the property, but before beginning the tour she asked City Manager Carpenter to explain what the current plans are for this property.

Eric Carpenter, City Manager, stated that they are ultimately in a bit of a holding pattern to see what the City Commission wants to do. At this point, the Building Department has purchased the property, and it sits on their balance sheet. It is up to them to move forward with the design and refurbishment to make this property more conducive to City services. There is money in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year for the Building Department to make renovations. Still, they would have to do a selection of a design consultant and execution of either a Job Order Contract (JOC) or if they decide to go with something significantly larger. They would have to do a full design and construction contract.

EXHIBIT A

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked whether as of now the Building Department is the owner of this property.

City Manager Carpenter replied that unless there is direction given by the City Commission otherwise, the game plan is to have the Building Department move in. Currently, the Building Department has a much smaller space in the facility by the fountain in Normandy Drive. Were they to move into this property, they would not use 100% of the space at this property, and they could then determine what other services they can use this space for.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez thanked City Manager Carpenter for the information. She asked Interim Director Miro to lead the tour of the property.

Elizabeth Miro, Interim Director Facilities and Fleet Management Department, agreed and stated that she would start the tour on the first floor.

The tour began in the living room and moved through the kitchen into the recording studio, which is located in the northeast section of the house.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that it seems to be a very expensive house for how small it is.

City Manager Carpenter replied that the house is not as valuable as the land it is on. This property sits on a big chunk of land that was not incorporated into the Altos del Mar Park.

Sharon Weiss, a member of the public, asked City Manager Carpenter for more information as to how this property was not integrated into the Park.

City Manager Carpenter replied that before the Park was built this block was full of residential properties just like the homes that can be found between 77th and 79th Streets. However, when the City went ahead and built the Altos del Mar Park, this was the only property the City was unable to acquire. Back when the Park was being built it did not make sense to purchase the property once it went above a certain price point, but now one would probably pay pennies on the dollar to get the property back then, as opposed to what the City eventually paid to acquire this property.

The tour continued into the recording studio.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked whether this house would have to be renovated to be ADA compliant given the layout of this house it may be very expensive to bring this house up to the required specifications.

City Manager Carpenter replied that the property would have to be made ADA-compliant only if it is intended to be a public-facing building.

The tour continued to the common area in the southeast portion of the house facing the pool.

Jacqueline Budin, Aide to Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez, asked what would happen to the pool.

Interim Director Miro replied that the pool would have to be closed off and repurposed for additional space depending on the needs of any potential facility. If this place is to be commercialized, they would have to make modifications to it.

EXHIBIT A

The tour continued back to the recording studio.

Larry Shafer, a member of the public, stated that the Surfrider Foundation could use a portion of the recording studio and the bathroom for their water testing lab. They would have to have a separate entrance, but he believes this could be a good use for it. They would, however, not need the entire house, just the portion he highlighted in the recording studio and the bathroom.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked whether the City could buy this property from the Building Department.

City Manager Carpenter replied that the City could do so.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked whether it could be a ceremonial purchase because purchasing it outright would come at a monetary loss.

City Manager Carpenter replied that he would have to consult with the Office of the City Attorney on that question because he does not know how that would work. He would rather err on the side of caution, but it is something that can be looked into.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that this house is a weird space for an office. She would prefer to demolish the house and add the property to the Altos del Mar Park.

City Manager Carpenter replied that he believes that that is the long-term plan, but the question is what do we do with this property in the interim.

Ms. Weiss stated that she spoke with Fire Chief Abello about what she would be looking for in alternative locations for Ocean Rescue, and one of the things she mentioned was an area large enough for their meetings. This house has a suitable open area for those meetings, which is better than the trailer Ocean Rescue currently meetings in.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez agreed that the living room in this house could be used for meetings. Mr. Osvaldo Garcia of the CWA could not make it to the meeting today because he is on vacation, but she believes he would want to look at this location and see if it is suitable for them.

City Manager Carpenter stated that there is a service that can be provided from this location, but the question is how long we want to relocate something here, and how long until we realize the ultimate goal once we do something with the North Shore Branch Library. Do we then do something with the Parking lot, and do we connect this property with Ocean Terrace Park and connect it down to Bandshell Park and become part of the L-shaped park system that goes from Parkview Island to 77th Street?

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that they could potentially use this property as a Recreation Center.

City Manager Carpenter replied that they could use this for storage or a location for one or two offices, but he is unsure if this property would be a good fit as a recreation center.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that the Building Department bought this property. How would we feel if Surfrider would like to use this space?

EXHIBIT A

Mr. Shafer stated that Surfrider does not need to use the whole property. They could use the areas he pointed out earlier in the recording studio and the bathroom. Currently, Surfrider uses a temporary space on 1680 Meridian Avenue, it is like a WeWork cubicle, for which they pay. They do water testing and provide the results for free. If the City were to give Surfrider a space, they could save \$1,000 a month, and they could then use that money to test at more locations.

Ms. Weiss stated that if Surfrider were to become accredited, they could then sell the water testing to other municipalities.

Mr. Shafer stated that the State of Florida wants an accredited lab. This property would be a good use for Surfrider. They would only need to use the recording studio and bathroom and do some modifications such as installing a locking door and adding a sink and a shower. This would be a technical lab where testing is done, and the shower would be needed in case something has to be showered off.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that she believes there could be windows in the recording studio.

City Manager Carpenter stated that he believes the recording studio used to be the house's garage. That is why there are steps leading up to the main area of the first floor of the house.

Mr. Shafer stated that anything is better than the current Ocean Rescue trailers. He does not believe they would want to stay in the trailers for another five years while they wait for the negotiations with the County to go ahead to build the new shared facility. That is a realistic thing that both David Gomez, CIP Division Director, and David Martinez, CIP Director, agreed on. One thing about this proposal to move Ocean Rescue to this location is that as soon as the new facility is constructed, they can move out immediately.

Ms. Weiss stated that if Ocean Rescue were to leave the West Lots, residents could gain the Parking spaces back.

Mr. Shafer agreed with Ms. Weiss. If Ocean Rescue were to move to this location, that would mean that North Shore would get its parking spaces back. Currently, Ocean Rescue is taking up 25 parking spaces in the West Lots. He does not believe this is an unreasonable ask. He clarified that he is not a politician and does not speak on behalf of his neighborhood, but he knows his neighbors and they have been vocal on wanting those parking spaces back. Ocean Rescue is taking up half a parking lot, and we have more people coming in using parking spaces. Not to mention when the new rules kick in, people will buy Altos del Mar parking passes that will load up the West Lots, which are already full for weekends, holidays, full-moon parties, etc. 25 parking spaces may not sound like a lot, but it is very meaningful for our neighborhood. This is why they wrote the proposal. He would like this to stay on the table, and he believes that aside from Ocean Rescue, Surfrider could benefit from using this location. Surfrider tests the water and Ocean Rescue works in the water that is not a bad tie-in. He is sure they can get along and each use their separate space.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that Ocean Rescue is currently in a large parking lot, which she has not visited in some time, but she believes they have a lot of equipment stored there.

Mr. Shafer stated that he has photographs and videos of the location that he can share with everyone.

EXHIBIT A

City Manager Carpenter stated he visited the site not too long ago, and he believes there are opportunities to free up parking without relocating the trailers, but ultimately, he wants to make sure he does not put the Fire Chief at a disadvantage. We will be in the process of determining what we will be doing at this location. This is not ready for primetime so to speak. This will take time, money, and making sure everything works from an operational perspective.

Mr. Shafer thanked City Manager Carpenter. He is glad to see this is still on the table. This idea first came out of Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez's recap meeting.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that in theory this is a good idea, but there is still a lot to get done legislatively. We need to remember that this property belongs to the Building Department; we need to determine whether the Administration and the Fire Chief are on board with having Ocean Rescue move to this site; and lastly, does Ocean Rescue even want to move here?

City Manager Carpenter replied that he does not have the answers to those questions yet, but it is important to show that this property can work for Ocean Rescue's needs as opposed to just asking them whether they would move to this location. We need to remember that change is hard.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked whether the house provides enough space; are the trailers bigger?

Ms. Weiss stated that the trailers do provide a big space, but when she spoke with the Fire Chief, she said they need a bigger space for meetings when they discuss shifts and duties for the entire day.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez addressed Ms. Weiss and Mr. Shafer and stated that if they want something to happen legislatively, they will need to get other members of the City Commission on board. She supports what they are proposing, but she cannot do it alone. The aides for Commissioners Bhatt and Magazine are present at this meeting, perhaps they can talk to them about this. She believes that Commissioner Suarez would also be attentive to their request.

The tour continued back to the living room.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez noted that the downstairs area is relatively small. She asked to see the upstairs.

The tour continued to the second floor.

City Manager Carpenter noted the small half-bedroom located on the west side of the house.

The tour continued to the master bedroom located on the east side of the house.

City Manager Carpenter commented that this is the best space in the house and provides a lot of space. Unfortunately, this area is not ADA accessible unless an elevator is installed and those are expensive. He believes this could be a great space for storage or offices, but not suitable for public-facing purposes.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that she would like to see this property serve the public and not just be used as storage.

EXHIBIT A

City Manager Carpenter replied that given the constraints of the house having poor ADA accessibility, making this open to the public would be difficult. They could potentially have the first floor accessible to the public and have the upstairs used for staff offices, but everything is still up in the air about what the future of this property will be.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked City Manager Carpenter if he liked the idea of having Ocean Rescue here.

City Manager Carpenter replied that if Ocean Rescue does not want to be here then he does not want them to be here. It is up to them to decide whether they would like the space or not.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked if there were only two bedrooms on the second floor.

City Manager Carpenter replied that there are only one and a half bedrooms in this house, and although the master bedroom is of considerable size the half bedroom is very small.

Interim Director Miro stated that there must have been some modifications made when the house was renovated in 2019.

The tour continued making its way from the master bedroom to the half bedroom.

Ms. Weiss stated that she understands Ocean Rescue not wanting to relocate if the County would have the new facility ready in a few months, but we are talking about something that will take about five years to complete. She believes this is a good site to house Ocean Rescue.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked Ms. Weiss to speak to the Fire Department and Ocean Rescue about that. She believes if Ms. Weiss gets Osvaldo Garcia, the Head of the CWA, on board with relocating Ocean Rescue here, then it will be easier to get the Fire Chief to agree to the relocation. Otherwise, this house is in the hands of the Building Department.

Ms. Weiss agreed with Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez. She believes this property is better suited for the needs of Ocean Rescue as opposed to the Building Department.

Mr. Shafer believes that financially an Ocean Rescue relocation will work. If we put functionality first, then the accounting will follow. They have made it clear that they would like Ocean Rescue as an option to relocate to this location, which would eventually lead to the residents of North Beach getting their parking spaces back. If Ocean Rescue does not want this property, then they can look at other options.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked Mr. Shafer if he had considered coming to the City Commission meetings and speaking at the Stanley Sutnick Hour and expressing his proposal.

Mr. Shafer stated that he had already done so.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked Mr. Shafer when he did so because she does not recall seeing him at the Stanley Sutnick Hour.

Ms. Weiss stated that Mr. Shafer spoke at the latest afternoon Stanley Sutnick Hour.

EXHIBIT A

Mr. Shafer stated that this is a meaningful proposal and the merit is independent of the labor put in. He believes Ocean Rescue will realize that this property is better than operating out of a trailer. It is that clear and easy. He recalled David Gomez and David Martinez bringing up the issue of Ocean Rescue needing space to park their vehicles such as jet skis and ATVs.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez agreed with Mr. Shafer, that there is a problem with Ocean Rescue having to relocate its equipment and vehicles.

Mr. Shafer replied that he believes the City could block the street next to this house and use it for parking Ocean Rescue vehicles.

Ms. Weiss stated that the street Mr. Shafer is referring to is a dead end. It can be used to park Ocean Rescue vehicles.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked Ms. Weiss whether she had spoken to the Fire Chief about this property and whether she had expressed interest in using it for Ocean Rescue.

Ms. Weiss replied that the Fire Chief had not expressed interest in the property.

Mr. Shafer stated that the Fire Chief is not interested in this property and the residents are not interested in her using the West Lots, and if he needs to raise his voice at the Stanley Sutnick Hour to get his point across to the Fire Chief then he will do so. The Fire Chief does not get to rule everything because she has a large and powerful Union behind her. He is sorry, but the residents want Ocean Rescue off the West Lots, they need the Parking spaces back. If the Fire Chief chooses not to show up, then that is up to her. If she wants a reputation of not caring about the residents then she will hear about it from the residents. It is not an option to take parking spots away when residents are supposed to follow new parking regulations.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez adding to Mr. Shafer's point, stated that it looks like the permanent facility is about a decade away from being built.

Mr. Shafer stated that nothing had been done about it. The neighborhood put the time into finding a suitable location for Ocean Rescue. City Manager Carpenter is trying to play the medium here. If Ocean Rescue says to leave them in the West Lots, then he would ask for them to take the fence back and put it around the trailer to free up parking spaces. He would agree to that because there would be a compromise. However, if Fire Chief Abello chooses to keep Ocean Rescue in the West Lots without changing anything then there will be many irate residents who will complain. The City has to clean up its act regarding the West Lots. He is not speaking out of anger here, but rather pointing out that something has to be done about this.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked Ms. Budin to schedule a meeting with Fire Chief Abello and Mr. Garcia of the CWA.

Mr. Shafer stated that they missed this meeting, so they should at least at some point come to the property and check it out.

Ms. Budin stated that she believes the Fire Department was supposed to send someone to this meeting, at least that was based on prior communications. She will set up a separate meeting with them as well.

EXHIBIT A

Ms. Weiss stated that the Fire Chief should at least look at the property. If she rules it out without anyone from the Fire Department or the Union checking it out first, then that is not great faith.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that Mr. Garcia of the CWA could not make it to this meeting because he was on vacation.

Mr. Shafer replied that that is a reasonable answer for why he is not present today.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that if Mr. Garcia is on board with the Ocean Rescue relocation, then the Fire Chief would most likely be more agreeable to it. She does like the idea, it makes sense.

Ms. Weiss added that this house is nicer than a trailer there is space and there are showers.

The tour continued back to the first floor of the house.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez addressed City Manager Carpenter and stated that she, Mr. Shafer, and Ms. Weiss, had been discussing relocating Ocean Rescue and moving them out of the trailers from the West Lots into this location so that it would free up parking spaces in the West Lots. She does not want to put City Manager Carpenter on the spot right now expecting an answer but wanted to see if he had something to add.

City Manager Carpenter stated that he understands what the ask is.

Mr. Shafer stated that a compromise can be reached by fencing in the trailers that are already in the West Lots, which would then free up the rest of the Parking spaces for residents to use at night. He would not choose to remain in the West Lot trailers when there is a luxury home available, but that is up to Ocean Rescue to determine.

City Manager Carpenter stated that they can try and find a way to have the trailers separated from the Parking so that they do not take up so many parking spaces.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that Ocean Rescue may not want to stay in the Parking lot if they move the fence.

Luis Atencio, Aide to Commissioner Magazine, stated that Commissioner Magazine would like to know whether the only proposal for this space is for Ocean Rescue.

City Manager Carpenter replied that the status quo is that the Building Department used their dedicated enterprise fund to buy this property, so any lack of direction from the City Commission to the alternative, the Building Department would remain the primary owner of the house. What would then happen is that they would renovate it and move out of their space by the Normandy Fountain and put the North Beach Office here. They would probably lease out space to other City departments as necessary. This would become the North Beach annex of City Hall.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that if this house were bigger she would agree, but she believes the house is just too small and disjointed.

City Manager Carpenter replied that the space is not optimal, but they will make do with what they have.

EXHIBIT A

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez joked with City Manager Carpenter whether he had any interest in moving back to Miami Beach.

City Manager Carpenter replied that he and his family now live in Broward County.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez stated that the answer right now is that the Building Department owns the property. Mr. Shafer, Ms. Weiss, and other residents would like to see the West Lots freed up for parking, but as of now, the Fire Chief has not expressed interest in this property. We are looking at least ten years before the new facility is completed.

City Manager Carpenter stated that Ocean Rescue had been in trailers long before he got this job with the City.

Mr. Shafer stated that there is a joke among residents and they call this "Miami Beach temporary," meaning that here we are temporarily and two decades later people cannot remember when they got there. The Ocean Rescue facility has an eight-foot chain link fence with graffiti. He will send photographs and videos of the location. It is an eyesore and it takes up parking spaces. The new parking regulations mean that people will buy Altos del Mar parking passes. If someone lives in North Shore, they can buy Altos del Mar parking passes and park in the West Lots, but this is limited if Ocean Rescue keeps taking up so many parking spaces.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez asked whether they could get all 25 parking spots back.

City Manager Carpenter stated that as long as we have signage that people have to be out of the Parking spaces before the lifeguards get there, we can free up the Parking spaces say from 6 p.m. until 8 a.m., or whatever times we need.

Mr. Shafer stated that Ocean Rescue can stay in the trailer if they want. He sent out an email that highlighted four locations that they could move to. One option was to co-locate with the County. There are also two northern West Lots that are vacant lots with no parking. He would ask if they move to that location they not use a chain link fence. Also, the fourth option is a luxury home. He knows which option he would pick.

Commissioner Rosen Gonzalez thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez
DATE: October 30, 2024
TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS UTILIZING 7605 COLLINS AVENUE AS A POTENTIAL BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR OCEAN RESCUE.

RECOMMENDATION

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

ANALYSIS

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

NA

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate? (FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

If applicable, the Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on:
See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notices/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

CONCLUSION

Applicable Area

North Beach

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

Yes

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Office of Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

Co-sponsor(s)

Commissioner David Suarez

Condensed Title

Ref: PSNQLC - Utilize 7605 Collins Avenue for Ocean Rescue. (Rosen Gonzalez/Suarez)

EXHIBIT C

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

LTC # 118-2025

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Honorable Mayor Steven Meiner and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager 

DATE: March 17, 2025

SUBJECT: **Update on Open House for 7605 Collins Avenue**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to provide an update on the 'open house' held for 7605 Collins Avenue pursuant to Resolution 2024-33425. The administration hosted an open house on February 6, 2025 with the goal of showcasing the space and gathering community feedback regarding its potential use. Following the event, staff received a range of feedback from residents and stakeholders. Below is a summary of the key themes expressed:

Community Feedback Summary

Feedback on the future use of 7605 Collins Avenue was diverse, with residents expressing a range of ideas and priorities. Some attendees were pleased to learn that the property would be used for Building Department staff, offering closer city services in North Beach. Others expressed interest in exploring alternative uses that would provide different community benefits.

Many residents highlighted the need for more cultural, educational and environmental programming in North Beach and suggested that the property could serve as a multi-use community space. There was also a shared desire to integrate any future use with the surrounding park and neighborhood, ensuring accessibility and enhancing the character of North Beach. Additionally, several attendees expressed a willingness to volunteer their time and expertise to support community-driven initiatives at the site.

Alternative Uses Proposed

Residents shared a variety of alternative uses for the property, all of which focused on community enrichment and engagement. Suggestions included:

- **Community Cultural Center:** A space for local artists, musicians and organizations to host exhibitions, performances, and educational workshops.
- **Beach Club for Residents:** A membership-based venue with reasonable fees, providing a gathering space for local residents.
- **Events Venue:** A rental space for weddings, retreats, and workshops to generate revenue while fostering local engagement.
- **Environmental & Marine Science Center:** A facility dedicated to sea turtle conservation and marine education, integrating with Altos Del Mar Park.
- **Public Safety:** An Ocean Rescue and/or Police Substation.
- **Library Integration:** Enhancing or expanding North Shore Branch Library by incorporating 7605 Collins Avenue.
- **Art & Cultural Programs:** Dedicated space for art classes, ceramics, poetry readings, and cultural programs for seniors and adults.

- Tourist & Community Welcome Center: A hub offering visitor information, cultural programming, and shared office space for local nonprofits.
- Public Space Improvements: Suggestions to remove the security wall, repurpose the pool area, and create an outdoor event space.

Next Steps

Given the level of community engagement and the strong preference for public use, the administration is reviewing the feedback and exploring potential pathways that align with both community interests and the city's operational needs. The next steps will include assessing the feasibility of proposed uses, engaging further with the community to refine concepts, and determining funding options for any potential renovations or operational costs.

Attached to this LTC are copies of emails received from residents, further detailing their perspectives and proposals.

MIH / KP


Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 11:25:51 Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: The Perez home purchased by MB
Date: Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 10:35:01 Eastern Standard Time
From: Rosie Betancourt
To: Pulido, Kevin

You don't often get email from rosie.betancourt@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hi, Kevin

It would be great if there was a program of art, ceramics and perhaps a reading or book clubs room available for either seniors or adults. We need indoors gathering spaces that can be reserved by groups for cultural activities since there are no shaded benches in the parks around and our heat is sweltering. Unidad has a great art class but the facility is open in the lobby and not conducive to proper class or art lab. Park design in this area has ignored that people have backs and instead are populated by uncomfortable concrete walls and benches. There is a large senior voting population in the area that does not play panel or volleyball, but it seems we're not getting any pampering from city officials, or at least a small return on our property Taxes. Please do something. Even Cleveland has a poetry garden in their downtown area. Miami Beach could do something as sophisticated, right?

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 11:20:23 Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: FW: Follow Up from 7605 Collins Ave Open House
Date: Friday, February 7, 2025 at 12:00:37 Eastern Standard Time
From: Guevara, Bianca
To: Pulido, Kevin

MIAMIBEACH

Bianca Guevara, Permit Coordinator
OFFICE OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139
Tel: 786.750.6185 | www.miamibeachfl.gov

We are committed to providing excellent public service and safety to all who live, work and play in our vibrant, tropical, historic community.

From: Debra Diana <debrabook1@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 7, 2025 11:19 AM
To: Guevara, Bianca <BiancaGuevara@miamibeachfl.gov>
Cc: laelora@gmail.com
Subject: Follow Up from 7605 Collins Ave Open House

You don't often get email from debrabook1@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

[THIS MESSAGE COMES FROM AN EXTERNAL EMAIL - USE CAUTION WHEN REPLYING AND OPENING LINKS OR ATTACHMENTS]

Dear Bianca,

It was so nice to meet you yesterday and share some quality conversation about our amazing North Beach residential community!

Thank you to you and the City of Miami Beach for thoughtfully providing an open forum for community residents to view the fabulous property right on the Altos Del Mar beachfront park.

As discussed, Laura Lopez and I shared some ideas of how to utilize the property and create an opportunity to build a local community center for North Beach Residents -- preserving the North Beach residential community.

Here are a few ideas 💡

1. First and foremost — don't tear it down and don't build up! Can you designate it as a historical property of the city of Miami Beach instead and perhaps build out plans for interior renovations?

I had shared a comparison with you to Alphabet City in NYC -- very unique and culturally rich area that combines gentrification of the area with local residents and blends a unique arts feel very special to the community.

2. It could be a wonderful Beach Club open to residents of North Miami. If needed, an annual membership fee could be requested for registered North Beach Residents wanting to utilize the space for community engagement activities. My primary request would be to make the annual membership fees reasonable since we are a working community! The pool should stay! Patio furniture and chairs would be a nice touch for members. A great way to network and build more community locally.

Bianca, you and I discussed finding out what upkeep costs will be associated with maintaining the property — thanks for your review.

3. An Events Venue — open for rentals i.e. weddings, occasions, workshops and retreats. Supporting entrepreneurship and small local businesses. For example, I have a coaching business and I would personally set up about 3-4 annual weekend retreats for my women's wellbeing workshops in the space since it's on the beach and close to everything. We are always observing folks doing sunset vows on the beach or creating small gatherings of celebration on the beach all year round. It should have a liquor license and built in outside bar area for congregation purposes.

4. A restaurant — although, I think using it for local community residents is ideal.

5. Display art from local artist community of the area (maybe for sale?) -- Laura, please elaborate if you have more to share on this point.

In general, community engagement is always possible with food and drink and a place to connect.

Please let Laura and I know when you may be available for a coffee connect in the upcoming weeks. We'd love to take you on a walk in the immediate area and show you a few local spots that are treasures in the area and also building community for North Beach.

I am very much an advocate of enhancing the local culture and community exclusive to North Beach (and not duplicating South Beach). As new towers are being developed in the area which will bring a lot more residents and snow birds to North Beach, it is most

important we cultivate a shared sense of preservation for the unique essence of what North Beach culture and residential community offers.

With kind regards,

Debra Diana
8000 Harding Avenue, 6F
Miami Beach, FL 33141

646.438.5012

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 11:20:57 Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: Input and feedback on 7605 Collins
Date: Monday, February 10, 2025 at 12:32:14 Eastern Standard Time
From: Adam Ganuza
To: Pulido, Kevin
Attachments: North Beach Welcome Center One-Pager - 02.10.25.pdf

[THIS MESSAGE COMES FROM AN EXTERNAL EMAIL - USE CAUTION WHEN REPLYING AND OPENING LINKS OR ATTACHMENTS]

Hi Kevin,

Thank you for organizing and hosting the open house last week. I took the large turnout as an indication of the neighborhood's great interest in the facility.

Please see the attached document. It lays out some specific proposals for how the space could be used to best complement the Building Dept and Surfrider.

Happy to answer any questions or discuss further.

-AG

--

Adam Ganuza
Executive Director
The Rhythm Foundation | Miami Beach Bandshell
786.295.0666
miamibeachbandshell.com



Welcome to North Beach!

North Beach is a gem where rich history and culture blend with a vibrant future. The **NORTH BEACH WELCOME CENTER**, located at 7605 Collins Avenue, would be a gateway to this dynamic neighborhood, offering a new public space designed to foster community, enrich quality of life, and further reinforce Miami Beach's identity as a place of A.W.E. (arts, wellness, and environment)

WHAT IS THE NORTH BEACH WELCOME CENTER?

The *Welcome Center* would be more than just a tourist information hub – it would be an entrypoint and anchor to what is, in effect, a mile-long urban oceanfront greenspace that encompasses Bandshell Park, Ocean Terrace Park, Altos Del Mar Park, and North Shore Open Space Park.

With a focus on A.W.E. (arts, wellness, and the environment), the center would offer a wide range of activities, including workshops, exhibitions, and talks. Beyond programming, the center would provide shared office space for arts nonprofits, and serve as a gathering place for all who live in or visit North Beach.

The inspiration for this Center comes in part from the Welcome Centers in South Beach, whose positive impact on the area is well established. The South Beach Centers, however, do not include information about North Beach.

KEY SERVICES OFFERED:

- **Tourism Concierge Services:** Personalized guidance for visitors to explore North Beach. The concierges would direct tourists (and curious locals) to the abundance of arts, culture, wellness and community events happening in the neighborhood by providing schedules, flyers and calendars for the Miami Beach Bandshell, Unidad Center, Altos Del Mar Park, North Shore Library, Normandy Fountain, the North Shore Youth Center and much more!
- **Public Programming:** Public events like arts, wellness, and eco-themed workshops, exhibitions, and talks will engage both residents and visitors, promoting local talent and cultural exchange. These programs would also attract more people into the Altos Del Mar Park after hours, helping to deter bad actors from the dimly lit park.
- **Shared Administrative Spaces:** Office space and a conference room will be made available for a consortium of North Beach-based arts nonprofits, fostering collaboration and supporting the local arts infrastructure.

A CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The *North Beach Welcome Center* is designed to bring economic and social benefits to the neighborhood. By drawing tourists, supporting local businesses, and providing a platform for local nonprofits, the center would be a driver in the development of North Beach. Additionally, it would provide a tangible proof of concept for the ambitious Byron Carlyle Cultural Center and demonstrate the power of shared cultural spaces to enrich our lives, develop our neighborhoods, foster community, and preserve our heritage.

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL CULTURAL LEADERS

The *Welcome Center* would collaborate with established North Beach-based arts nonprofits to ensure diverse and impactful cultural offerings:

Normandy Fountain Business Association

The Normandy Fountain Business Association aims to promote and support businesses in the Normandy Foundation area through arts programming. It works to create a vibrant and attractive environment for businesses, visitors, and residents.



DanceNow!

DanceNow! Miami is a dynamic dance company based in North Beach since 2000. Renowned for its innovative approach and community engagement, the company has been recognized as a leading force in South Florida's dance scene.



FUNDarte

FUNDarte is a North Beach-based cultural organization that promotes artistic expressions from Latin America, Spain, the Caribbean, and beyond. By presenting a variety of Spanish-language performances and events, FUNDarte aims to engage communities, nurture local talent, and foster international collaboration.



Rhythm Foundation

Founded in 1988 in Miami Beach, Rhythm Foundation is a leading presenter of international music in the US. Since 2015, it has operated the Miami Beach Bandshell on behalf of the City of Miami Beach.



FLEXIBLE, MULTI-USE SPACES

7605 Collins will contain a Building Department field office, as well as a water testing facility operated and maintained by Surfrider Foundation. Here are some specific ideas for the rest of the facility:

- Add a *Welcome Center* information desk, whether it be in the main house or by enclosing the porch. This manned-desk could be staffed by volunteers from the non-profits benefiting from use of the space.

- Enclose part of the ground floor to create a shared conference room. Priority would be given to the Building Department.
- Fill in the pool for liability concerns, and remove at least a portion of the security wall surrounding the building to create greater connection with Altos Del Mar Park. The now expanded "backyard" could become another public space to host receptions, small performances, and perhaps even a cafe.
- Use the first floor for the Building Department. Convert the second floor into a shared administrative workspace for the local nonprofits (think "WeWork" for the arts).
- Seek design solutions so that the first floor can convert into a program space after business hours. For example, after 5 pm, the Building Dept. waiting room can flex into a space that could host a talk on the history of MiMo architecture.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN AND FUTURE-FOCUSED

By investing in the *North Beach Welcome Center*, we're investing in the neighborhood's future – a future where arts, wellness, and environment come together to create a vibrant, healthy, and thriving neighborhood.

Subject: Re: 7605 Collins Avenue Open House
Date: Friday, February 7, 2025 at 00:31:15 Eastern Standard Time
From: Maria Luisa Rouco
To: Kevin Pulido
CC: Antonio Lopez, Bob OB Bob Nanes, Frank Raposo, Ariel Yuneisy Miranda, Matthew Anderson, Carolina Peraza, Ariel Blanco, Cary Lopez, Gil Rachlin, Bianca Guevara, Leonor Hernandez, Ariel Yuneisy Miranda, Bianca Guevara, Leonor Hernandez

[THIS MESSAGE COMES FROM AN EXTERNAL EMAIL - USE CAUTION WHEN REPLYING AND OPENING LINKS OR ATTACHMENTS]

Kevin, the lady wearing blue is Maria Luisa Rouco (ML). It is I.

I was a little disappointed that City Officials had already a direction as to what to do with the property.

We fought long and hard in this neighborhood to not allow Betsy to sell to developers and destroy the fabric of the park by allocating the type of occupancy that in some ways you now described.

Definitely "NO" to a satellite office for the Building Department, and or leased as a cafe or restaurant, as was mentioned. The "funds" being from the Building Department as they were described, is not the case; the "funds" used for buying the property are "OUR HARD EARNED TAX PAYERS MONEY".

Thus, we the neighbors of Altos Del Mar , want the decision to come from us; the ones who paid and are the ultimate users of this facility.

We are interested in the future of this area, and want this facility to be used to awaken and develop the environmental consciousness required in our young to preserve the quality of life aspired by those that live in the surroundings of our beloved Altos Del Mar Park.

We will fight again and again, any type of occupancy that is not advocated by our neighbors, and comes from the top down.

The idea floated by the Surfriders(?), seems to be more in line with the Altos Del Mar Committee, integrating the children in our neighborhood to become stakeholders of our ocean and the wonderful creatures that thrive within this ecosystem.

Please know, we are here to volunteer our time to make the Altos Del Mar Community Center a success.

ML, Board member at OceanBlue Condominium
avanti@bellsouth.net,
305-5735505

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 6, 2025, at 9:15PM, Pulido, Kevin <KevinPulido@miamibeachfl.gov> wrote:

Pleasure to connect with you today. I apologize if we got disconnected during the rush. If you may please have the neighbor who came share her (she was wearing blue) comments so I can share with staff.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any additional questions.

<image001.png>

Kevin Pulido, Neighborhood Affairs Division Director
OFFICE OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, FL 33139
Tel: 786.394.4033 | www.miamibeachfl.gov/NAD

We are committed to providing excellent public service and safety to all who live, work and play in our vibrant, tropical, historic community.

From: Antonio Lopez <arlopez2@msn.com>
Date: Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 14:14
To: Kevin Pulido <KevinPulido@miamibeachfl.gov>
Cc: Bob OB Bob Nanes <bobnanes@gmail.com>, Frank Raposo <frankraposo@aol.com>, Ariel & Yuneisy Miranda <yuneisymiranda@hotmail.com>, Maria Luisa Rouco <avanti@bellsouth.net>, Matthew Anderson <aerochoice@gmail.com>, Carolina Peraza <mcperaza@bellsouth.net>, Ariel Blanco <arielbm@yahoo.com>, Cary Lopez <caryel@msn.com>, Gil Rachlin <gilrachlin@gmail.com>, "Guevara, Bianca"

List of Ideas for Proposed Uses of 7605 Collins Avenue - Ashley Moline 305-890-0557

- Integrate with North Shore Branch Library, could use rejuvenation (compare to South Beach Library and North Beach very much needs it own library)
- Relocate parks department offices that are currently in trailers on 79th street at the entrance of North Shore Open Space Park
- Relocate Miami Beach Lifeguard Headquarters that is currently in trailers West of Collins Ave between 79th & 80th Street "West Lots" (7940 Collins Ave, Miami Beach, FL 33141). They currently have to drive their ATV's through 79th Street and have to Collins Ave twice a day
- **Headquarters for Sea Turtle Conservation and/or Marine-Aquatic Ocean / Environmental Science Education Center with events, presentations, etc. utilizing / integrating with the adjacent park**
- Contact Environmental Organizations
- Educational facilities such as institutions / universities' Marine Studies departments (MAST academy, UM, FIU)
- "Turtle Bill" connections, Jim Hoover, Bill Aher, and more!
- Pelican Harbor Seabird Station
- **Turtle Fest Event** - Organizers & Participants (Booths)
- Haulover Park, Key Biscayne
- Water testing facility for reporting current beach conditions / water quality for swimming <https://www.theswimguide.org/>
- Surfrider
- Lifeguards / Ocean Rescue / coast guards offices /facilities (meeting rooms, break rooms, etc.)
<https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/fire/ocean-rescue/currentbeachconditions/>
- Art classes, ceramics with oven, drawing, painting
- Information & Welcome Center for Miami Beach visitors

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 at 11:19:13 Eastern Daylight Time

Subject: 7605 Collins Ave
Date: Sunday, February 9, 2025 at 14:38:23 Eastern Standard Time
From: Nina Schumann
To: kevinpulido@miamibeachfl.gov

You don't often get email from nina_schumann@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

[THIS MESSAGE COMES FROM AN EXTERNAL EMAIL - USE CAUTION WHEN REPLYING AND OPENING LINKS OR ATTACHMENTS]

Dear Kevin:

I live at LaGorce Palace 6301 Collins Ave. I took a walk through the property at 7605 Collins Ave. last week. I understand the property was purchased in April 2024 for \$6.5 million. It's market value today is considerably less according to some real estate websites (as low as \$4,500,000).

I got a little information from people who were at the open house, But I would appreciate if you could direct me to the information concerning how the Building department and/or the city came to be in possession of this property.

Someone said that the Building department has to occupy 51% of the building according to whatever deal was made. Something doesn't sound right! But I'm sure there's a paper trail and even if you can't provide it, I should be able to find it.

One of the city staff at the open house said that the Building department is thinking of moving a call center and offices from their location on Normandy Isle to the house at 7605 Collins Ave. I cannot imagine a more inappropriate setting for the Building department, and that seemed to be the sentiment of most people who attended the open house.

Even if a deal was made that would require the Building department occupied 51% of the property I'm sure that can be undone. And I think there Are easily several locations in the city of Miami Beach that would be more appropriate for the Building department offices. The Byron Carlyle proposals included expansion upward to build workforce housing. Very suitable location for a call center and the Building department and there will be parking available. Call centers are rapidly being automated with AI so personnel numbers will diminish.

The house at 7605 Collins is prime real estate! In my opinion, it should be sold to the highest bidder. If not, the building should be used for the community.

It would make a lovely community cultural center, providing outreach and education, as well as a social networking hub for the residents of North Beach. While we have Unidad, that facility caters mostly to the Hispanic community and low income residents with free meals and free outings. Unidad is not very welcoming to non-Hispanic people. It is not open at night or on the weekends. I've tried to address these issues with the Unidad staff but they act powerless to effect any change.

I envision a community cultural center that would showcase local artists, local Musicians, local chefs, entrepreneurs and speakers, with a rotating Residency for area nonprofits and environmental initiatives. A community center would foster cultural, educational, and social programs, for the benefit of our richly diverse north beach neighborhood. As a community center for North Beach, small gatherings could be offered on weekends and evenings, with an emphasis on building relationships, personal growth and healthy living. Do we aspire to be a Blue Zone community? One of the most important factors in the longevity of blue zone residents is “community”, represented by the fact that people are connected socially, and not just for a free lunch, but for meaningful exchange.

The building at 7605 Collins is the perfect size and location for a community cultural center! Reasonable fees can be charged for classes and programs. The center would evolve as the neighborhood does, reflecting the needs of the residents.

I would like to know more of the history behind this property! Thank you

Nina Schumann
Miami Beach
603.502.3983