

Coalition of North Miami Homeowners Associations

Mayor and Council:

On behalf of all Homeowners Associations in the City of North Miami, we respectfully request the elimination of all discretionary funding for elected officials.

Our city's fiscal health is in critical condition. The budget has a current deficit of untold millions of dollars. A bloated payroll, excessive staff, and unchecked spending have gone hand in hand with deteriorated services. We need to chart a new course, and we believe that the first step is to end the "blank check" privilege bestowed upon every member of the Council

At present, every member of the Council receives \$77,000 a year in discretionary funding, with the only direction that \$20,000 must be spent on trees and \$50,000 "should" be spent on capital projects. Funds not used, foolishly, roll over to the following fiscal year. Not county, state or federal budgets permit rollover funding. That is a total of \$385,000 annually that are regularly, and unilaterally, spent on parties, events, scholarships and gifts without transparency or accountability as they are outside of the regular budgeting process.

An assorted array of pageants, heritage celebrations, homages and celebrations take place, sometimes repetitively and often with little respect to residents' wishes, ideologies or identities and even in disregard to values like separation of church and state. Additionally, these miscellaneous events typically entail no-bid contracts that reveal questionable ties with private contractors-stakeholders.

Most extraordinarily, discretionary funds have been arbitrarily distributed among various organizations and civic groups, including religious ones, without any open application or selection process, as arbitrary gifts. Similarly, the portion allocated to trees follows no community consultation or expert advice to ascertain best location, contractor, and tree variety, among other considerations.

This situation of legalized arbitrary gift giving, paired with a lack of both transparency in the decision-making process and expense accountability, only legitimizes a culture of wasteful spending among elected officials and public servants. Consequently, we, as North Miami residents, **call for the immediate elimination of discretionary funding.**

We wish to clarify that the elimination of discretionary funding is not the same as the elimination of funding for events, charitable contributions and/or grants to civic groups, and much less for beautification and environmental projects resulting in a greener North Miami. Our sole goal is to ensure a sensible use of taxpayer's money for the benefit of all following democratic processes for decision making, transparency and accountability.

We want to make clear that:

- (1) We support the development of a program to provide charitable contributions and grants for projects and operations to worthy non-profit organizations and civic groups. Amounts, determined during the budget process, should be allocated after a competitive and transparent process, and for purposes clearly stated and agreed upon. Recipients should submit expense and project reports. When the budgeted funds have been spent, the contributions and donations shall cease.

(2) We support the municipal organization of various holiday celebrations, such as the 4th of July and its traditional fireworks display, Thanksgiving and the traditional turkey giveaways, Haitian, Black and Hispanic history months. We also support heritage celebrations, always ensuring an equitable representation of residents' various cultural identities and interests. We share the opinion that publicly-funded events cannot be decided unilaterally, but need to be the product of a civic consensus. They must be thoughtfully and transparently decided, designed and organized and their budgets must recognize currently hidden costs such as payroll, and overtime for city staff and police.

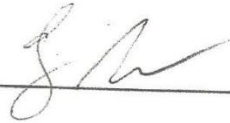
(3) We are enthusiastic about landscaping initiatives to boost the city's greenery that will surely enhance residents' physical and mental well-being. We support the current allocation of \$100,000, equally distributed among council districts as long as the decisions and expenses are not the personal opinion of one, but a plan developed by specialists with residents' input.

We urge you to immediately implement these recommendations, thereby adhering to practices of fiscal responsibility and ethical government. In so doing, the North Miami Council will contribute to deficit reduction while also boosting residents' civic morale and trust in government, improving the city's regional reputation, and, above everything else, enhancing our residents' quality of life.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

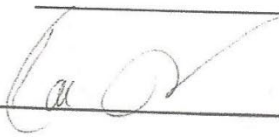
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Arch Creek East Neighborhood
Assoc.



Irons Manor
HOA

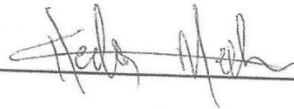
Keystone Point Homeowners
Assoc.



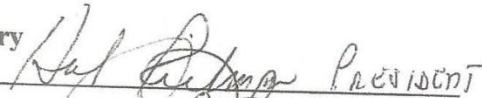
NoMi
Neighbors



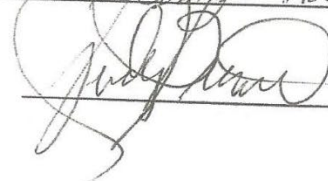
Palomar
Park



San Souci Gated Voluntary
HO

 President

Sunkist Grove
HOA



Alhambra Heights HOA

