

## **Annual Report to the Citizens of Coral Gables**

**DON SLESNICK  
MAYOR**

**DELIVERED AT THE Coral Gables CHAMBER of Commerce**

**SEPTEMBER 2007**

Good morning Coral Gables!

We are gathered as a community to offer “thanks” to those persons who have brought the Coral Gables Chamber to a new plateau of excellence – and to “welcome” and give support to the new leaders as they take the helm of this organization for the coming year – with the promise of great deeds and accomplishments still to be realized. I am honored to share this important moment with the business community as we at City Hall prepare to finalize our business plan and budget for the year ahead.

The following needs to be said “loud and clear” – I am tremendously proud to serve the citizens of the best city in the State of Florida. That is not an empty political boast – it is a factual assessment of this municipality based on comparative statistical and evaluative indicators. The accomplishments of Coral Gables are products of a community working together as an effective partnership between residents, school and university students, businessmen and women, visitors and government workers. The supportive interaction between the Coral Gables Chamber, the Business Improvement District, the University of Miami, the cultural organizations, the Community Foundation, the Garden Club and City Hall is a relationship unequalled in other jurisdictions. Our achievements are not the legacy of any one person or specific group of people, but are the legacy of this generation (all of us).

The results of our past labor are explicitly chronicled in our Annual Report booklet which has been mailed to the households and businesses of our community; now let’s focus on our future. Despite the budget challenges crated by actions of the State Legislature this City will

proceed to address the needs of our citizenry in a proactive, positive manner. A few of the ongoing efforts (the continuation of which are seemingly supported by a majority of the Commission) include:

1. Moving boldly into a full use of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century technology to make the administration of City business more economical and to make dealing with government easier through the use of the internet to conduct transactions from home or office;
2. Continuation of a City-wide traffic calming program;
3. Resolution of the City's pension plan's funding problems;
4. Improvement of parks and open spaces;
5. Historic preservation projects like the DeSoto Fountain and the Country Club Prado Entrance;
6. Bolstering the cultural vitality of our downtown with the establishment of the new City Museum and Art Cinema;
7. Reopening the Biltmore Golf Course (and taking other steps required to insure the continued viability of the hotel);
8. Insuring that the Country Club of Coral Gables continues to operate without interruption;
9. Continuing the Coral Gables trolley service in the commercial core; and
10. "Greening of the Gables" – everything from vegetation to building codes.

While, unfortunately, some employee positions will go unfilled; while the much-needed growth of the Police and Fire Departments' tables of organization will be delayed; while support for some cultural, historic preservation, and Crime Watch programming will diminish, this government is committed to deliver the best services possible with the financial resources available. What we must not allow is for Coral Gables to become a "bargain basement" operation – a situation which could lessen the value of our properties and dim the luster of our commercial district.

It is my pledge that the Office of the Mayor will continue to dedicate its efforts:

- ✓ to preserve our exceptional quality of life
- ✓ to protect the lives and property of our citizens
- ✓ to encourage and facilitate citizen participation
- ✓ to insure fiscal stability in government operations
- ✓ to keep our stakeholders fully informed

and to keep Coral Gables the most desirable South Florida address in which to live, work, study or just to “enjoy the moment”!

God bless this nation, its young men and women who put their lives on the line to protect our way of life, the Great State of Florida, and our beloved “City Beautiful.”

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