



January 27th, 2020

To: Miami Beach City Manager, Mayor and Commission
1700 Convention Center Drive.
Miami Beach, FL 33139

To Manager, Mayor and Commission:

I'm addressing this problem to you more formally because it is indeed a serious issue. You all wonder why businesses are leaving the beach and flocking across to Miami. Here are the reasons and it is clearly our administration's fault. Two years ago, before the untimely death of John Lermayer, he told me he was trying to add the space next to Sweet Liberty to add 35 seats to his thriving establishment that pays a lot of resort tax to the City. In order to get the permits for this 500 Sq Ft space he had to pay for a traffic study, neighborhood impact etc. etc. etc. The cost for all this would mean the first 4 years of operation would have no profit. He decided against it. I asked if I could use this for an example to show administration the problem with the system. He said, "no", he was concerned about retaliation. Before I could take this further, he died. Last year Shawn Vardi from Think Hospitality told me he was going to open a Pizza Parlor in the same space. On Friday I texted and asked if he changed his mind. He is still waiting for permits from the City who decided he needed grease traps. This is not a restaurant, it a pizza joint. He said that adds 8-10 months to the permit process not to mention the fees. It would seem to me that we would make a lot more money from the resort tax getting a business open than throwing up road blocks to impede the process. These small businesses don't have the luxury of waiting or the money to pay for operation without a TCO or CO like the City can with the Convention Center. Our system is broken and you need to fix it. Is this something that the Inspector General can look at? I can tell you from my own experience at the Mantell. We redid the plumbing for our pool but on final inspection someone had to come from structures to say N/A and someone from Fire to say N/A. Who pays for this, us through permit fees or the City? No matter which, this is gross mis management of personnel. Someone needs to be the oversight on the permit process to get a speedy end result. You may think the fees are important but it is not nearly as important as business opening and paying the resort tax. Aren't you tired of hearing about these issues? It's time to take action. This is merely one example. With the opening of the new Collins Park Garage, we need to get that retail open ASAP. The permitting process could be extremely detrimental if we can't streamline the process.

Sincerely,

Ray Breslin, president, Collins Park Neighborhood Association.