



Town of Miami Lakes Memorandum

To: Honorable Councilmembers
From: Honorable Mayor Dieguez
Subject: Mayor's Memorandum 2024-02
Date: December 27, 2024

Council Members:

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and as we wind down the clock on 2024, I wanted to take some time to announce two important decisions. The first announcement will be my nomination to fill the Seat 4 vacancy which we will vote on at our next Regular Council Meeting taking place on January 21, 2025. The second announcement concerns my new assistant who will be my right hand at Town Hall as I fully begin my duties as Mayor.

Council Vacancy – Seat 4

Before I name my nominee to fill the vacancy in Seat 4 caused by my resignation to run for Mayor, I wanted to take some time to clear up any potential confusion regarding my decision to make a nomination. First and foremost, Section 2.5(c)(ii) of the Town Charter **requires** that the Mayor make a nomination within thirty calendar days following the occurrence of the vacancy. Said nomination is then voted on by the Town Council and the nominee is either confirmed or rejected. Earlier this year, I joined two other colleagues in voting against the prior Mayor's nominee to fill the vacancy caused in Seat 6 by the resignation of former Vice Mayor Alvarez. The reasons for doing so are on the record for all to see. However, I want to re-emphasize my decision on the special election at that time and draw a contrast with why I believe an appointment is more appropriate in this instance.

In my remarks this past January, I stated that my vote was based on an evaluation of what I believed the Town needed at the time of making an appointment and the history of those appointments. I joined many residents in stating that I believed what the Town needed most then is **continuity**. I recounted how in every other instance of an appointment for the Town Council, there was no shortage of experienced council members to guide the new member being appointed. I also pointed out the unprecedented situation of potentially being as many as 5 new members of the Town Council with no prior public budgeting experience and that any nominee would only serve until November and yet make decisions that impact the Town well beyond that time. Combined with the prior

Mayor's nominee stating she would not run for a full term, this created a situation that was unacceptable to me as it would be detrimental to the Town's long term best interests. Accordingly, a special election was more appropriate because, by doing so, the eventual winner would serve for two years and would likely be someone committed to running for re-election—the sort of individual who is better suited to making long term decisions. Additionally, the eventual winner would immediately start immersing themselves in the budget process and, because of the longer term, would retain that knowledge on the dais to help out the new council members just elected this past November. In short, in light of the circumstances that existed at that time, I made a decision consistent with my belief that what the Town needed most was continuity and the outcome of a special election was the only way to achieve that result.

Unlike last January, there is no immediately pending election in which (as a result of term limits) as many as 5 entirely new members of the Town Council would be elected. In fact, all members of this Town Council are committed to serving for the long term—including the nominee I have selected. Further, there are now three members of the Town Council who have experienced at least one budget cycle instead of just two members. Additionally, unlike in years prior, this nomination follows a public and open call for applications for the appointment and consultation with you, my colleagues, on what they would like to see in a nominee at our recent Sunshine Meeting. To summarize, none of the circumstances existing in January 2024 that led me to decide a special election was more appropriate at that time are present in this case.

Now turning to my selection, my overriding goal was to select a candidate who I believed would join me and you in putting the interests of the Town above political considerations. I wanted someone with a history of involvement in the Town and someone who would work well with us and town staff. I shared with you my concerns in nominating someone who had previously run for office unsuccessfully since voters had clearly indicated a preference not in their favor although we all agreed it is commendable that they threw their hat in the ring and demonstrated “tough skin” by doing so. Taking these considerations and others into account, I have decided to nominate Alejandro Sanchez for the Seat 4 vacancy and ask that you support his nomination.

Alejandro, or simply “Alex”, is a sixteen-year resident of the Town of Miami Lakes and a decorated veteran of the United States Navy. His public service in the Town of Miami Lakes includes service on the Planning and Zoning Board, Veterans Affairs Committee, Neighborhood Improvement Committee, and Town Manager Selection Committee. Of all the applications we received for the Seat 4 vacancy, his application notably included the most letters of recommendation from everyday town residents. His policy and budget priorities also are similar to the priorities many of us have identified as our own with a decidedly local focus on the Town. Although Alex previously filed to run in the 2016 election for Town Council, he ultimately withdrew and therefore voters have not yet weighed in on his candidacy. However, he has committed to running for re-election for a full term in 2026 when voters will then get the opportunity to weigh in on his record at that time. Alex has also demonstrated a great level of transparency and candor during this application process, which I know is the sort of personal character we all appreciate in a colleague.

I sincerely wish to thank all the applicants who put their names forward. They were all highly qualified individuals with commendable service records and deserve praise for being willing to increase their involvement in making our Town a better place to live, work, and play. I fully expect we will continue to see them actively involved.

Mayor's Assistant

Turning to my second announcement, I am pleased to announce that I have selected Joshua Villorin to serve as my assistant. We'll have to work out a nickname for him to avoid confusion with me when someone is trying to get our attention, but I'm sure we'll work that out in due time! In the meantime, I'll go with JV. JV is a young energetic Marketing Communications Coordinator for Greenspoon Marder, LLP where he was responsible for a variety of tasks including research and analysis, drafting press releases and newsletters, and providing support in the development of requests for proposals. Previously, JV served as a Staff Assistant to Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart and as an intern for former Miami Beach City Manager Jimmy Morales where he developed an interest in public service and was responsible for constituent services—an area that will be top priority for me during my time in office as Mayor. JV will officially join the Office of the Mayor beginning January 21, 2025 and will not only be my assistant but also a trusted confidante and gate keeper to ensure I carry out my various priorities.

Sincerely,

/s/ Joshua Dieguez

Josh Dieguez
Mayor