

## REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

K #: K07-087

Date Opened: July 5, 2007

Name of Investigator: Manuel W. Diaz  
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### Allegation:

Mr. Jose Antonio Lopez, a resident of Ward Towers Complex 2200 NW 54 Street, Miami FL., alleged that there was widespread corruption at the complex. He alleged that Mr. Robert Tavel, the President of the Resident's Council for the complex is at the center of the corruption.

Investigators initiated an investigation to determine if Mr. Lopez' allegations were credible.

### **Investigation:**

In a letter to Mr. Robert Meyers, Executive Director, Mr. Lopez advised of the following.

1. He is a resident of MD Housing Authority Ward Towers complex located at 2200 NW 54 Street, Miami, Florida. There are two sections of the complex, Tower 1 and Tower 2. The complex has a Resident's Council. The President of the Resident's Council is elected by the residents of both Towers. The President of the Resident's Council, Robert Tavel, has threaten Mr. Lopez. Mr. Lopez has been forced to get a restraining order against Mr. Tavel.
2. Mr. Lopez continued that that MDHA wishes to evict him because he has knowledge of corruption at the Ward Tower. Mr. Lopez agreed to

provide the COE with evidence of the corruption. In the memorandum Mr. Lopez stated that he has relayed information concerning the activities of the Residence' Council to Mario Marlote, Assistant to the County Manager.

3. Investigators contacted Mr. Marlote to learn what information Mr. Lopez had provided. When contacted, Mr. Marlote advised that Mr. Lopez lives in different Tower than Mr. Tavel. Mr. Lopez claims to have surveyed the tenants of his Tower and they wish to establish their own Resident's Council. Mr. Lopez claims to have held an election for the tenants of the Tower, and he (Lopez) was elected president. The election was held independent of the Housing Authority and the Residential Council. Mr. Marlote recommended that Investigators contact Freddie Nay from Miami Dade Housing to discuss Mr. Lopez' situation. Mr. Nay, according to Mr. Marlote, directed an independent survey of the residents of the tower to determine if the residents wish to create a separate Residential Council.
4. Investigators spoke to Mr. Freddie Nay, Acting Director, Miami Dade Public Housing, (305-644-5311). Mr. Fey advised Investigators that the housing agency will create a separate residence's council for Mr. Lopez' building. He also advised that Mr. Lopez' restraining order went to court on Monday July 2, 2007. Mr. Fey heard that the presiding judge dismissed the case against Mr. Tavel and advised both parties to "act as adults". Mr. Ney advised that he was not aware as to any

allegations of corruption at the Towers or that Resident's Council funds were being misspent at Ward Towers.

5. Investigators interviewed Mr. Lopez in the COE Offices. Investigators advised Mr. Lopez that the matter of whether one or two resident's council represented the tenants of the Ward was a matter to be addressed by the tenants and MDHA. The issue was not under the jurisdiction of the COE. Mr. Lopez was asked to clarify his allegations of corruption within MDHA and particularly Ward Towers. In response Mr. Lopez cited recent articles in the Miami Herald concerning corruption at the MD Housing Authority. When asked to be specific as to Ward Towers, he cited two examples. In the first he stated that he had been informed by several female residents of Tower 1 that they believed that there apartments were being used by prostitutes while they were out. He advised that the resident's apartment's beds were disturbed while they were out. As a second example, he advised Investigators that periodically grocery stores donate pastries to the residents. He feels that Mr. Tavel, acting as president of the Residents Council, does not distribute the pastries equally.
6. Mr. Lopez advised that recent health problems prevent from getting any further involved in the problems of the complex. He commented that he has requested to relocate to another MDHA facility, and is working through the Manager's office.

CONCLUSION:

There appears to no violation of the Miami-Dade County Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Ordinance. If additional information is developed, the case may be reopened.