



**Economic Development Committee
Semi-Annual Report to Council
May 16, 2017**

Members:

Name	Committee Position	Nominated by:
Michael Huffaker	Chair	Tim Daubert
Yefrei Musa	Vice Chair	Manny Cid
Andrea Rechichi	Secretary	Ceasar Mestre
John Tingle	Vice Secretary	Nelson Rodriguez
Jorge Alvarez	Member	Frank Mingo
Elizabeth Coto	Member	Tony Lama
Marta Diaz	Member	Nelson Rodriguez
Mara Falero	Member	Ceasar Mestre
Ladd Howell	Member	Tony Lama
Ivan Lambert, Jr.	Member	Manny Cid
Paul Marino	Member	Frank Mingo
Luis Marquez	Member	Tim Daubert
Neill Robinson	Member	Luis Collazo
Magaly Rubio	Member	Luis Collazo

On behalf of the Economic Development Committee, I am pleased to offer this semiannual report as a detailed update on our activities. As reported in past updates to the Council, the Committee has continued to focus on not only promoting economic development in Miami Lakes by attracting new businesses, but also ensuring that our current businesses remain pleased and ensure their desire to remain in our town. Our goal is to reinforce, strengthen and promote the livability and sustainability of our commercial and industrial business districts.

The following represents the activities of the committee from November 2016 to the present:

1) Completed Activities/Events

a) Business Survey

In order to better identify the needs and expectations of the business community, we distributed a survey to all businesses registered with the Town. We had 40 businesses respond that represent a cross-section of our business community including geographic distribution, size, years in service, industry type, etc. The most requested assistance from the respondents (40%) was Networking Events. The category of Workshops/Forums finished with only 7.5% seeking this assistance from the Town.

In response to the survey, the Economic Development Committee has scheduled a networking event for Thursday, June 1 at the recently renovated Shula's 2 on Main Street. The Committee is also reevaluating future Workshops/Forums in light of the survey results.

Since several respondents indicated a keen interest in addressing transportation issues, the Committee decided to get more informed on this topic. At the April 18 meeting of the Economic Development Committee, we hosted the Town's Transportation Planner, Michelle Gonzalez, for a preview of future transportation initiatives that could impact the business community.

b) Business Workshops

- November 26 – Small Business Saturday, Main Street in conjunction with the annual Festival of Lights
- February 23 – Crowdfunding, Town Hall Council Chambers, Cosponsored by the Miami-Dade Beacon Council, the Small Business Administration (SBA), and MICROscholarships Inc., the workshop was moderated by Sheri Colas-Gervais of the Beacon Council.
- April 22 – Youth Job Fair, Mary Collins Community Center

c) Tracking the Miami Lakes Marketing Campaign

2) Planned Activities/Events

a) SCORE Office Hours and Consulting

- May 19 – Town Hall Council Chambers
- The Town and its Economic Development Committee in partnership with SCORE Miami will be hosting a workshop and a series of one-on-one consulting sessions aimed at educating our local business community of the many resources available to them.

- SCORE is a nonprofit association dedicated to helping small businesses start, grow, and succeed nationwide. SCORE is a resource partner with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), and has been mentoring small business owners for more than fifty years

b) Networking Events

- June 1 – Shula’s 2 on Main Street
- Future events to be scheduled

c) ICSC Convention

- August 27-29, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando
- Space reserved
- Marketing materials being ordered and collected
- Two Town representatives to attend

d) Small Business Saturday

- November 2017
- Planning underway

e) Farmers Market

- Will consider participating when the Market re-starts in the fall

f) American Airlines Ad

- The Committee voted to secure an ad in the American Airlines inflight publication

3) Ongoing Activities/Events

a) Welcoming New Businesses

The committee continues its efforts in reaching out to all of the new businesses moving into the Town. Each month every committee member is responsible to reach out to a new business by phone, email or a personal visit. We remind these business owners about all the great opportunities that Miami Lakes offers including the free listing on the Marketplace, grand opening ceremonies and the sponsorship opportunities available for Town events. This has generated a very positive response from each of the new businesses.

The Committee has begun to more closely track contacts with new businesses and will have a better tabulation of results for our next semi-annual report.

b) Web Site Activities

- www.MiamiLakesMarketplace.com : The Marketplace which is available on both the website and the new Mobile App offer all Miami Lakes business a FREE site to showcase their business. Each business can include photos of their merchandise, service or menu items, upcoming events, coupons and even job opportunities.

- As of November 2016 the site has had over 29,178 visitors and lists 1,172 of the Town's businesses. To date, we have had over 34,987 visitors. That's an increase of almost 6,000 more visitors since our last report.
- www.Miamilakes-fl.gov/properties: The Property Search Portal on the Town's website is also available on the mobile app. This Portal allows Commercial Realtors and Brokers to show their listings of commercial properties for sale or lease. The Portal also offers demographic details which are key indicators for businesses when looking to relocate or expand. This is a great tool for prospective business owners to research what properties are available in Miami Lakes.
 - As of November 2016 the site has had over 11,600 visitors and lists 60 of the Town's available commercial properties. To date, we have had 14,877; an increase of over 3,000 more visitors since our last report.
- www.miamilakes-fl.gov/bizresources: The Business Resource Page on the Town's website was designed to showcase the opportunities provided by the Town to local businesses including, steps on how to open a business, Grand Opening ceremonies with elected officials, sponsorship opportunities for Town local events, and the local business preference program.
 - Last November, this page had 2,371 views, and to date it's up to 3,635 views.

For the remainder of 2017, the Economic Development Committee will continue its efforts to market Miami Lakes as a superb place to locate a business, to maintain a business and to expand a business. We will attempt to do so in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the existing business community and consistent with the overall strategic plans of the Town.

On behalf of all the members of The Economic Development Committee, I would like to thank the Town Council and staff for their continued support.

Michael Huffaker, Chair