

Frigo, Victoria (COE)

From: Frigo, Victoria (COE)
Sent: Monday, September 23, 2013 4:00 PM
To: Edwards, Julie (PHCD)
Cc: Centorino, Joseph (COE); Diaz-Greco, Gilma M. (COE)
Subject: Former Housing Director (INQ 13-231)

Ms. Edwards,

Thank you for bringing to our attention the matter involving former County Housing Director Rene Rodriguez, who left County employment approximately six or more years ago.

We do not have jurisdiction over Mr. Rodriguez, who is now a private citizen. Consequently, we cannot opine on possible conflicts of interest that may have been created by Mr. Rodriguez's real estate transactions involving government funding.

We recommend that you contact the [Miami-Dade Police Department](#) if you suspect criminal activity such as fraud is involved. Alternatively or simultaneously, you may wish to file a complaint with the [Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation \(DBPR\)](#) if you suspect that a real estate licensee has violated a practice act. Information about filing complaints with the DBPR can be found at <https://www.myfloridalicense.com/prosecutor.asp>.

Sincerely,

VICTORIA FRIGO, SENIOR STAFF ATTORNEY

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Main Number: 305 579-2594
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Miami, FL 33130

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From: Edwards, Julie (PHCD)
Sent: Monday, September 16, 2013 11:12 AM
To: Centorino, Joseph (COE)
Subject: Ethics Opinion

Mr. Centorino,

Your assistance is needed with reviewing the below request and providing an opinion as to whether or not a conflict of interest exists.

Background

As you know, the Public Housing Agency (Housing Agency) merged with the Office of Community and Economic Development in October 2011 to form the Public Housing and Community Development (PHCD) Department. PHCD has a homebuyer program that provides low interest rate/forgivable loans of up to \$80,000.00, to hundreds of first time homebuyers in Miami-Dade County each year. The homebuyer program was originally administered by the Housing Agency prior to 2007

and the "House of Lies" article which resulted in major changes in that department. Today, the first time homebuyer program continues through PHCD to positively impact the lives of many residents by making their dream of homeownership a reality. To this end, PHCD works closely with community partners, such as homebuyer counseling agencies, realtors, and lending institutions.

In a recent transaction, staff brought to our attention that Mr. Rene Rodriguez, the former Executive Director of the Housing Agency, and the director at the time of the "House of Lies", is now a realtor whose company Royal Palm Partners, LLC., is the listing agent and owner of a property that is being sold to a customer that has qualified for a PHCD homeownership loan. Further, Mr. Rodriguez is listed on the sales contract with the prospective buyer as the Listing Sales Associate for Ocean Palm Realty, Inc. where his wife, Maritza Meitzner-Rodriguez' is the owner and manager.

Please note that the customer did not originally qualify for the loan, however, after submitting additional documents to the IRS, and subsequently providing our office with amended Tax forms, the customer became eligible for a loan of \$80,000.00. While the customer has been determined eligible based on the information provided, including the amended Tax documents, concerns surround the involvement of the former Housing Agency Executive Director and his wife in this case. Therefore, your assistance is requested in reviewing the case and providing an opinion so that we can document the file accordingly. Additional details are provided below:

Additional Details

1. Transactional Realtor, Mr. Rene Rodriguez (representing both buyer and seller) is the former Executive Director of Miami-Dade Housing Agency and Miami-Dade Housing Agency Development Corporation
2. Royal Palm Partners, LLC., 3011 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, Fl., 33134 - are the owners of the property and details Rene Rodriguez as the Principal/registered agent and his spouse Maritza Meitzner-Rodriguez as the General Manager
3. Ocean Palm Realty, Inc., 3011 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134 – Selling Agency, the Owner and Manager is Maritza Meitzner-Rodriguez
4. The IRS 1040 representing 2012 income presented to the Homeownership Specialist at the interview resulted in a Monthly Housing Expense (MHE) and Debt To Income Ratio (DTIR) which exceeded the program guidelines. Subsequently the first Lender provided an amended IRS 1040 reflecting higher earnings for the borrowers' spouse who is self-employed, resulting in them qualifying for a loan of \$80,000.00.

As information pertaining to the listing agent/realtor is not tracked, it is unknown if Mr. Rodriguez' or his company, or his wife's company have been involved in any other transactions involving Miami-Dade's homebuyer program. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Thank you for your assistance.

Julie Edwards, Assistant Director
Miami-Dade Public Housing and Community Development
701 NW 1st Court, 14th Floor, Miami, Florida 33136
786-469-2255 Phone 786-469-2170 Fax
305-302-9813 Cell

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