

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

K #:K07-101

Date Opened: August 8, 2007

Name of investigator: Manuel W. Diaz
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Allegation:

The COE received a letter from Ms. Francis Neuhut. In the correspondence Ms. Neuhut advised of two incidents that she he suspected were indicative of “unethical” activities by Bay Harbor Islands Councilwoman Wallace.

1. Councilwoman Wallace attended a luncheon at the Sea View Hotel in Bay Harbor. This luncheon was paid for by taxpayers for the Miami-Dade Public School Board.
2. Councilwoman Wallace had a private 60th Anniversary party at the home of the Broad family. The Town contributed to the cost of the party. The letter refers to the party as a “Town Social”. Attendance at the social was limited to invited guests, and not to all the residents of the Town.

Investigation:

Interview - Alan Short, Bay Harbor Finance Director. Mr. Short advised that he heard that Councilwoman Wallace had attended a luncheon sponsored by a Condominium sales office. He advised that the City did not pay for the luncheon. He was not sure who, in addition to the Councilwoman attended the luncheon.

Concerning the second allegation, he advised that the Town sponsored a **60th Anniversary Party** at the Broad family home, several months ago. The Town was incorporated in 1947. Mr. Short advised that he believed that the Town contributed to the Social. He recommended that Investigators contact Marlene Marante, Town Clerk

for additional information. He noted that funding for the Party was discussed and approved at an advertised Council meeting.

Interview - Ms. Marlene Marante, City Clerk, Town of Bay Harbor Islands.

Ms. Marante advised Investigators that she coordinated a portion of the activities which were held during the Town's 60th Anniversary Celebration, including the 5K run, the Anniversary Party and the Town Picnic. According to Ms. Marante the town appointed a Celebration Committee, one of the members was Mr. John Bussel, a descendent of one of the Town's founders. When the decision was made to hold a party, he volunteered his house and his mother, who also lived in the house, volunteered to pay for the refreshments. Ms. Marante recalled that the refreshments cost approximately \$8900.00, **all** of which was paid for by Mr. Bussel's mother. Ms. Marante recalled that the Celebration Committee limited the guest list to between 100 and 200 persons, because of the size of the house. The Committee set the following guest selection criteria, those who were instrumental in the incorporation and growth of the Town, past and present. She advised that the Party was more of a social event, where only desserts and drinks were served. There were no City funds expended for the party. She noted that the Town held a street festival/picnic which was open to all residents. Ms. Marante agreed to provide Investigators with copies all City Resolutions and supporting documentation for the party.

Interview - Councilwoman Irene Wallace, Bay Harbor Islands. Ms Wallace was interviewed via telephone on August 21, 2007. She advised that, as a Councilwoman, she is concerned with the children of her community and other educational issues. Bi-Annually the Miami-Dade School Board conducts an Elected Officials Workshop. The Workshop is rotated throughout Miami-Dade County, with various Municipalities sharing the responsibility of sponsoring the event. In January of 2005 the Town of Bay Harbor Islands, after a public hearing, voted to sponsor the Workshop on January 10, 2007. The Town Council agreed to contribute \$1500.00 toward the event. The remainder was

to be paid by the School Board. Councilwoman Wallace advised that the Sea View Hotel was chosen because it was one of the only hotels in the Town with the necessary seating capacity.

Findings:

1. Ms. Ileene Wallace is a Town of Bay Harbor Islands Councilperson.
2. The Town Council approved at a public hearing (December 7, 2004) the expenditure of \$1500. 00 to sponsor a School Board Workshop. The workshop was attended by members of the Bay Harbor Islands community and members of the School Board.
3. The Town of Bay Harbor Islands held a 60th Anniversary Celebration. There were three manor events, a 5K run, a Social and a town picnic. The Social was held at the private residence of the Brussel family. No Town funds were used to pay for the Social. Attendees were limited because of the size of the house. There was selection criteria used to chose who were invited.

CONCLUSION: