

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION ON ETHICS & PUBLIC TRUST



REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

#K13-039

Date Opened: 03/19/13

Date Closed: 03/22/13

Investigator: Sylvia Batista

The COE received information alleging a possible Sunshine Law violation in connection with the removal of City of Doral Vice Mayor Sandra Ruiz (“Ruiz”) from the position of Vice Mayor and nominating Councilmember Bettina Rodriguez Aguilera (Aguilera) as such, at the 03/18/13 City council meeting.

According to the information, Mayor Luigi Boria (Boria), his aide, Gonzalo Bello, and Aguilera were seen having dinner at the Carolina Ale House in Doral on February 27, 2013 after the City council meeting had ended.

The COE’s issue relates to a possible violation of The Sunshine Law, Chapter 286, Florida Statutes, in that the removal of Ruiz and nomination of Aguilera may have been a topic of discussion between Boria, Bello and Aguilera during the alleged dinner.

Investigation:

03/21/13 – Gonzalo Bello, Aide for Mayor Boria – (305) 333-7378

Gonzalo Bello (“Bello”) was contacted by the COE investigator and asked about the dinner with Boria and Aguilera. Bello, who spoke in the presence of City Attorney Joe

Jimenez, stated that on the night of 02/27/13 he and Boria went to the Carolina Ale House after the City council meeting ended. Bello explained that Boria had been invited to a networking event presented by the Panamanian American Chamber of Commerce (PACC) which was held at the Carolina Ale House. Bello said that he and Boria tried to attend the event, but when they arrived no one was there. Bello said that they asked a waiter about the event and the waiter informed them that the event had ended and everyone from the PACC group was gone. Bello said that he and Boria parted ways in their respective vehicles. Bello stated that Aguilera was not with them when they went to the Carolina Ale House and they did not see her there when they arrived.

03/20/13 – Gisella Thomas, President, PACC

Gisella Thomas (Thomas) was contacted by the COE investigator. Thomas confirmed that PACC held an event on 02/27/13 at the Carolina Ale House. Thomas provided the COE with a copy of the invitation to the event. The invitation listed Boria and Aguilera as special guests at the event. Thomas does not know whether Boria, Aguilera or anyone else from the City of Doral attended the event. Thomas said that someone with PACC would be contacting the COE to answer any other questions related to the event.

03/21/13 – Felipe Madrigal, Senior Advisor, PACC

Felipe Madrigal (Madrigal) contacted the COE and explained that he was late to the event because he was at the City of Doral Council meeting. Madrigal said that he saw Boria and Aguilera at the council meeting. Madrigal said that he arrived at the Carolina Ale House at approximately 9:30 p.m. Aguilera arrived unaccompanied a bit later. Madrigal did not see Boria or Bello at the Carolina Ale House that night. Madrigal said

that by the time they left the City council meeting, the event at the Carolina Ale House was over. Madrigal said that he left the Carolina Ale House at 10:00 p.m. and did not see Boria or Bello the entire time that he was there.

03/18/13 – City of Doral Council meeting –

A review of the video of the 03/18/13 council meeting shows that Boria made a motion to remove Ruiz from the position of vice mayor and nominated Councilmember Ana Maria Rodriguez. Councilmember Rodriguez declined to accept the nomination due to personal time constraints. Boria at that time nominated Aguilera to be the City's next Vice Mayor and Aguilera accepted.

Conclusion:

In consideration of the fact that no evidence was revealed indicating that a Sunshine law violation occurred during the alleged dinner, this matter is closed and no further action will be taken.