

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES
EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Section 13

Fredrick J. Murry

*Gainesville City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

Fredrick Murry
4830 NW 43 Street, Apt B-29
Gainesville, Florida 32606
Phone: (352) 395-6449 / (954) 803-7658

Re: City Manager's Position – City of Gainesville, Florida

Dear Sir/Madam:

Please accept my cover letter and my application for the City Manager position for City of Gainesville, Florida. As demonstrated on my resume, I have more than 25 plus years of experience in city and county government including 20 years of executive management positions at the department director level and above. My background includes extensive management and budget experience as well as significant experience in community development, economic development and youth and family services that I believe will be an asset to your organization. I have excellent management and leadership skills together with my strong work ethic, high moral character and enthusiastic attitude. Throughout my career, I have worked with closely with elected and appointed officials, business leaders and developers, community leaders, neighborhood organizations and employee groups. My track record is one of achievement and effectiveness and my wide ranging experience uniquely qualifies me for this position.

As Assistant City Manager for the City of Gainesville, Florida, I am involved in all operations of the city; however, I am directly responsible for the oversight of several departments as well as for the bi-weekly City Commission's meeting agenda for those departments. I am currently overseeing a large scale capital program which focuses on facilities renovations. Prior to my appointment to Gainesville Assistant City Manager position, I spent 15 years working in South Florida and Virginia. I have been instrumental in managing organizational changes in my current and previous positions. In addition to my work experience, I am heavily involved in professional and community activities. I hold a Master Degree in Public Policy and Public Administration and I am also recognized by the international City and County Managers Association as Credentialed Manager (ICMA- CM).

Lastly, I am seeking a challenging position in a progressive organization where I can contribute to the Long term success of the community. I believe that I have the personal and professional skills necessary to serve as the City Manager for the City of Gainesville, Florida. I have attached my resume for your review and would welcome the Opportunity to discuss my qualifications further in an interview. Please contact me at the above telephone number and address if you desire to discuss my qualifications further. Thank you for your consideration and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Fred

Fredrick Murry

FREDRICK J. MURRY

4830 NW 43 Street Apt. B-29

Gainesville, Florida 32606

(352) 395-6449 (Home) * (954) 803-7658 (Cell)

SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

- Over 20 years of governmental management, administrative and fiscal experience.
- Exceptional ability to collaborate efforts with other governments and the community.
- Responsible for a budget of over \$180 million.
- Exceptional leadership and management abilities.
- Experienced in budget administration, strategic planning, employee development and team building, internal management systems, program design and implementation, policy development and implementation, liaison and public relations activities, contract development and negotiation, technical writing, grantsmanship and grant implementation, arbitration/negotiation and intergovernmental relations.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

08/07- Present

Assistant City Manager
Gainesville, FL

- Oversee all management and administrative functions of Neighborhood Improvement Departments and Divisions including Community Planning Program, Housing and Community Development, Facilities Management, Fleet Services and Code Enforcement.
- Supervised five employees and administered a \$23 million operating budget.

12/96 – 12/06

Director of Family Success Administration Division

Broward County, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

(A Joint Commission Accredited Organization)

- Oversaw all management and administrative activities of the Family Success Administration Division including Social, Refugee, Homeless and Mental Health Services and the Community Action Agency.
- Supervised 107 employees and administered a \$12 million operating budget.

10/91 – 12/96

Director of Youth and Family Services

Loudoun County, Leesburg, VA

Section 13

- Oversaw all financial, administrative, planning, development and delivery of services, including juvenile detention facility, Area Agency on Aging, community and employment training program and housing and youth services.
- Supervised 55 employees and administered an operating budget of \$3.2 million.

1/90 – 10/91

Community Development Director

City of North Miami Beach, FL

- Directed the city's planning, zoning, strategic planning and economic development programs.
- Supervised up to 15 employees with an operating budget of \$250,000.

4/86 – 10/89

Housing and Grants Director (2 ½ years)

Lee County: Fort Myers, FL

- Directed the County's housing, grants and economic development programs.
- Controlled a \$3 million operating budget.
- Accomplishments include the establishment of Florida's first city/county urban homesteading program and Lee County's first economic development/revolving loan program (\$614,000).

Acting Assistant County Administrator (1 year)

Lee County: Fort Myers, FL

- Directed and coordinated the administrative, supervisory and financial activities of department directors responsible for strategic planning and growth management programs in the departments of community development, utilities, transportation and engineering and real estate.
- Supervised up to 549 employees and worked with an operating budget of \$181 million.

10/82 – 4/86

Community Development Specialist

City of Pompano Beach, FL

- Assisted in directing and coordinating the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.
- Supervised three employees with an operating budget of \$647,000.

EDUCATION

Master of Public Policy and Administration

Mississippi State University, Starksville, MS

Bachelor of Arts – History/Pre-Law

Talladega College, Talladega, AL

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)

International City Managers Association (ICMA)

Salvation Army of Alachua County – Alachua County Board Member

MISCELLANEOUS

Computer Literate

Extensive Volunteer Work

Candidate Introduction

Fredrick J. Murry

EDUCATION

Master of Public Policy and Public Administration, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS
Bachelor of Arts, Prelaw- History, Talladega College, Talladega, AL

Additional Training

Certified City Manager- International City and County Manager’s Association

EXPERIENCE

Assistant City Manager, City of Gainesville, FL	2007 - Present
Photography/Business Consultant, Deerfield Beach, FL	2006 - 2007
Director of Family Success Administration, Broward County, FL	1996 - 2006
Director of Youth and Family Services, Loudoun County, VA	1991 - 2006
Community Development Director, North Miami Beach, FL	1990 - 1991
Director of Housing and Economic Development, Lee County, FL	1987 - 1989
Acting Assistant County Administrator, Lee County, FL	1986 - 1987
Director of Housing and Economic Development, Lee County, FL	1986 - 1986
Community Development Specialist, Pompano Beach, FL	1982 - 1986
Administrative Intern, Deerfield Beach, FL	1980 - 1982

BACKGROUND

The City of Gainesville, Florida is the County seat and the largest City in Alachua County. The City was founded in 1869. There are approximately 63.75 square miles of land inside of the corporate boundaries of the City. As of August of 2017, the City’s population was estimated at 129,816 by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida. Gainesville is the home to the University of Florida, the state’s leading research institution and Santa Fe College, is a provider of excellent professional and vocational education. Also, Gainesville is one of the largest medical communities in North Central Florida.

The City of Gainesville operated under a Commissioner-Manager form of Government since 1927. The City Commission is responsible for enacting the ordinance and resolution that govern the City. The City Manager, who is appointed by the City Commission, is responsible for the operation and management of all departments of city government except those controlled by the other charter officers.

Gainesville’s General fund budget is comprised of \$126 million and the total budget of \$354 million in 2018. That includes the capital project budgeted for the General Funds. The City has 2200 employees but only 1300 report directly to the City Manager, the remaining employees report

Fredrick J. Murry

to the other charter officers. I have approximately 100 employees who I am directly responsible for and six directors that report directly to me.

The three most important issues facing Gainesville are:

1. No new revenues and a slight increase in the real estate values. Fifty-one percent of the taxable properties in the city are off the tax rolls due to state-institutions, nonprofit organizations and churches. The City depends upon a \$35 million budget transfer from the City's Utility Company to maintain and provide services to the public.
2. Aging infrastructure within the City. For many years, City delayed funding to maintain or plan for new facilities for the City. This practice has resulted in a significant amount of deferred maintenance or planning for future facilities.
3. **Disparities within the Communities including Housing, Poverty, Education and Economic Development, Income and Transportation. The City must work with its Community partners to reduce or eliminate these issues impacting Gainesville-Alachua County.**

GENERAL OF MANAGEMENT ISSUE STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

The City of Gainesville is the Employment and Educational Center for North Central Florida. Being the City Manager in Gainesville, Florida excites me because this employment opportunity offers me the opportunity to use my twelve years of experience as Assistant City Manager to help guide the city to another level. I have a familiarity with many issues and concerns that impacts the city and its residence.

My management style is based upon four principles: integrity, accessibility, responsible to the needs of the citizens as well as to my staff and reliability. I believe that a manager should be flexible and adaptable while unyielding to the principles and values of city government. The success of any organization lies with its employees and their ability to perform tasks and accomplish the goals of the citizens as well as the City Commission. I view staff as a Team which I encourage creativity and innovation within the Departments and Divisions

I do believe that some organizations tend to be over managed and under led/or micro- managed. I believe in a participatory approach in managing the organization as well as holding each employee accountable for his or her performance. I delegate authority and responsibility to my team members thus instilling ownership and leadership among the employees within the organization. To maximize teamwork, I do not believe in micro-managing the tasks, although I will use the opportunity to ask the team to look at the projects and tasks from various angles and other point of views. By motivating, challenging and rewarding employees, true teamwork and trust is built

Fredrick J. Murry

which bring about an assurance that the organizational goals and visions are being met within the organization.

Staff would say that I am helpful, respectful, ready to listen and participate in the discussion and/or that I will share information about the organization and the professional principles of management, and that I am trustworthy. Because, I am not appointed and do not report directly to the elected officials, I cannot assert what the City Commission members would say about me. I will say that I have not heard of any negative comments or thoughts expressed directly to me by the elected officials.

I think that my biggest strength is being a listener and a quick learner. My ability to listen has led me to be recognized as someone who trying to get information from on all points-of-view before acting which promote fairness to everyone. I have used this skill to work within the community and provide helpful suggestion in their communication with the City Commission and staff which has led to city staff being able to implement projects and develop community events that met the City as well as residents' needs. I am a quick learner which helps me to be flexible and adoptable to projects and tasks.

I find my biggest weakness is trying to keep a proper balance between work life and personal life. I have no problem in visiting sites and going to community events on the weekends and there are times when I become too focus on my work which lessening my time to relax and enjoy my family and friends and enjoy my hobbies. I am slowly learning to balance the job and the personal life.

In Gainesville, the City Commission has adopted the Blue Ribbon Report which will change how the city will be conducting business. This report talked about how city departments and divisions will conduct business and how it will measure success in reaching these goals and objectives. This report points to this to be citizen centric, it requires the city to redraw its organizations chart so citizens are in the center of this new approach in providing services. New Performance Measures are being developed to match this new Blue Ribbon Report.

I would say that the biggest achievement in Gainesville is the development of the remediation plan for the Cabot Koppers Superfunds site. The City and its community partners had been working for the last 30 plus years in developing a remediation plan that would clean a superfund site within the City. The City worked with its community partners to provide comments and technical information to develop a record of decision for the site with the United States Environmental Protection Department. The Record of Decision was approved in 2011 and a contract between the Department of Justice and Beazer's East, Inc. was reached and Remediation work had been completed on the offsite areas and work now has begun on the on-site property.

I would say that my biggest failure in local government came during the early years of my career. I was assigned to develop a Housing Replacement Program for my city which had to be approved by the City Commission. I worked and developed the program for nearly two years. However, the City Commission would not support the project and the project was not implemented at that time.

Fredrick J. Murry

Later, the project was implemented in the community, after, I had left the City. I learned that the District Commissioner should have been actively involved in the project before the Project was submitted to the City Commission. With the District Commissioner involved in the project, the Project would have been approved and implemented for the district.

At the City of Gainesville, I've had to fire three employees for violating city policy. Before, it lead to this decision, I worked with the Department Director and the Division Director to work with these employees for a lesser disciplinary action. However, all three employees took extreme measures and hired attorneys which resulted in a recommendation to terminate their services once additional information was presented to me. I do not take pleasure in terminating employees but this is a part of the job when rules and behaviors don't support the goals and values of the City.

The challenges that I see facing the new manager are:

1. Reduce or Eliminating the Disparities within the Community by working with the Community partners and the Friendship seven;
2. Develop Affordable Strategies to preserve and provide an array of housing options for the Community including, Housing for the Low income households, supportive and housing for people with disabilities, workforce housing, Senior housing, etc.;
3. Provide and Develop a Funding Strategies to address our aging Facilities;
4. Retain and recruit applicants to consider the City's Employment as Career rather than a job;
5. Develop a Long term Budget Strategy to address current and Future needs,
6. Develop a Communication Plan which includes Citizen Engagement to get Citizen involves in the Local Government
7. Capitalizing on the economic development to assist in helping the City to grow.

Prior to my coming on board, I would like to like to meet with community leaders, community-based organizations and city employees to learn how to improve communications with and how to best communicate with them. I would meet with City Commissioners to identify priorities for upcoming year.

Review the current and future financial strategies to determine how the city should position itself to address its future needs.

In past and current positions, I have had to interact with the local media throughout my career. Gainesville uses social media in various ways. For projects that I was assigned, I worked with the Communication Department and other forms of local media to get information out to the public regarding city projects. However, we must not forget that everyone doesn't use the social media as their main form of communication, particularly our seniors and those without the financial means to purchase computers and smart phones.

I don't foresee anyone contacting the City of Gainesville with negative comments about me.

Fredrick J. Murry

In my spare time, I enjoy reading, photography, fishing, traveling, enjoying family and friends and volunteering in the community.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

- Hardworking
- Broad-minded
- Honest
- Dedicated
- Knowledgeable
- Inclusive of others

REASON FOR DEPARTING CURRENT POSITION

I would like the opportunity to manage the City of Gainesville and believe that I have the skills, knowledge and ability to do so. I believe that I am ready for the next level of challenges and opportunities.

CURRENT/MOST RECENT SALARY

My current compensation at the City of Gainesville is \$155,000.

CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
FREDRICK MURRY**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Record Found
County	
Alachua County, FL	No Record Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Record Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Alachua County, FL	No Record Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Record Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Record Found
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Credit

Excellent

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C. 1681-1681Y, credit and bankruptcy information are very sensitive and should not be used in the consideration of hiring. The information is included for each candidate because we do not want you to be surprised if third parties raise what they consider to be a concern.

**Background Check Summary for
FREDRICK MURRY
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: Fredrick J Murry

The following questions are designed so that we will be able to make full disclosure to our client concerning your background. Please answer them honestly. Cutting corners or misrepresenting your past will result in you being eliminated from all further searches conducted by this firm. We understand that frivolous charges are sometimes made and that charges do not mean you were guilty. We also understand that you may have been wronged and needed to seek compensation. The bottom line is that we want to be certain that our client is fully informed. If you have any questions, please contact us for clarification.

Please explain any yes answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Have you ever been charged or convicted of a felony?
Yes No
2. Have you ever been accused of or have been involved in a domestic violence or abuse incident?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy or been an owner in a business that did so?
Yes No
4. Have you ever been the subject of a civil rights violation complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
5. Have you ever been the subject of a sexual harassment complaint that was investigated or resulted in a lawsuit?
Yes No
6. Have you ever been convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that, if made public, would cause you, our client or our firm embarrassment if it came to light through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No
11. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: 
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 no later than 5:00 PM PST 08/12/19.
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

Since the candidate is an internal candidate, we did not include reference checks.

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Research
FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Gainesville Sun
November 21, 2018

Gainesville’s assistant city manager to resign

Author: Andrew Caplan

Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** has submitted his resignation letter with the city of Gainesville. He has worked for the city for 11 years. **Murry** oversaw contract negotiations and the operation of Grace Marketplace, the city’s homeless shelter in northeast Gainesville. He has also been involved in the city’s ongoing efforts to increase affordability housing.

The oversight of Grace, however, was recently moved under the city’s housing and community development department a few weeks ago. The department is headed by Jacquelin Richardson, who was also part of the shelter contract negotiations.

According to the resignation letter submitted to City Manager Anthony Lyons, **Murry** will leave his role March 1, 2019. His letter didn’t give a reason for his departure. **Murry** did not respond to requests for comment on Wednesday. “I am more than grateful to have had the opportunity of working with such great teams here,” he wrote in his letter. “If I can be of any assistance during this transition, please let me know.”

Murry is one of two assistant city managers under Lyons. Last year, Paul Folkers suddenly resigned from the city, as well. Folkers and **Murry** were both hired in 2007, prior to Lyons’ appointment by the City Commission. Folkers’ replacement was Dan Hoffman, who was hired at an annual salary of \$155,000, about \$16,500 more than **Murry** made. **Murry** was later brought up to the same salary as part of an “equity pay raise.” The difference in pay spurred a complaint from the NAACP.

The city has seen the departures of other high-ranking officials in recent months. Bob Woods, the city’s longtime spokesman, abruptly resigned in August after nearly 20 years with the city. Finance Director Chris Quinn also recently announced he is leaving, too. Quinn was the city’s second finance director since 2017, following the sudden resignation of April Shuping after 12 years. In June, the city’s human resource director was also fired. The position has yet to be filled.

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FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
June 27, 2018

City, county discuss spending to house homeless

Author: Cleveland Tinker

Dilapidated hotels could be part of the solution to reducing homelessness in Alachua County. Providing money in their budgets to pay for housing the homeless, as well as owning and operating low-income housing are a couple of avenues Alachua County and city of Gainesville officials want to explore to reduce homelessness here.

The Alachua County and city of Gainesville commissions earlier this month met to discuss homelessness and government's role in curtailing it. During the discussion, they decided to begin developing budgets to implement a housing-focused model to serve the chronically homeless, which officials say number around 300 in Alachua County.

The housing-focused model is desirable because it costs less keeping a person housed than living outdoors and because it allows officials to provide social services in those homes, among other things, officials say. The housing-focused model will be phased in over a period of years, which will be determined later, with goals and performance measures for each year, officials say. Funding options should include using housing bonds, said City Commissioner Gail Johnson, and both commissions agreed.

Local governments around the nation have had success using housing bonds to provide affordable housing to residents, Johnson said. Housing bonds are debt securities issued by state and local governments to raise money to spend on housing. Led by Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** and Claudia Tuck, director of county Community Support Services, officials will analyze several ideas that might become part of a long-term plan to combat homelessness that will be presented to the commissions in December.

Those ideas include analyzing opportunities to buy apartment complexes and hotels that can be used for affordable housing, creating an incentive program for landlords to rent to the homeless, developing a better emergency housing site that would feature dry pads for tents, staff patrolling and improved hygiene, asking state legislators to urge state officials not to use money from a state fund meant to help pay for affordable housing for other causes and to request the state Legislature mandate that all 67 counties "equitably address funding for the homeless issue."

The Florida Legislature established the Sadowski Affordable Housing Trust Fund about 25 years ago to take revenue generated through doc stamp taxes — the tax on documents such as real estate titles — and save it for assisting with affordable housing. But beginning in 2003, the Legislature began taking money out of the trust fund and using it to shore up other parts of the state budget. The process accelerated during the Great Recession, but the process has continued even as the economy recovered.

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FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Last year, the doc stamp taxes generated about \$292 million for affordable housing trust funds, but more than \$130 million of that was moved to general revenue to balance the budget. That happened every year since 2003, even as the Legislature passed tax cut after tax cut. City and county officials also want the Malcom Randall Veterans Administration Medical Center, North Florida Regional Medical Center, University of Florida Health and UF President Kent Fuchs to appoint a member of their staffs to provide them with information and attend meetings about the issue.

It's going to cost about \$3 million to \$4 million to deal with the issue annually, City Commissioner Harvey Ward said, while suggesting the housing-focused approach discussion include the idea of single-room occupancy — in essence, providing hotel rooms to the homeless. "There are motels around Alachua County that are not in great shape and are barely staying afloat, some of which are abandoned," Ward said. "Maybe we need to look at the city and county owning those, doing some minimal remodeling, rehab and retrofitting, and maybe that's part of the answer. We're only talking about 300 units here. That ought to be solvable."

City and county officials also want their staffs to draft a policy that will govern who is eligible to take advantage of whatever housing model is adopted to serve the homeless. "The residency issue is real," said County Commissioner Mike Byerly.

Homeless people throughout the region will flock to the county if they find out there is no residency requirement, Byerly said. "We've got Williston, Ocala and we've got Palatka, and we have Starke and Lake City and we have communities around here with their own chronic homeless who would not come here for Dignity Village, but if they hear Alachua County is giving away housing, that (coming to Alachua County) will happen."

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
August 12, 2017

City official’s hopeful to improve relationship with county

Author: Andrew Caplan

The county's relations with the city of Gainesville have been strenuous in recent years, with each board haggling over issues like gas tax revenue, a transit facility and a fire-service agreement, some of which resulted in lawsuits against the city. But some say the contentions could soon be resolved.

County commissioners agreed 4-1 to fire County Manager Lee Niblock on Tuesday with Attorney Michele Lieberman serving as interim manager. Some city commissioners said the move shocked them but are hopeful it will help spark a positive change in how the governing boards work together.

On Monday, commissioners will be put to their first test as the two boards meet to discuss several key issues, including the gas tax dispute, which was recently prolonged for another year for the boards to reach an agreement; and who should take over Grace Marketplace, the city's homeless service center, and Dignity Village, a homeless encampment outside Grace Marketplace. "I hope this will lead to better relations between the county and city," City Commissioner David Arreola said. "I like to think any action the county takes will improve our relations."

Commissioner Harvey Budd, who was out of the country when Niblock was fired, shared the same optimism. "I hope the change in management will help solve many of our differences and the city commission will be able to work better together with the county," Budd wrote in a text to The Sun. However, county officials said they don't know how much impact Niblock's firing will have on the boards' future negotiations, since the boards ultimately vote on issues.

Ken Cornell, who chairs the county commission, said he takes responsibility for issues between the city and county, but that a "fresh start" could help. "I think it's always good when elected officials can take to each other and the public," he said. "I'm hopeful with what we did that there can be a fresh start with new leadership from the county."

County Commissioner Robert Hutchinson said it is up to the boards to mend sides, not managers. "I don't think the issue is between staffs," he said. "I think it's between stances from commissioners. (The manager) is reacting to what we are asking him to do." Cornell said he wants the gas tax discussion to include transportation funds that are spent countywide and will wait to hear back from county staff on what taking over Grace Marketplace would entail.

Hutchinson said he requested that Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** send a letter to county officials, inquiring the county's interest in taking over Grace Marketplace. He said a potential solution is having the city receive less money from certain Community Redevelopment Agency

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FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

districts and use the funds for permanent housing. "Funding is the main issue for permanent housing," he said. "I think the math works. I think one of the biggest beefs that the city has with the county could be solved."

City Commissioner Adrian Hayes-Santos said he doesn't care who pays more as long as city residents are getting the best services possible. Because the county has a social service department, he said, it makes sense for the county to take over the homeless facility. "I'm open to any kind of conversation," Hayes-Santos said. "My concern is trying to solve all the problems at once." The joint meeting will take place at 3 p.m. Monday at the county administration building at 12 SE First St., in the Jack Durrance auditorium (Room 209).

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FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
July 12, 2017

City manager accused of skirting policies

Author: Andrew Caplan

The local president of the NAACP has filed a complaint against Gainesville City Manager Anthony Lyons, accusing him of skirting city policies and the city commission when hiring a high-level city staff member. The complaint to the city's Office of Equal Opportunity questions Lyons' decision to hire Assistant City Manager Dan Hoffman, and the process the city followed to make the hire. Lyons said he can't comment until City Auditor Carlos Holt's investigation is complete, sometime next month.

Evelyn Foxx's complaint, filed in early June, contends Lyons has violated city guidelines when selecting the assistant city manager and choosing the search firm that suggested Hoffman's hiring. Foxx said the issues were brought to her attention by former and current city employees. The city paid N2Growth, an executive search firm out of Philadelphia, to scan the country for the best candidate for the assistant city manager role. Hoffman was ultimately recruited for the job and starts work Monday.

In selecting a search firm, Foxx contends, the city did not make a request for proposal (RFP) — a bidding process in which businesses compete against each other to be hired for a service. City spokesman Bob Woods said the city didn't seek requests from companies interested in doing the work when it chose N2Growth, but city policy didn't require it. The city manager has the authority to bypass the RFP process and approve purchasing contracts up to \$50,000. The city had never used N2Growth before the recent search, Finance Director April Shuping said.

City officials agreed to pay the firm \$80,000 to conduct executive searches for three positions: an assistant city manager, a public works director and director of citizen-centered innovation. Each search is listed as a separate contract. The hunt for an assistant city manager cost the city \$30,000, records show, and the other positions cost \$25,000 each. Breaking the searches into three, rather than one, meant Lyons did not have to seek the city commission's permission to spend \$80,000 searching for executives to fill positions.

A typical search for such a position costs the city a few thousand dollars, Human Resources Director Eugenia Allen said, but the price can vary, depending on the position. Foxx contends when the city was considering Hoffman, who worked as chief innovation officer for Montgomery County, Maryland, others considered for the position weren't given a fair shot.

Records show that 165 candidates either applied or were recruited, including three applicants who already worked for the city: Code Enforcement Manager Chris Cooper, Risk Management Director Steve Varvel and Recreation Assistant Stephanie Hazard. Varvel has worked with the city for 27 years. Cooper has been there 11 years. Hazard is a part-time worker, who was hired in 2016.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

According to city policy, up to three in-house candidates must be interviewed for a position, if they apply and meet the minimum requirements. But records show the city's three in-house candidates were deemed not qualified for the position and none got an interview. Among those interviewed by the city were Hoffman, Gia Scruggs, Joseph Gascioch and Almis Udrys. Woods, the city spokesman, said all four were interviewed by phone April 10. Hoffman, however, was the only candidate who confirmed that date.

Scruggs, an administrative service director St. Joseph, Missouri, said she only had a phone interview with city officials and not until late May — well after Hoffman accepted the position May 6. She was the only black woman interviewed for the job. Gascioch, an assistant city manager for Ferndale, Michigan, said he was called April 6 and April 8 after being recruited, but never had an in-person meeting. Udrys, a director of performance and analytics at the city of San Diego, California, did not return The Sun's calls or emails.

Hoffman was the only candidate interviewed in-person. He visited Gainesville April 27 and 28, he said. The city also later reimbursed Hoffman nearly \$2,800 for his travel, hotel and rental car expenses while "house hunting" May 19-21, records show. Records show that the other assistant city manager, **Fred Murry**, until recently earned roughly \$16,500 less than Hoffman, who will make \$155,000 annually. According to the city's human resources department, **Murry** was given an "equity pay raise" to \$155,000 on May 22, a few weeks after Hoffman accepted the job offer.

In June, human resource officials responded to a public records request, saying there were no supporting documents to show how **Murry's** pay raise came about. City policy calls for supporting paperwork to trigger a review if the raise represents more than a 10 percent pay jump. On July 5, Allen, the city's human resources director, provided documentation that showed paperwork for **Murry's** 12 percent raise was filed June 1.

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(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Gainesville Sun, The (FL)
November 1, 2016

Consultants' plan aims to move homeless from Dignity Village

Author: Andrew Caplan

The Alachua County commission heard a presentation Tuesday to shut down Dignity Village, bulldoze and transform the landscape and place homeless people into housing. The Alachua County Commission heard a presentation Tuesday urging officials to shut down Dignity Village, bulldoze and transform the landscape and place homeless people into housing. Dignity Village is a homeless camp of tents and makeshift shelters next to Grace Marketplace, which has meals and support services for the homeless.

The plan, based on a report from OrgCode Consulting, pushes for homeless officials to focus primarily on getting people into permanent housing. The plan would restrict re-entry into the village, no matter the reason for leaving, and have homeless officials ban programming that has nothing to do with the housing process, such as Bible studies, Alcoholics Anonymous and job training, for a quicker transition.

Gainesville's assistant city manager, **Fred Murry**, said the overhaul of Dignity Village could take about a year, and other shelters would be affected, too. "It is a paradigm shift from where we used to be, to where we're going," **Murry** said. The Ontario-based consulting firm suggested the homeless initiative would be paid for largely by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and local funding could also provide property owners incentives for accepting low-income tenants.

Although the costs for the strategy in Alachua County are unknown, the county's director of community support services, Claudia Tuck, said the national average for four to six months of assistance per person is around \$4,800. Tuck said landlords would have guaranteed rent money each month. She said the new direction is more of a shift in policy for local officials to be in unison when addressing the homeless issue.

According to the OrgCode report, 21.6 percent of Alachua County's 260,000 residents live in poverty, yet only a "small fraction" of those in poverty are homeless. A person working full-time hours at minimum wage earns just shy of \$1,300 a month, the report states. The average rent here is \$883 and exceeds what is affordable to someone living on Social Security. Tuck said homeless people would be handled on a case-by-case basis and would have three main requirements when going into housing: agree to work with case managers, sign and abide by a lease and pay rent with a portion of one's income — no matter the source.

Tuck said in an interview she knows the transition from sleeping outside to inside a house won't be as easy for all. She has heard of situations where people made the change, but still slept on their porch. "It's an adjustment," Tuck said. But in areas where this approach is followed "85 to 90 percent remained housed for long periods of time." While shelters would take significant

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steps toward housing placement, people being housed would receive assistance (welfare, sobriety, job training, etc.) afterward.

Chairman Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson said several homeless people have come to him personally alleging crimes of abuse and corruption at Dignity Village. He said he fears those complaints haven't been taken seriously by others. "I get the sense when they talk to us that we have no answers to give whatsoever," Hutchinson said. "To me, that's not really fair." The strategy is preliminary and is subject to change due to community needs, **Murry** said. "This isn't a plan that's in concrete," he said.

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The Gainesville Sun
December 1, 2015

UF students share long term-vision for Dignity Village

Author: Christopher Curry

From the day Grace Marketplace opened in May 2014, tents began to pop up around its perimeter. Over the next several months, the Dignity Village homeless camp developed piecemeal just outside the shelter and social services center. Now, a group of University of Florida urban planning and landscape architecture students have recommended a long-term master plan they say will help the property function more like a true campground, while increasing resources for those seeking to transition out of homelessness.

Unveiled at the Grace Marketplace chapel Tuesday afternoon, the plan calls for 240 individual camp sites, each with a 15-by-15 foot tent pad, in six separate zones. Their proposal included 48 Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant sites, utilities such as water and electricity, bathhouse buildings for showers and restrooms, and paths through the site to allow police and emergency vehicles to move through more easily. It also recommended better security lighting, grading the land and digging retention ponds to combat standing water and flooding problems, a community garden, more native plants and an additional access point to Grace Marketplace, which is separated from the campground by a long stretch of fence.

Jessica Leonard, who was part of the site design team for the project, said the goal was to make Dignity Village “a more livable space.” The students' presentation did not include a cost estimate for the recommended improvements to the area, which the city of Gainesville manages and oversees. But Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said after the presentation that city officials have discussed the need for a long-term plan for the property and will consider the students' recommendations when one is created. “When we opened Grace we had some unintended consequences and one of those unintended consequences was we had people move in on the outside before we really got organized,” **Murry** said.

Richard H. Schneider, a UF professor emeritus in urban and regional planning, said the project was a way to get university students and faculty more involved with volunteering and assisting with the operation and future of Grace Marketplace and Dignity Village. The recommendations weren't limited to site improvements. They also include better transportation by increasing Gainesville Regional Transit System bus service or using Uber or a shuttle service. They suggested limiting the amount of time a person may stay at Dignity Village and using incentives to increase the volunteer work done by those who stay there.

One suggestion was to extend the amount of time a person may stay if they volunteer consistently. Peter Michaels, another UF student, said volunteer work could also help with landing a job by “training through involvement.” To help move people out of homelessness, another recommendation called for individual case management. The UF students also recommended creating a community engagement coordinator position to increase cooperation

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among the charities and social service agencies that help people at Grace and Dignity Village and to attract more such help. They said that person could also work to secure more food donations from grocery stores and restaurants and establish food “drop off” locations, so businesses making donations would not have to send workers on the sometimes-lengthy trek out to Northeast 39th Avenue.

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The Gainesville Sun
August 6, 2015

New rules in store for homeless camp residents

Author: Jeff Schweers

Gainesville officials will begin implementing new rules for living in Dignity Village in two weeks, once they've had a chance to explain them to residents living in the homeless camp that has pitched itself next to the city's Grace Marketplace center. The homeless center's oversight board voted unanimously Wednesday to adopt the rules, even as they expressed reservations that some of the more stringent rules might chase people away and defeat the purpose of having a city-regulated campsite. “We will pass out information over the next two weeks through peer leaders, post the rules on message boards and begin to enforce them around Aug. 15-16,” Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said.

The rules were drafted in conjunction with the city commission's July 16 decision to take over management of Dignity Village instead of hiring an outside vendor to do it. The city decided to take on management duties after Helping Hands Clinic backed out of negotiations to run the place. The plan is to hire a full-time project manager and two police officers — at a cost of about \$221,000 over the current \$560,000 budget the city and county contribute in equal measure. The oversight board has agreed to help raise the money, **Murry** said. The oversight board will discuss fundraising strategies when it meets Sept. 9.

A little more than a year after Grace Marketplace opened, the homeless camp has grown to anywhere from 150 to 250 people, raising all sorts of health and safety concerns. A July 14 dust-up at Dignity Village that happened when Gainesville police tried to serve a warrant resulted in two officers and at least one camp resident being taken to the hospital. “Our hope is to create a community out there,” City Commissioner Todd Chase said. Under the newly adopted operating procedures, the city will build a fence around the campsite, which will have a limit of 258 residents. The city will provide 18 campsite clusters equipped with access to water, portable toilets, trash cans and a communal fire pit. At last count there were 158 residents, but volunteers said the population could be around 170, **Murry** said. There were 225 tents, down from 252 in May — a 10 percent drop.

Potential residents must check in with a Dignity Village manager, complete a basic welcome form, provide some form of identification and proof of age and undergo a background check. If they pass, they'll be issued a 90-day permit for a specific campsite. No person younger than 18, with an active arrest warrant, or registered as a sex offender or predator will be issued a permit. No weapons or illegal drugs will be allowed in the camp. Only people 21 or older can have alcohol, and only within their designated campsite. The city is imposing a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. quiet time. Dogs are allowed in designated areas and must be licensed. “Each one of these rules could drive more people outside the (Dignity Village) fence,” County Commissioner Mike Byerly said. If the rules push people out, Byerly said, then the city will have created another situation. “It

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feels like a third ring of habitation is needed, as an alternative to the woods and trespassing,” Byerly said. “People don't want to comply with rules.”

County Commissioner Robert “Hutch” Hutchinson wondered whether it made sense to not allow registered sex offenders and predators. “These people have to live somewhere.” He also was uncertain whether the city had the authority to ban guns under state law that prohibits local governments from passing gun regulations. Assistant City Manager Sean McDermott said the statute is a broad preemption of firearm regulations by local governments, but they are allowed to enact codes about whether weapons can be brought onto municipal property. “These are the rules as we have them today, and can change as necessary, but these are the rules the city is going forward with,” **Murry** said.

Former University of Florida President Bernie Machen, the community member of the oversight board, said the city should allow itself some flexibility in changing the rules if they're not working. “Don't let a good idea sit on the table for three months,” he said. Board members also discussed whether the homeless center should remain a transitional community, offering services to help the homeless find jobs and permanent housing, or at some point look at providing some permanent housing. “This is a complex issue for the community,” City Commissioner Helen Warren said.

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The Gainesville Sun
July 22, 2015

Habitat dedicates home built by women

Author: Aida Mallard

The dream of home ownership is now a reality for Gainesville resident Lisa Brooks and her family, thanks to Alachua Women Build, a chapter of Alachua Habitat for Humanity. Brooks and four of her six children received possession of their new home in the Sugarhill neighborhood in southeast Gainesville last Tuesday evening during the Habitat Lisa Brooks Family Home Dedication, the "125th Home Built Celebration." After the celebration, Brooks and her children began the two-day process of moving into their new home. The Brooks' home is the 125th Habitat home built since 1986 and the eighth by Women Build since 1995. Women Build is a national effort to build homes that are funded and constructed by women.

Kristine Thompson, family services director at Habitat, said Brooks and her children worked on Saturdays for eight months alongside nearly 200 volunteers from Alachua Women Build, who donated more than 4,000 hours. "She wanted a home, and she earned every bit of it," Thomas said. Brooks had nothing but praise for the women who helped to build her home. "Women Build is a group of women that have showed me and my family love," Brooks said. "They are a group of women you just can't replace."

Scott Winzeler, executive director of Alachua Habitat, welcomed the more than 70 residents attending the dedication at the home at 1761 SE Fourth St. The Brooks family was introduced by Cheryl Kays, chairwoman of the Women Build Steering Committee, and Ben Phillips, a member of the Alachua Habitat Board of Directors, presented the family with a Bible and an afghan. Books for the children were presented by Blake Hakimian, president of the University of Florida chapter of Habitat for Humanity. Brooks' pastor, the Dr. LaShon Young, pastor of Victory Temple Ministries, blessed the home and praised Brooks for being "consistent in adversity."

Sponsors of the home included Hugh Dailey, CEO/president of Community Bank and Trust, which donated \$50,000 for the construction of the home, and **Fred Murry**, assistant city manager for the city of Gainesville, which donated the property. "We're happy to be a part of Habitat for Humanity keeping the dream of ownership alive," **Murry** said. Keith Perry of Perry Roofing, which has installed the roof in about 30 Habitat homes and provided the labor, said he believes in Habitat's mission because the homeowners invest their time to learn the process of homeownership and they also provide sweat equity. He said through the process, Brooks' children have learned valuable lessons about saving money and responsibility. "Her children learn from her and benefit greatly," Brooks said. "She has set an example of financial responsibility in real terms, which is not taught in school."

Brooks, a Regional Transit System bus driver and the single mom of six children ages 10, 11, 13, 16, 20 and 22, said her four younger children live at home with her. She said her dream has always been to provide her children with adequate shelter in a safe neighborhood with lots of

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love. And now, her dream is realized. The 1,250-square-foot house has a good-sized front yard and a huge back yard and consists of a front porch, four bedrooms, two bathrooms, a living room, kitchen and laundry room, walk-in closets, appliances and landscaping. To prepare for homeownership, Brooks had to take classes on such topics as home maintenance, finances, property taxes and home evaluation. She also was required to provide 400 hours of sweat equity, which consisted of 100 hours of community service, 100 hours of work on someone else's Habitat home and 200 hours of work on her own home.

Haydee Britton, a University of Florida professor and Women Build volunteer, said she worked alongside Brooks' children and they were focused and dedicated to complete their task. She said 10-year-old Diamond helped her paint doors and 12-year-old Tyler helped to install hinges on doors. "The commitment was amazing," Britton said. "The children came, too, and they wanted to learn. Working on their home gave them a sense of 'this is mine. I worked on it.' "

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The Gainesville Sun
July 22, 2015

City votes to take control of Dignity Village

Author: Morgan Watkins

After months of talking about the need to manage Dignity Village, the Gainesville City Commission voted last Thursday to take responsibility — at least in the short term — for the ever-growing homeless campsite that's adjacent to the city's homeless center. The decision came after the commission considered a few recommendations from the oversight board for the homeless center last Thursday, including increasing the budget for Grace Marketplace next fiscal year and having one vendor — possibly the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry, which runs Grace — manage the homeless center as well as Dignity Village. "They are at once completely separate and completely intertwined," Jon DeCarmine, the coalition's operations director, said about Dignity Village and Grace Marketplace.

After a few hours of debate, the commission voted unanimously late last Thursday to direct the city manager to implement rules for Dignity Village in counsel with various stakeholders and to seek a vendor to manage the campsite within 90 days. The city will now be responsible for Dignity Village and already has drafted rules that have been drawn up, Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** told The Sun. They'll check in with stakeholders to get input about the rules first and then implement them soon.

The debate last Thursday evening over the oversight board's recommendations centered on the need to manage Dignity Village and implement rules there. Commissioners pointed out that they aren't going to solve the issues facing Grace Marketplace and Dignity Village overnight, but they did have ideas about how they could take immediate action and what their approach should be. Commissioner Todd Chase said he thought it will affect the coalition's ability to be successful at Grace Marketplace if it is asked to manage Dignity Village, too. "I believe now that the organization that should run Dignity Village for the next year is an organization called the city of Gainesville," he said. "I believe that we need to step up and possibly hire somebody who does this and only this."

The city recently negotiated with the Helping Hands Clinic to potentially manage Dignity Village, but the organization decided against it. There was talk last Thursday of issuing a request for proposals for a vendor to manage Dignity Village, but Mayor Ed Braddy — echoing Chase — said he wants the city to take responsibility for the homeless campsite. Later on, the city can bring in a vendor to take over that responsibility if they wish, he explained. "We cannot maintain the status quo for six weeks until we receive bids and get them evaluated and get a contract drawn up and signed," Braddy said. "We don't have six weeks on this, we really don't."

City Manager Russ Blackburn also said he believes Dignity Village needs to be managed with rules today, while Gainesville Police Chief Tony Jones said he wants Dignity Village to be a safe and enjoyable community, but to do that they are going to need rules. Chase advocated for

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funding a position at the city for someone who would focus on Dignity Village rather than selecting an outside vendor. "I am still searching for the dignity in Dignity Village," local resident Barbara Sharpe said during public comment after saying it has become another Tent City.

Another woman took issue with Braddy's comments during the meeting regarding his concerns that people who aren't from this area are flocking to Dignity Village. "We're not bad people. Just the way we fall short and become homeless, each and every one of y'all can fall short and be in the same predicament. I am trying to be a productive citizen," she said. "Yes, I did leave another state and come here because sometimes you need change." There are people who come here from different states "that might need you, mayor," she told Braddy. "We're human beings no matter where we come from."

As for the proposed increase in Grace Marketplace's budget for next fiscal year, the commission voted 4-3, with Braddy and Commissioners Harvey Budd and Charles Goston Sr. in dissent, to approve contributing the city's share of the budget that the oversight board recommended. Theresa Lowe, the coalition's executive director, told The Sun the County Commission hasn't yet approved its share of the funding. The city and Alachua County government equally share the responsibility for funding Grace Marketplace. For the current fiscal year, the county and city each contributed \$279,840 for a total budget of \$559,680.

The oversight board, however, recommended funding a fiscal year 2016 budget of almost \$780,800 — an increase of around \$221,100. **Murry**, the assistant city manager, said the actual expenditure rate would stay at the current level for next fiscal year (which begins Oct. 1), while the additional \$221,100 in the new budget would be considered a contingency fund. The oversight board would assist the coalition in attempting to fundraise that roughly \$221,100, **Murry** said. Including that additional money in the budget from the get-go, however, ensures the dollars will be there if the coalition's fundraising falls short.

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The Gainesville Sun
January 15, 2015

Water lines, roads around Koppers to get work

Author: Morgan Watkins

The Gainesville City Commission on Thursday approved using money from a settlement with Beazer East to pay for repaving roads and replacing water lines in the area that surrounds the Koppers Superfund site. The Koppers site, which for decades was home to a wood treatment plant, has been on the federal Superfund list for 30 years. It is situated north of Northwest 23rd Avenue to the west of North Main Street. Although it will be several more years before the on-site cleanup there is complete, dozens of nearby homes were rid of contaminated soil and got new landscaping as part of an off-site remediation effort that was concluded late last year.

The agreement between the city and Beazer East was made to settle the city's claim regarding funds it had spent to ensure that the remedy the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency selected for the Koppers site adequately protects Gainesville's drinking water supply. The settlement agreement has a total value of about \$945,000, including in-kind services as well as a cash payout totaling \$674,500, according to the meeting agenda. The staff proposed using the settlement funds to repave some roads as well as to replace galvanized steel water lines in the remediated part of the Stephen Foster Neighborhood.

Several water lines in that area were originally installed back when the neighborhood was first built, and replacing them is expected to help improve water pressure and to save Gainesville Regional Utilities from needing to replace them sometime in the future, according to the agenda. The estimated cost for the planned road repaving is \$424,500 and the cost of the water line replacement is expected to be \$250,000 for a total of \$674,500 in funding — the same as the cash payout from the agreement with Beazer East. "I think this is something we need to do," Commissioner Randy Wells said Thursday. The commission unanimously voted in favor of using the settlement money on the proposed projects, although Commissioner Lauren Poe was absent.

Commissioners also discussed having future talks about other potential ways to reinvest in the area near the Koppers property. Robert Pearce, president of the Stephen Foster Neighborhood Association, told The Sun he was grateful for the City Commission's decision Thursday. "The City Commission's decision to allocate these settlement funds toward making infrastructure improvements significantly contributes toward improving the general living conditions in that neighborhood," he said. The commission also approved entering into a 50-year license agreement with the Florida Department of Agriculture Thursday for the use of property the state owns that is adjacent to the city's Empowerment Center.

The city owns the Empowerment Center campus, which is located off Northeast 39th Avenue and houses Gainesville's homeless center, known as Grace Marketplace, on the former Gainesville Correctional Institution property. It doesn't, however, own the adjacent property,

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totaling about 10 acres, where many homeless people have been camping. The state Department of Agriculture doesn't have a problem with the homeless camps being there but does want to enter into a license agreement covering the use of the property, according to the meeting agenda. Prior to this agreement, some of the liability for that land fell on the city and some fell on the state, said Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry**. With the agreement in place, the city will assume all liability for that property. **Murry** told The Sun the city now plans to develop guidelines for the use of those 10 acres as well.

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The Gainesville Sun
October 4, 2014

Homeless shelter scrambles to cut its expenses

Author: Morgan Watkins

With Grace Marketplace running on a monthly deficit of about \$15,000, the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry and the city of Gainesville are working out how best to tackle this financial predicament. Jon DeCarmine, operations director for the coalition, says they're considering their options and looking at how they can run things more efficiently now that they have some breathing room. From the moment the coalition first got the keys to the homeless center, located at the former Gainesville Correctional Institution, on April 17, it has been focused on getting the operation off the ground, DeCarmine said. The center opened by early May and expanded services on June 1 before turning its attention to getting the indoor shelter, which opened this week, up and running. "So from the inception, we have been hustling from one set of start-up issues to another, and we're only now at a point where we can sit back and start to do a little bit more long-term planning," DeCarmine said. There were expenses the coalition didn't anticipate initially, he said. The utility costs in particular turned out to be much higher than expected. The coalition had estimated utilities would cost about \$25,000 a year, according to a report DeCarmine provided to The Sun. For its current fiscal year 2015 budget, that figure has soared to \$96,000. The coalition had hoped the utilities would total a little over \$2,000 a month, but with old buildings, poor energy efficiency and old equipment, it's costing the coalition much more than that, he said. The coalition's actual utility costs now total between \$6,000 and \$8,000 a month.

The coalition closed the chapel on the Grace Marketplace campus this week in order to reduce some of those expenses, and DeCarmine said the coalition would like the city to consider taking over the majority of the utility costs until the shelter gets on its feet. The coalition also has agreed to pay the city a common area maintenance charge, or CAM charge, based on the square footage of the buildings it uses. Right now, the CAM charge, excluding utility costs, covers the landscaping work the city does, he said. But the coalition has asked for permission to have volunteers mow the lawn instead to save money. Fundraising also has been a challenge for the coalition. "Some of the grants and cash that we were planning on have not come through yet, so where we are today is in a position where we need some more time to develop other funding sources," DeCarmine said. For projects of this size and scope, it's common to have some delays and to have to revise the plan, DeCarmine said. "To think that everything we put on paper was going to be this rigid set of operating guidelines is not realistic," he said.

The city of Gainesville has a contract with the coalition that details how Grace Marketplace will be funded and operated. The city and Alachua County governments have allocated \$154,000 each for a total of \$308,000 in funding for the fiscal year, although the contract itself notes that this level of funding is insufficient to manage and run a robust homeless center. Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said the city recognized \$308,000 was only a portion of what would be needed to operate the homeless center, but the understanding from the get-go was that the

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coalition would need to supplement that money with funding from other sources. "We've always envisioned that this was going to be a partnership," he said. The city and coalition have been meeting regularly about the financial situation and aim to come up with a proposal before the newly formed oversight advisory board for the homeless center meets on Oct. 15, **Murry** said. Despite the financial issues that have arisen, **Murry** said the coalition has done a lot of good so far. "I think they've made impacts in our community, and they've made an impact on people's lives," he said.

County Commissioner Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson, who is on the oversight advisory board, says he plans to request that the county use some of the carry-forward balance it should receive in November to address Grace Marketplace's deficit. The carry-forward balance comes from the constitutional officers and county departments that have unspent money from the prior fiscal year. Hutchinson also said he thinks the coalition has not yet rolled out its own fundraising plan to his satisfaction — something he said he would like to see improve. "I know there's more funding out there. What I am very impressed with is the amount of volunteerism and (the) contributions of material and food — that, I think, is exceeding everybody's expectations," Hutchinson said. "But the contributions of just raw cash have not." Fundraising for nonprofits is extremely competitive in this community, so you can't sit back and hope the money rolls in, Hutchinson said. The coalition needs a major gift campaign where it inspires large donors to write large checks, he said. Despite the current fiscal challenges, Hutchinson emphasized the importance of recognizing everything that the coalition has achieved in a matter of months. "It's a very structured society that they're building out there, and I think most people would be very impressed if they knew the wisdom that the homeless coalition was bringing to this," he said.

City Commissioner Todd Chase, who also sits on the oversight board for the homeless center, said he too is willing to provide additional funding to help the coalition in the short term. He said he just couldn't imagine getting to this point and not doing what is needed to ensure the homeless center's success. Chase said he was most worried about the coalition's recent decision to close the outdoor pavilion where many people had been sleeping in order to save costs and alleviate pressure on the organization's staff, which must supervise the pavilion day and night if it's open. However, the City Commission voted Thursday to authorize the city to use some money from a prior settlement with business park owner Ropen Nalbandian to keep the pavilion open for at least a month. As a result, about \$250,000, which is sent to the city in increments of \$50,000, will be designated to be used for the homeless center, Chase said. The city met with a coalition representative Friday and agreed to move forward with the plan to keep the pavilion open for another 30 days. Chase said the most important thing is for everyone involved to present a unified voice about what they're trying to achieve rather than engage in finger-pointing.

This is a time to reassess and change course a little, Chase said, adding that he hopes all the involved parties can rally together and agree on providing a scope of services that won't overstretch their ability to pay for it. But there has to be support from the community at large as well, not just from local government, he said. "You know, ultimately the Grace Marketplace is not going to survive if there's not strong support from our community," Chase said.

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The Gainesville Sun
November 13, 2013

Homeless center becoming reality

Author: Aida Mallard

Eight years in the making and barring any unforeseen circumstances, a homeless assistance center is expected to become a reality when — on Tuesday — the city of Gainesville takes possession of the closed Gainesville Correctional Institution. Bob Woods, communication manager for the city of Gainesville, said in 2005, the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness was adopted and it has taken eight years to agree on a location. "It's been a long road to get to this point," said Woods, in a telephone interview on Tuesday. "We've reached consensus and now we need community conversations to create a future vision."

Woods said the site will need a name and the city will be holding meetings to solicit input from the public for a name that will represent the community's vision for the site. He said some in the community are referring to it as a homeless assistance center and others in the community are calling it a community empowerment center. **Fred Murry**, assistant city manager, said on Nov. 19, the city is expected to take possession of the closed property at 2845 NE 39th Ave. **Murry** provided a PowerPoint presentation/overview of homeless services during the November meeting of the Black on Black Crime Task Force held last Wednesday at the Kirby Smith Center. "This is a long-term project," **Murry** said. "but we can't do it without your vision. We want to take it from prison to pride."

Woods said the city is paying \$1.4 million for the property, which includes 98 acres for conservation and 30.5 acres with 15 buildings to be used for a homeless center that will also provide services to the community as well. The purchase also includes an access road from NE 39th Avenue. Woods said organizations and individuals have been invited to submit proposals to administer and implement services for homeless persons at the proposed center. The deadline for submitting proposals is Nov. 19 and the bid will be awarded on Dec. 5.

Woods said the city also is reviewing applications for an interim project coordinator, who will coordinate daily activities until a vendor can start providing services at the center. Woods said there are three buildings that can be ready for interim services, such as intake/case management and serving two meals per day starting in December or January. Woods said the Request for Proposals includes suggestions of services to be offered at the center. "We're saying these are the services we would like to see, but we're not telling the vendors what to do," Woods said. "Services will grow overtime in a phased process." "The property is suitable for a campus-style facility, expected to be self-contained," Woods said. "We don't expect anything but a minimum impact to the neighborhood." "Our goal is to make this a national showcase," said Woods, adding that the vision is to have a site that provides more than a site for a homeless center, but also provides long-term services to the community at large, such as education, job skills and job search, and other opportunities.

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Theresa Lowe, executive director of the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry Inc., said the coalition will be submitting a proposal for the operation of the homeless assistance center. The coalition is a non-profit agency that provides services to homeless and low-income residents in Alachua County.

Lowe said there are three buildings that only need cleaning and minor repairs, and those buildings could be used right away to provide homeless residents with intake and case management, two ready-meals per day, a place where they could get their mail, and storage for their belongings so they don't have to carry them on their backs all day. On the grounds, there is a restroom and a covered pavilion that can be used right away, too. "In the meantime, the other buildings can be renovated as funding becomes available," said Lowe, adding that there are four buildings the city will be repairing to allow for more services to be provided. She thinks those buildings could be used for a library/computer center, a kitchen/cafeteria, a laundry room, a dormitory, and a restroom/shower facility.

Lowe also doesn't think the center will have a negative impact on the neighborhood. She said the center will be self-contained. To access the center, Lowe said the homeless population at the Bo Diddley Downtown Plaza would probably walk along Waldo Road and NE 39th Avenue or take the RTS bus. "Hopefully, people serving food (for the homeless) at the plaza will agree to serve the meals at the center," Lowe said.

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The Gainesville Sun
January 8, 2013

Gainesville’s interim CRA director departs

Author: Christopher Curry

Gainesville again is searching for a Community Redevelopment Agency director after the departure of interim Director Kelly Huard Fisher. Fisher resigned because her family is moving to the Cleveland area. Her last day was Thursday. Fisher started with the CRA in February 2007. She was the project coordinator for neighborhood planning prior to being named interim director in November 2011, after former Director Anthony Lyons left for a job in Idaho.

After a search for a new permanent director, City Manager Russ Blackburn decided in April to keep Fisher in place so she could gain more experience and potentially become the permanent director. At the Dec. 17 CRA meeting, city commissioners praised Fisher for effectively running CRA and seeing through projects after Lyons departed. City spokesman Bob Woods said Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** now will serve as the interim CRA head while the city commences a new search for a permanent director.

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The Gainesville Sun
December 10, 2011

City will consider installing red-light cameras

Author: Chad Smith

While cities from Houston to Los Angeles have taken down their intersection cameras in recent months, Gainesville city commissioners on Thursday will vote on whether to install their own and join the roughly 500 communities across the country that electronically monitor red-light runners. The commission will be voting on a five-year contract that, if approved, would trigger the installation of cameras in the coming months at about five of the busiest intersections in town, the goal being to cut down on traffic crashes and, of course, red-light running.

Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said the deal is “cost-neutral” in that if the city's revenue from the tickets isn't enough to pay the monthly fees to the contractor, the city won't owe anything. According to the contract, the city would pay Gatso USA, a Beverly, Mass.-based company that runs a similar program in Daytona Beach among other cities, up to \$4,750 per intersection per month. Per state law, violators caught by the cameras — or, more precisely, the owner of the vehicle cited — would be fined \$158, with \$75 of that going to the city, but no points would be assessed on the driver's license. (Conversely, a motorist ticketed by an officer for running a red light is fined \$252 and given four points on their license.) So for the city to see revenue from the program, each camera would have to issue at least 64 tickets in a month in order to get past the \$4,750 mark.

Murry reiterated what officials have said throughout the discussion of the issue — that the city is not pursuing the cameras for the revenue. “There is really a safety issue for us — to make the public aware that when they get to the intersection, they need to slow down and stop,” he said. Commissioner Todd Chase, who wasn't on the City Commission when it unanimously gave staff the go-ahead to negotiate the contract in March, said he believes money isn't the motivating factor. “I still think it's hard to ignore the fact that it could appear that way,” he said last week, adding that he was leaning toward voting against the measure for a host of reasons, including some discrepancy as to whether the cameras make intersections safer.

Even some cities that have endorsed the cameras have backtracked. Last month, the City Council in Albuquerque, N.M., voted to get rid of its program after 53 percent of voters answered a ballot question that they didn't want it, the Albuquerque Journal reported. Last year, the City Council of Brooksville in Hernando County voted to get rid of its five-camera program after public support waned and a state law passed that would curb its revenue, the St. Petersburg Times reported. However, in October, the council voted to reinstate its program and install cameras at 20 intersections, the Times reported. Chase pointed to the growing number of cities unplugging their cameras as a sign it's not a good idea for Gainesville. “I have a hard time believing that this is what the people want,” Chase said. “People are bringing these things to court and they are bogging down the judicial system, and they are costing the cities a lot of money to defend.”

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Murry said if the commission approves the contract, city staff would review accident data and determine the intersections where the cameras would be installed. **Murry** said if the Legislature decides to outlaw red-light cameras, as a bill that died last year would have done, the city wouldn't be on the hook financially. The contract also states that drivers turning right on a red would not be ticketed, at least at first. There is a provision for allowing the city to start enforcing right-on-red infractions, like rolling stops, if it wants.

However, state law currently says that a “traffic citation may not be issued for failure to stop at a red light if the driver is making a right-hand turn in a careful and prudent manner at an intersection where right-hand turns are permissible.” All infractions would be reviewed by a certified city staff member, possibly a police or code-enforcement officer, before being mailed out, **Murry** said. The tickets can be appealed in court, and a number of them have been overturned around the state.

In Daytona Beach, an attorney has challenged and beaten a number of the tickets by questioning whether the system has been tested for accuracy, The Daytona Beach News-Journal reported earlier this year. Like Chase, Commissioner Thomas Hawkins has his own concerns but wasn't sure how he would vote. Hawkins said he is worried about the consequences of adding a for-profit company to the public-safety equation that is currently “just between us and our police department and our constituents.” “That creates a pot for lobbying and for interest. I don't have any concrete reason to be concerned about it. As far as I know it's a reputable company,” he said. “We're creating a system where the intentions might not all be pure.”

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The Gainesville Sun
July 5, 2010

Koppers e-mail was a false alarm

Author: Chris Curry and Chad Smith

On Thursday afternoon, Gainesville Mayor Craig Lowe got an alarming e-mail. "BLDG DEMOLITION ON SUPERFUND SITE TODAY...RESIDENTS OUTRAGED," the subject line screamed. The e-mail was from Sandra Watts Kennedy, the president of the Stephen Foster Neighborhood Association, who was reporting that residents had witnessed workers in hazmat suits demolishing buildings on the Cabot-Koppers Superfund site. "NO PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES were visibly taken," wrote Kennedy, one of the plaintiffs in the \$500 million lawsuit against the companies deemed responsible for the site's cleanup. "Local speculation regarding the nature of the corporate giant's unannounced actions over the last two weeks is understandably widespread." City and Alachua County inspectors went to the site soon after getting the e-mail and found no sign of any work going on, Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said at the end of the City Commission's meeting Thursday. "We have not been able to determine whether work was being done on the site," **Murry** said. While the property owner and one of the defendants in the suit, Pittsburgh-based Beazer East, has applied for demolition permits for structures left over from the former wood-treatment plant, city spokesman Bob Woods said none had been granted yet.

When reached for comment, Mitchell Brouman, Beazer East's senior environmental manager, said no work was being done. "There's nothing going on out there," Brouman said. "I don't know what they're talking about." On Thursday evening, Kennedy said she had received a number of phone calls and e-mails about demolition going on. "It was alarming, and I really needed to create some form of communication that would get some kind of reaction," she said. It sure did. Kennedy's e-mail is a sign of the mistrust some residents near the Superfund site have of both Beazer East and local agencies. "WHERE are our government agencies- Federal, State and Local?" she wrote to Lowe. " Who is allowing this activity (sic) to take place? Where are You?" Because of the sensitivity of the issue, **Murry** said he didn't think the company would engage in any illegal demolition. But Kennedy is more skeptical, even if nothing was going on Thursday. "They need to be honest with us," she said. "They need to take the time to tell us what is actually going on." COUNTY FIRE FUNDING: Alachua County commissioners will discuss the possibility of a new hybrid funding option for the fire department during a Tuesday afternoon meeting. It would involve moving forward with the establishment of a fire assessment but setting rates at 25 percent of the amount recommended in a consultant's study. The property tax for the Municipal Services Taxing Unit now funding fire services would then stay in place but the rates would be reduced by a little less than 14 percent - from about \$1.18 of tax for every \$1,000 of taxable value to \$1.02. Tuesday's discussion also will include a detailed look at the effect budget cuts will have on the department, as well as other options for the MSTU and assessment. The meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. Formal votes on property tax rates and the assessment are scheduled for July 13.

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The Independent Florida Alligator
June 8, 2010

Homeless get turned away after 130-meal limit

Author: Jordan Diaz

Praying won't get you a free meal if you're the 131st person in line at the St. Francis House. The Gainesville ordinance, which caps the number of free meals at homeless shelters, was criticized again by residents at Thursday's City Commission meeting. The city threatened on April 2, 2009, to shut down the St. Francis House, a homeless shelter and soup kitchen in downtown Gainesville, if it did not begin complying with the city code's section concerning soup kitchens, which limits the number of daily meals to 130. This made social workers and local church members question the reasoning behind the strict enforcement of the ordinance.

Miriam Elliott, who used to work at St. Francis, said she was saddened by the city forcing the shelter to lock its doors while it still has food to serve. Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** listed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, the Salvation Army and Arbor House, a facility for homeless, pregnant women, as potential options for those who are turned away from food by the 130-meal limit. Elliott, who now works at Arbor House, said the Arbor House is not open to the public and does not give out meals. The house's residents, who are single mothers and pregnant women, use food stamps.

She also said the Salvation Army begins service at 4:30 p.m. while the meals at St. Francis are served at noon, which would make one wait for more than four hours to be fed. The issue of meal limits have been debated since early 2009 when the city began enforcing the 1993 city code amendment, which limits the number of daily meals a shelter could provide, restricts certain areas from providing meals or shelter and caps the number of people who could stay the night at a shelter, according to the commission meeting's agenda. The City Commission approved a petition on Feb. 18 to lift the meal limit on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and one additional day to be determined by the shelter.

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The Gainesville Sun
February 19, 2010

1 year, \$165K later, nothing cooking at Mom's Kitchen
Gainesville bought the property with the hopes of revitalizing the area.
Author: Chad Smith

A year ago today, the Gainesville City Commission voted 4-3 to purchase the shuttered Mom's Kitchen restaurant on Northwest Fifth Avenue for \$165,000, nearly double the taxable assessed value of the property. At the time, the city said the purchase was necessary to help revitalize the surrounding neighborhood by rehabilitating the former soul food restaurant and other dilapidated properties. Mayor Pegeen Hanrahan said she envisioned issuing a request for proposals from developers to redevelop Mom's Kitchen and other properties. But as of Thursday, city officials still had no concrete plans for the former restaurant, although they said they hope to use its prime location as a catalyst for revitalization.

County Commissioner Rodney Long served as the real estate agent for the relatives of the former owner and made \$16,500 in commission on the deal, according to documents from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. City Commissioner Jack Donovan, who was outspoken in his opposition to the purchase, said Thursday he did not want to throw stones at his colleagues for voting to buy Mom's Kitchen. Hanrahan and Commissioners Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Craig Lowe and Sherwin Henry voted in favor of the purchase, while Donovan, Thomas Hawkins and Lauren Poe opposed it. "I cast all the darts I needed to at the time," said Donovan, who at the time of the purchase said Mom's Kitchen wasn't a priority for either the city or the Pleasant Street neighborhood.

But the city needs to use its purchase - wise or not - to benefit the neighborhood, Donovan said. "It would be great to see a transformation there," he said. **Fred Murry**, an assistant city manager, said staff members went through the restaurant and donated some items, like the steel sink and pots and pans, to a local food cooperative. Other equipment is being saved for use at the one-stop homeless center that the city hopes to begin construction on in August. According to Alachua County property appraiser data, the property's taxable value was assessed at \$87,100 in both 2008 and 2009. **Murry** said the county's appraisals are typically well below market value and that the city's appraisal determined the property was worth \$165,000.

Hanrahan defended the purchase Thursday, saying it was an investment in a somewhat-dilapidated part of town. "It used to be a much more vibrant, healthy neighborhood," Hanrahan said, adding that she felt much of the criticism the city received for the purchase was because a county commissioner had served as the broker on the deal. In an e-mail interview, Long wrote that there is a "perception of an impropriety when you are a private individual who serves in the capacity of an elected official and represents private individuals before a government entity." "Other than perception," Long continued, "my attorney has researched the ethics laws and has opined that it's not unethical or illegal to represent an individual as a consultant before a political body so long as it's not the body that you are elected to serve."

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Hanrahan said she is hopeful the city can work with the nonprofit group that owns the nearby and recently closed Seminary Lane housing project to incorporate both properties into a redevelopment project. While no plans are in place, both Donovan and Hanrahan said mixing low-income housing with market-value housing would be good for the neighborhood. Rosa Williams, head of the Gainesville Housing Finance Corp., which owns the roughly five-acre site that was home to Seminary Lane, said she had contacted the city and was looking forward to putting a plan in place. "We need to be working on the same page," Williams said.

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The Gainesville Sun
February 2, 2010

Property owner objects, but Plan Board OKs One-Stop Homeless Center zoning
Author: Christopher Curry

The long-discussed one-stop homeless assistance center on Northwest 53rd Avenue has cleared its first hurdle but faces the possibility of a legal challenge from a neighboring property owner. Monday evening, the Gainesville Plan Board, a citizen advisory board to the City Commission, recommended 4-1 for approval of the petition for a zoning change to allow the center. That application should go to the City Commission in March. The Plan Board vote of support came over objections from an attorney representing Nalbandian Properties, which owns an industrial and warehouse park on the south side of Northwest 53rd Avenue.

"We are not opposed ... to the siting of a one-stop homeless center in Gainesville," said attorney Karl Sanders. "What we are opposed to is the rezoning of this property for this use in this location." Sanders said the center was "inappropriate and incompatible" with the surrounding industrial area and raised legal objections over whether the city was following its own code. Sanders argued that moving forward with the current application would violate a city requirement that, if a zoning application for a piece of property is denied or withdrawn, at least 12 months must pass before another applications for the same property may be heard.

Sanders argued that the continuance of a different zoning application for the same one-stop center last September was "effectively" a withdrawal of the application. He also argued that the city could not use the planned development zoning district sought in the current application to push ahead with a facility that would not be allowed in the other zoning districts associated with the property's current industrial land-use category. Sanders said his client, Ropen Nalbandian, had spent several thousands of dollars to secure an option on another piece of property that could be used for the center. That site was the "Gain Property" along the 5900 block of Waldo Road, which city commissioners once considered before last April they selected the location off the north side of the 800 block of Northwest 53rd Avenue. The city has not yet closed on the purchase of that property.

Gainesville Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** and representatives of the Gainesville and Alachua County housing authorities, the Alachua County Poverty Reduction Program and the Gainesville-Alachua County Office on Homelessness urged the Plan Board not to delay the construction of the homeless center any longer because of the objections. The term "NIMBY" -- an acronym for "not in my back yard" -- was used more than once in Monday's discussion. "We need to move this forward," **Murry** said. "We've wasted years and years." He said delays had already cost the project millions of dollars in potential grant money.

Jayne Moraski, executive director of the Gainesville-Alachua County Office on Homelessness, the lead agency for operating the future homeless center, said the "model" for a one-stop center with a range of programs to aid the homeless is to locate in an industrial area, away from

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residential neighborhoods. The plan for the GRACE Marketplace One-Stop Homeless Assistance Center is to construct a facility with a shelter, a soup kitchen serving up to 500 meals a day, a health clinic and job training services. The zoning application under consideration would also allow for a campground and a community garden.

Right now, there are no sidewalks along the roadway -- although they may be built as part of the project -- and the site is not on a bus route. Those factors were also raised by Nalbandian's representatives. "This is an urban-type of service. It should be really be in an urban-type area," said Clay Sweger, a planner representing Nalbandian Properties. Before their vote, Plan Board Chairman Bob Cohen said the project should not be held up by a "legal issue" raised "at the eleventh hour." Plan Board member Chris Dawson, who cast the lone dissenting vote, said it was not appropriate for the advisory board to forward the application without a city response to Sanders' objections and just "let the attorneys and the (city) Commission handle it."

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The Independent Florida Alligator
October 30, 2009

Mayor explains stance on serving meals

Author: Peegen Hanrahan, Gainesville Mayor

Q: Is it true that the City Commission took action to prohibit St. Francis House from serving more than 130 meals at holidays?

A: There has been no recent action or direction by the City Commission related to meal service at St. Francis House. Approximately 18 years ago, long before the tenure of any current elected official, the City Commission passed general code provisions that regulate food distribution centers for the needy that are not operated at a place of religious assembly (sec. 30-111) and those that are operated at places of religious assembly (sec. 30-91). These code provisions address, among other things, a limit on the number of meals within a 24-hour period, distance requirements and management plan requirements. These code provisions make no special distinction for holiday meals. This ordinance has not been reviewed by the City Commission at any time during my nearly 12-year tenure.

In certain zoning districts, a special use permit is required to operate a food distribution center for the needy. This is the case with the St. Francis House property. Under the City Code, the City Plan Board reviews and issues special use permits as they did for St. Francis House in the early 1990's. This permit was renewed most recently by the Plan Board in March of 2009. Mr. Vann indicated to me today that St. Frances House consciously chose not to ask for an ordinance change to raise this meal limit in their most recent permit process. The issue regarding holiday meal service at St. Francis House was only brought to the attention of the City Commission, via e-mail from a homeless advocate, last Wednesday, Oct. 21. On Thursday morning, Oct. 22, I spoke to two members of the board of St. Francis House (Al Cockrell and Fred Vyverberg), with witnesses present, regarding the fact that this was not a matter that the commission had provided any direction on, and that I and the City will certainly be willing to try to work out a solution. On Monday, Oct. 26, Commissioner Donovan sent an e-mail asking for additional information and solutions. At my direction, this matter has been scheduled for discussion at the City Commission meeting on the afternoon of Thursday, Nov. 5. I have every reason to believe the City Commission and our staff will work to find a solution that ensures an opportunity to serve meals to more people than could be accommodated at St. Francis House alone, with or without a meal limit.

Q: Why is someone spreading information that the City turned down such a request?

A: On Oct. 22, Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** sent a letter in reference to this matter to Mr. Kent Vann. This letter does not turn down the request. To the contrary, it states, "While it is challenging, the City and St. Francis House can expedite an amendment to the Special Use Permit to exceed the meal limitation for Thanksgiving and Christmas day (the two days you specifically inquired about). I would suggest that the application be filed as soon as possible..."

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However, upon further discussion with City Planning Staff, **Mr. Murry's** letter was further clarified. As stated above, the meal limitation is specified in the City Code, so any change would first have to be accomplished by a revision to the City Code and then to the St. Francis House Special Use Permit. As this cannot, as a practical matter, be accomplished by Thanksgiving Day, the City is offering to open the Martin Luther King Jr. recreational facility on Thanksgiving Day to any group who would like to serve a Thanksgiving Meal to the public on that day. Any interested group should register in advance by contacting **Mr. Murry** at (352) 334-5010. The MLK Center is a beautiful facility that has seating for several hundred people at one time, and excellent parking and other public accommodations. Other alternatives also exist and have been suggested.

Q: Why is there a 130-meal limit in the first place?

A: This has been a provision in the Gainesville Code of Ordinances since before 1992. The intent was, and is, simply to distribute the services to destitute people across the community, rather than to concentrate them all in one location. St. Francis House has never been legally authorized to serve more than this number, and has, or should have, been aware of this during its entire existence at its current location. The initial permit issued, and the permit re-issued earlier this year, were based on that level of service provision. All zoning and special use permit decisions throughout the city consider off-site impacts, and weigh those against the benefits that the use provides.

The role of a city government includes balancing the needs, rights and responsibilities of property owners and citizens with differing and sometimes adverse interests. As was demonstrated on the record during the recent SFH permit hearings, many adjacent property owners have experienced what they believe to be substantial negative off-site impacts from clients of St. Francis House. The imposition of a meal limit at any single location is simply an effort to balance competing interests between various citizens and property owners.

Q: Isn't this immoral? Aren't people then left to starve?

A: Every place of religious assembly throughout our community is authorized to serve meals and house homeless persons, subject to the limitations and permit requirements set forth in City Code Sec. 30-91. However, the administrative enforcement of those limitations and requirements have been temporarily suspended since March 28, 2008, when the City Commission directed the City manager not to issue or deny any permits under Sec. 30-91 until the Community Development Committee studied those regulations and returned with proposed amendments. The Committee is returning to the City Commission with recommendations on Nov. 5, 2009. In addition, it should be noted that these code provisions only regulate the operation of a food distribution center for the needy (as defined in City Code), they do not preclude or prohibit a place of religious assembly from hosting a holiday meal open to the public. At various times, the City of Gainesville and Alachua County, through the joint Office on Homelessness, have contacted the more than 300 places of religious assembly in our community to seek assistance in helping those in need. To date, little interest has been shown toward expanding such services, though some

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downtown churches, such as Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and First Methodist Church, have been among the congregations who consistently provide such assistance. While this is very helpful and appreciated, their work does not substantially spread the burden of helping people in need who exist beyond the borders of downtown. In addition, the City has continued to allow meal service at the Downtown Plaza with few limitations. In recent months, the City has been actively working to encourage other service providers who are able to provide meals to do so, but there has been an emergence of competition among different entities and an unwillingness to work cooperatively to increase legal meal service in a coordinated manner. The City continues to seek a workable and respectful plan for addressing this need.

Q: If the 130-meal limit has been in place since the 1990's, what has changed recently?

A: Earlier this year, the Special Use Permit that allows St. Francis House to operate was up for renewal. The primary responsibility of the Plan Board, which heard the permit request, was to determine whether the facility had been operating in substantial compliance with the existing permit. In reality, although the 130 limit has been in place since at least 1992, it has not been actively enforced by either the St. Francis House or the City of Gainesville. It became evident, in the course of the permit process, that if the permit were re-issued without regard to this fact, then the City would likely face lawsuits from other property owners and residents who feel as if they have been aggrieved by lax enforcement of the code requirements. The City Plan Board re-issued the permit, but added a new permit condition that St. Francis House file semi-annual status reports and allow periodic inspection by city staff to ensure that they remain in compliance with permit and code requirements, including the meal limits.

Q: Why wasn't the issue of serving meals at Christmas and Thanksgiving addressed at the time that the Special Use Permit was re-issued?

A: Again the meal limitation is established in the City Code and provides no special rules or waivers for holidays. The Code cannot be changed by Special Use Permit. As stated above, St. Francis House or others can request that the Code requirements be changed by legislative action (passage of a general ordinance) of the City Commission.

Q: Why isn't the City doing more to help the homeless? Is St. Francis House the only group really doing anything?

A: For more than four years, the City and county governments have been working methodically toward increasing resources to help homeless individuals. Some examples of this include:

- Working to acquire a site for a Homeless One Stop Center (that will provide meals, 60 shelter beds and other services) on 53rd Avenue, and committing and seeking funding for a multi-million dollar construction project.
- Allocation of more than \$560,000 in federal stimulus dollars for homelessness prevention efforts to pay for apartment rent, security deposits, utilities, etc.

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- Several years of funding winter shelter beds, via St. Francis House, Holy Trinity and private hotel rooms.
- Funding of the "Ticket Home" program to reunite homeless individuals with family members, treatment programs or other "receivers" who can assist them.
- Funding of the joint City/County Office on Homelessness, which has obtained millions in additional dollars to support homeless services.
- Development and implementation of the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.

It is worth noting that in part because of the disproportionate impact of social service provision on the downtown, almost all of the City's actions to help homeless people have been widely criticized and protested by both proponents and opponents. In this same period of time, the city's budget has been cut in excess of \$10 million per year relative to prior anticipated revenues, and our ability to address any given concern has been impacted as a result. It is difficult to ignore the fact some homeless advocates sometimes minimize the real and tangible issues created by the concentration of homelessness in the downtown, which is one small area of our community, but the one that should feel welcoming to all people, rich and poor, housed and homeless, young and old, liberal and conservative. It is a myth that it is only "rich business people" who are complaining to the City regarding the impacts of homeless people in the downtown. There are many residents of moderate means, employees, office workers, church-goers and others who feel negatively impacted and even frightened by the current situation. Acknowledging and helping to address this fact is a necessary step toward resolution of these issues.

Q: The City of Gainesville has been listed as one of the nation's "Meanest Cities" toward homeless, for closing tent city and enforcing this meal limit. What is wrong with the city?

A: In reality, the cities who have been placed on this list are actually all communities that are doing SOMETHING to help homeless people, albeit imperfectly. There are many communities that do little or nothing for homeless people, so those that take up the responsibility end up with "more than their fair share" of work to do. Unlike most government programs, one of the difficult issues around helping homeless people is that the better the services you provide, the more people who come forward to seek those services. In an environment in which there is no requirement for basic human needs to be met in all jurisdictions, those who do provide services end up taking up the burden for those who don't, and the better your services are, the more people you attract who need them. In reality, Gainesville is a city of 130,000 that is trying to provide almost all of the homeless services in a multi-county region of more rural, suburban and disadvantaged communities. And because we are "the Sunshine State," Florida attracts a disproportionate number of homeless people from throughout the rest of the nation. We have more than 300 shelter beds in our community, and few in any of the surrounding rural and suburban areas. The Point-in-Time homeless surveys taken in recent years have shown that the percentage of homeless people who originate in Alachua County (people who were last housed or employed here) has dropped from around 57 percentage to below 49 percentage. The number

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of people in need from beyond our borders continues to climb, but our resources have not grown proportionately.

The tent city site was closed because it was unsafe, unmanageable and located on private property that was not zoned or permitted for such use, and public property containing both a closed unlined landfill and the outfall from a wastewater treatment plant. The City of Gainesville cannot simply decide to ignore its own codes related to zoning, health and safety, as it is the entity that creates and enforces such codes among other property owners. The City cannot and should not knowingly tolerate a dangerous living situation on its own property, or on that of other landowners. The city, and all of its elected and appointed officials, do believe in providing compassionate and effective care for homeless residents and others in need, and, in addition to the government programs listed above, have actively supported non-profits and faith organizations toward this end.

Q: Well when are things going to get better? The City keeps talking about a One Stop; why don't they just have St. Francis House act as the One Stop?

A: Earlier this year, the City Commission voted unanimously to approach St. Francis House to serve as the location of an interim One Stop, for appropriate negotiated compensation. This request was turned down by St. Francis, for reasons that were not communicated to the City Commission, though efforts to engage all parties continue. As recently as today, I spoke with Kent Vann about the City's continuing desire to have St. Francis House work with all of the other engaged service providers toward this end, and he indicated a sincere willingness to do so.

The City anticipates an 18 month process of permitting and constructing the One Stop GRACE Marketplace on 53rd Avenue, which is expected to provide 60 shelter beds and meal service, as well as a host of other needed services. Transportation to and from other locations, including St. Francis House, will be provided.

Q: What more can I do to help?

A: The City's main avenue for working to address issues related to Homelessness is the Implementation Committee for the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. This committee is chaired by Commissioner Rodney Long and myself and meets approximately bi-monthly. More recently, the City and County worked with numerous non-profit and other groups to complete a Hunger Abatement Plan that has several implementation efforts underway as well. In addition, in December the City will be working with a large community-wide event to restock area food pantries and raise awareness around issues of hunger and poverty in our community. Many opportunities to assist with all these efforts exist, and you may call **Fred Murry** at 352-334-5010 for upcoming dates and further information.

Because the City of Gainesville is responsible for passing and enforcing rules that respect competing rights and interests of all citizens and are enforceable in courts of law, it is not reasonable to expect the City to simply ignore its regulations. Regulations can be amended,

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based on methodical review and broad public input that, again, balances competing public needs. St. Francis House certainly can approach the City Commission to request a change to the current code limitations for food distribution centers for the needy. I have recommended that on Nov. 5 we initiate the process of, at a minimum, providing for a lifting of the 130- person limit for important holidays. Again, unfortunately, it is unlikely that this lengthy process, as required by law, will be completed in time for this holiday season. Had the issue been raised by St. Francis House prior to the middle of October, resolution would have been much easier to achieve.

As with anything in life, communications that are accurate and respectful are most likely to lead to understanding and resolution of differences.

Sincerely,
Pegeen Hanrahan
Mayor

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The Gainesville Sun
October 15, 2009

Housing programs forced to cut back

Author: Megan Rolland

At a time when the nation's housing crisis is slowly improving, Alachua County's housing programs have suffered drastic cuts in state funding that will result in layoffs and a reduction in services. The Gainesville Housing Division, which constructs affordable housing and provides funding and counseling for first-time home buyers, foreclosure intervention and home rehabilitation for low-income residents, faced a budget reduction from the state this year of \$960,000. Alachua County's smaller counterpart suffered \$908,000 in state funding cuts. "In this market, we've seen a lot of people ask for services," Gainesville Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said. "They ask us how to repair credit or prevent foreclosure. It's also a prime time to purchase a home, but the credit criteria has increased."

All those services provided by the city and county have been reduced. And two longtime city employees in the housing division will lose their jobs in December unless alternative funding is discovered - the only two layoffs in the city government so far in a tight fiscal year. "We help these people. We change people's lives. We bolster communities," said Judy Raymond, a housing rehabilitation specialist with the Housing Division, who has been notified that she will be laid off in December. "We also keep neighborhoods stable by not allowing that roof to fall in on that family."

Raymond's position is being cut in addition to a filled housing finance coordinator position and one unfilled housing finance coordinator position in which the employee was fired this summer. Tom Webster, Alachua County's housing manager, said he avoided potential layoffs in his program by personally taking a 20 percent cut in pay and working partial weeks for three months. "That saved us funds that we really needed in order to keep everybody whole," Webster said. "I have a great staff, and I'd do it again."

Murry said the city investigated means of meeting budget other than layoffs but decided that the cuts were unavoidable. The cuts leave seven people in the department, including one director and two supervisors. "We are going to look at restructuring the department," **Murry** said. "The mission will still be the same, and we are going to do the best of our ability with the funding available." **Murry** said the city has applied for two federal grants that if obtained will allow the department to remain whole.

Alachua County isn't the only housing program in the state to face cuts, as the Florida Legislature capped the State Housing Initiatives Partnership program and mandated that 90 percent of the fund allocations go to down-payment assistance loans for first-time home buyers. Cecka Rose Green, communications director for the Florida Housing Finance Corp., said the mandated allocation for the Florida Home Buyer Opportunity Program was set up to help Floridians take advantage of the federal \$8,000 tax benefit.

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"We know that there's going to be a bit of an impact there," Green said. "We are hopeful that the governor and the Legislature will understand the importance of home ownership, first-time homeowners and preserving housing that is already there and will be able to allocate appropriate funds." Green said her department is in the process of making budget requests for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. "Statewide, it makes sense that with a reduction in the funding that there will be some local programs that will be adversely impacted," Green said. "I think there's a concern, especially in a time where you have a lot of communities with hurricanes that have come through in the previous years. Home ownership and the buying of homes stimulates the economy."

Webster said that in Alachua County, the housing programs fuel real estate agents, housing inspectors, loan agencies and countless other industries that are struggling now and could use a stimulus. "When you take basically \$900,000 out of the local economy, that's going to have an economic impact on Alachua County," Webster said. "The ripple effect is way beyond a few people who aren't going to buy a home."

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The Gainesville Sun
August 26, 2009

County split over homeless center?

The question is whether county should help city pay for its operation.

Author: Cindy Swirko

A split may be emerging among Alachua County commissioners over whether they should help pay for services at a one-stop homeless center or leave it to the Gainesville City Commission to fund the operations. The discussion came Tuesday as Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** told the County Commission the total cost to open the center will be about \$2.8 million. **Murry** said the city has about \$1.3 million and added it may apply for a loan for the rest of the cost. "I think the community needs to see something," **Murry** said. "We've been waiting too long."

Alachua County and the city have jointly developed a plan to curb homelessness. The county pays for the Office on Homelessness and had agreed to pay \$140,000 toward the operation of the center where the homeless can get social and medical services, food, take a shower, wash clothes and access other resources. But the county ended that contract last year as the development of the center dragged on. Now the City Commission is proposing to build the originally planned center and a 60-bed shelter - 40 beds for men and 20 for women.

The proposed site, which is under negotiation for purchase by the city for \$633,000, is off the 800 block of Northeast 53rd Avenue. The targeted opening is August 2010. City Commissioner Thomas Hawkins told The Sun on Tuesday that he believes the county should help pay for operations of the center. "I think the ultimate answer is what they have committed to in the past. I would want them to continue to support the project in that vein," Hawkins said.

Support from county commissioners was mixed. "To me, the most important basic service in this community is food and housing. I made a commitment, and I am going to do what I can to fund this project," Commissioner Rodney Long said. "These are things that I am passionate about." Commissioner Lee Pinkoson said the county already funds other homeless programs directly or indirectly. "We have been involved in the homelessness issue for decades through social services, (nonprofit) programs and, in an extreme case, the jail," Pinkoson said. "It gets down to monetary issues, and if we commit to this, we might not be able to do as much in social services."

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The Independent Florida Alligator
March 23, 2009

Gainesville residents apply for assistance at block party

Author: Emily Fuggetta

Music blared from a van's speakers, children bounced in an inflatable moonwalk and smoke poured from a huge grill cooking hot dogs and hamburgers at what seemed to be a typical block party. But at Saturday's block party in North East Park, Gainesville residents who met low-income qualifications applied for down payment assistance, mortgage foreclosure intervention, housing rehabilitation, housing reconstruction, credit repair and community development block grants. More than 200 people visited the park for the Gainesville Housing and Community Development Division's biannual event.

Assistant city manager **Fred Murry**, said the goal of the event was to let people know that it is possible to purchase or maintain a home despite financial problems. "We want them to know all the ways the city can help them," **Murry** said. "That's what it's all about." After getting food and sodas, visitors stopped at shaded tables to fill out applications while their children played in the bounce house and took rides around the park on a trolley. According to Housing and Community Development Division supervisor Teresa Osoba, HCDD receives about as many applications at each block party as it does in an average month.

On Saturday, the group handed applications out to more than 100 people. "We use the party to bring our office to the community," she said. "People may be working Monday through Friday and can't make it during office hours." Osoba said that people were lined up at 9 a.m., an hour before the event started, waiting to fill out applications and get information about the city's assistance programs. Gainesville resident Suzette Riggins said the event was helpful for her and her family because it was held on the weekend and so close to home.

Riggins, who applied for housing rehabilitation to fix her leaky roof, said that the atmosphere of the party was inviting and open, which made it easy to focus less on her money problems and just enjoy herself. "Everyone was so friendly," she said. "They gave me a lot of information and really helped me out."

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The Gainesville Sun
February 28, 2009

Economy takes toll on recreation plans

Author: Megan Rolland

Alachua County and its cities are preparing to see less funding than originally projected from the Wild Spaces Public Places half-cent sales tax, just as the first projects get under way this spring. "You project based on the economy, but it's never certain until the money rolls in," Ramesh Buch, director of Alachua County Forever said. "The slowing economy is having an impact on the amount of money we can raise, and it definitely has an impact on the amount of land we can protect."

Buch said that a year ago, the half-cent sales tax was optimistically expected to bring \$40 million of revenue that would be split evenly between land conservation projects and recreation projects. Voters approved the sales tax in the November election with a list of projects that could be funded by the money. However, cities are reporting they don't expect to get as far down the list as they'd hoped. But the agencies responsible for doling out the funds are moving quickly on the projects to provide residents with immediate benefit from the self-imposed tax.

All agencies submitted lists of pre-approved projects that can be funded by the sales tax. The dedicated funding source cannot be used for any projects that don't appear on the list. Gainesville Assistant City Manager Paul Folkers said the agencies are in the process of setting up a collaborative oversight board for the tax dollars. "They will track overall expenditures of the half-cent sales tax ensuring they're spent only on eligible projects," Folkers said. The sales tax, which will be collected for two years, is a dedicated funding source that cannot be used for any other purposes. The money started being collected on Jan. 1 and the government bodies will get their first payment in March.

City of Gainesville projects: Gainesville has already approved four projects that Folkers said needed to get off the ground quickly. Prime among those was the purchase of Smokey Bear Park, 1600 NE 23rd Ave., from the Florida Forestry Division and improvements to the playground equipment for a total of \$600,000. "When you look at the adjoining neighborhoods, Smokey Bear is really the only park in the vicinity," Commissioner Scherwin Henry said as the commission approved the purchase. "That's why I thought it wasn't a bad idea to acquire it. It seems to me this is possibly extra storage space for the recreation department, as well."

The state used the park to store maintenance equipment and staff lived in two houses on the property, which Folkers said could potentially be rented out as a revenue source. "Believe it or not Smokey Bear used to be out in the country," Don West, Division of Forestry Center manager, said of the park on NE 23rd Avenue. "We've got a lot of big equipment coming in and out (of the park) and that can be bad." Folkers said that the city will report in April what the actual revenue from the tax is up to that point, but he said they are still budgeting for the full \$14 million projected last year.

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Of that money, \$2.8 million will go toward sensitive land acquisition and another \$1.5 million will go toward building a new senior center at Northside Park. Additionally, the county will match that from its sales tax revenues and in November the project was awarded a \$2 million state grant. Assistant City Manager **Fred Murry** said the city is pushing the project forward quickly. "If everything goes well between June and July the design portion will be under way," **Murry** said. "We hope to begin to move dirt around September."

Other city projects already approved include renovations of Northeast and Westside pools, \$315,000; improvements at the Thomas Center, \$188,000; resurfacing trails at Northeast Park, \$110,000. Alachua County projects: Buch said that Alachua County will probably only be able to finance a \$15 million commercial line of credit for land acquisition based on current projections that are about \$3 million less than hoped. "If it rebounds and there's more money coming in the second quarter, we might be able to get more," Buch said. Alachua County will acquire a third of 276 acres adjacent to Paynes Prairie Preserve known as the Edwards property for approximately \$500,000, with the city of Gainesville and the St. Johns River Management District paying for the rest of the property.

"It's the nicest third of the property in terms of its environmental quality, and it's buffered by Paynes Prairie State Park on three sides," Buch said. "It will be managed by Paynes Prairie as a buffer." The other portion of the property will be swapped with the state for other land that Gainesville Regional Utilities will use to filter chemicals out of water flowing onto the prairie. The city's portion of the purchase is almost \$500,000 and it is being funded through a combination of the Gainesville Regional Utilities capital budget and the city of Gainesville's storm water utility budget, said Alice Rankeillor, who is heading up the Paynes Prairie Restoration project for GRU. She said the land swap is one of many steps in the project, but "a really important one."

A small portion of Alachua County's sales tax revenue will go toward recreation projects. Rob Avery, the county's superintendent of parks and open spaces, said that at the top of the list is constructing a community center at Kanapaha Park. City of Newberry projects: Triangle Park in Newberry will be developed using the natural slope of the land to create a small amphitheater with a stage, said Richard Blaloch, parks and recreation director for the city of Newberry. "We want to develop a theme for the park and incorporate a stage area for movies on the lawn or bands," Blaloch said. The city also will add pavilions and walking trails to the park. The other priority is the creation of pavilions and a playground at the Martin Luther King Park.

City of Alachua projects: City Manager Clovis Watson said the city is prioritizing its projects but that four have risen to the top: expansion of the Hal Brady Recreation Center Complex, a Phase II addition to the Cleather Hathcock Community Center, completion of the San Felasco Conservation Corridor and the development of a downtown civic center at the Swick House. Watson said that to maximize the sales tax money, other funding sources would be sought to combine with these efforts. The approved project lists for Archer, Hawthorne, High Springs, Lacrosse, Micanopy and Waldo are available at <http://wildspacespublicplaces.org/index.html>.

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The Gainesville Sun
October 4, 2007

City career fair called a success

Author: Cleveland Tinker

More than 300 local residents from all walks of life attended a career fair sponsored by the City of Gainesville last week, and officials said it was the most successful career fair to date sponsored by the city. "This is our seventh year doing this, and this is the most successful by far," said Albert White, GRU's community relations director. "We had more than 300 people come through the doors. We did a very good job of getting the word out to the community. People are looking for career opportunities, and the city of Gainesville is certainly a great employer."

The career fair was held Sept. 25 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Multi-Purpose Center. A host of different city departments from the Gainesville Police Department and GRU to the Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs and the city attorney's office were on hand to talk about different career opportunities. Juniors restaurant provided free dinners. Jimmie Williams, the director of the city's Office of Equal Opportunity, told those in attendance to ask representatives of the different departments as many questions as possible. "This is not just about finding a job. We're talking about careers," said Williams, addressing those seeking employment.

Fred Murry, who was hired as an assistant city manager in late August, also spoke to the crowd. He urged them to take advantage of the educational opportunities available in the area, and to always find ways to develop new skills or enhance the ones they already have. "I began my career as an intern in another city before I came to Gainesville," said **Murry**, who came to Gainesville from Deerfield Beach in South Florida. "Take advantage of what is here, and ask a lot of questions."

Lee Cruger, a 21-year-old 2004 graduate of Eastside High School and a recent graduate of ITT Technological Institute in Jacksonville, said he is trying to get into the job market for the first time. "I'm looking to jump-start my career, and I figured this would be a good place to come and find out about employment opportunities," Cruger said. "I just got through talking with a representative from GRU about engineering positions there." David Kvaltine was the representative from GRU who talked with Cruger, and he said he was excited about being at the career fair. "I enjoy being here," Kvaltine said. "It gives me a chance to meet new people."

Alexa Bryan, 48, said she has been living in Gainesville for 22 years and wants to do something different than what she has been doing. "I've worked in the health field for 17 years, and I'm interested in finding a different kind of career," Bryan said. "I'm very interested in taking water samples at GRU's Deerhaven plant as a laboratory technician. I hope to apply for that position." Freda Bwenge, 44, a native of the African country Tanzania, said she has been in Gainesville for 13 years and was excited to be attending the career fair. "I'm looking for a job, and I'm very interested in getting hired by GRU," she said, adding that she has a background in community

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planning. She also added that she thought the event was organized well, and she praised the hospitality of the organizers. "Everybody has just been so nice," she said.

Delasi Thomas, 21, said she was at the career fair because she wants to improve her employment status. "I need another job," Thomas said. "Something better than the one I have. I'm really interested in being a school crossing guard, because I like working with kids." Thomas Frisbie, operations manager with the public works department, said he was happy to see the turnout. "Certainly, it appears that people are interested in jobs," Frisbie said. "In the past, it was more of a social event. Unfortunately, with the hiring freeze, we don't have as many positions available as usual." Frisbie said his department has hired several people from career fairs in the past. "We have an opening that won't be posted for one to two weeks," Frisbie said. "We have taken some names, and we will be calling people when that position is posted."

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Westside Gazette
December 14, 2006

Farewell and good luck to Fred Murry, division director of Family Success Administration

It is with a tear in the eye and a heavy heart everyone feels when they hear the news that **Fred Murry** is leaving the County on Dec. 15. To know **Fred** is to love and respect him. For the community and Broward County, residents will continue to benefit from his vision and his legacy of accomplishments will be remembered as well into the future.

Murry came to the County in December 1996, as Division Director of the Bureau of Children and Family Services, including at that time, Child Care Licensing. In 1999, a new concept was born. The Bureau of Children and Family Services became Family Success Administration and under the leadership of **Murry**, an exciting one stop-shopping concept was created. Three Family Success Centers opened in the county and residents could visit one of those offices to access all the services they needed. There are now four centers and expanded homeless services.

Fred's multiple accomplishments included three JCAHO surveys, all successful, in the years 2000, 2003 and recently, this year. As far as emergencies, hurricanes and cold weather shelters, **Murry** worked around the clock. Cold weather shelters started at the Family Success Centers and **Murry** is proud to say there are now three excellent homeless centers. **Murry** is very happy to see that in 10 years he has seen homeless assistance improve and expand.

Murry has been the backbone of Family Success, and all who have worked with him have seen him commit his heart and soul to the Family Success staff and to the community in need. He said, "We provided quality caring services from 1999 to the present and will continue to grow and to improve these services for the residents of Broward County. Any accomplishments achieved, we did as a team. I enjoyed them all and now I will go on to the next chapter, exploring other adventures in my life. All these years, I have had wonderful people with exciting ideas to help me."

Murry is ready for the next chapter in his life, but for now, he says, "it is time to go fishing." Our best wishes go out to **Fred Murry**, a man of wisdom, compassion, humor and dedication. We will miss him.

[Author Affiliation]
From the staff of the Human Service Department

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SunSentinel
August 26, 2005

County's Needy Running For Shelter, Food Organizations Open Doors To Help Homeless
Author: Brittany Wallman Staff Writer and Staff Writer David Fleshler contributed to this report.

The chief problem for some in Broward County this weekend has nothing to do with insurance deductibles or fallen tree limbs. It's how they will pay for groceries after missing a day or two of work. Relief officials said the county's neediest were shaken by the hurricane, turning for help to feed their families or for a place to sleep. Today would have been a payday for many workers, but it will be a day without work instead. So groups that supply food and shelter to the poor went into emergency mode Thursday, asking the community for food, supplies, money and help, and preparing to pass it on to those who need it once Katrina leaves. Unsure what the needs or the demands will be, relief agencies Thursday focused on food and shelter. Some homeless people avoid the shelters because of their strict rules regarding drugs or drinking, but those were waived Thursday afternoon, and anyone who needed help was allowed in. That was expected to continue today, officials said, if the weather remains dismal and there are people in need. "All the restrictions are canceled during foul weather," said Fort Lauderdale police Officer Scott Russell, who regularly works with homeless people and spent Thursday finding homeless people to help them. Relief officials said anyone in need this weekend can be referred to the right agency by the county's hurricane hotline, 954-831-4000.

Fred Murry, director of Family Success Administration Division for Broward County government, said about 151 people on Thursday afternoon turned to the county's homeless shelters in Pompano Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Hollywood, among other places. "We're going to a level where they could be at risk," **Murry** said, adding that the county would continue using outreach workers to find people who might need assistance. At the Cooperative Feeding Program on West Broward Boulevard and Northwest 33rd Terrace, families from all over the county asked for food. The agency said its warehouse was depleted, and it put out a plea for food or donations. "We're right now unloading a truckload of stuff. My guess is we'll go through that in two hours," said CEO Marti Forman. In less than two hours Thursday, 73 families had come to get boxes of food so their families could eat this weekend, said Bruce Harris, who works in that organization's development office.

For safety, Forman had to close early Thursday and send her staff home. But she expects Monday will be busy with requests for food from families who can't get by after missing a little work. Families first must be screened and referred to the program by another agency. "What are you going to do if you lose a couple hundred dollars wages? That's your food budget for the month or even more." Meals also are served at the evacuation shelters in the county, and Kathryn Cousins of American Red Cross said they will remain open "until the need passes." Sally Gress, director of development for Salvation Army of Broward County, said her agency is prepared to set up a mobile kitchen after the hurricane in areas with power outages or poorer areas, to provide food and water.

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The Sun Sentinel
May 2, 1997

**County Hiring More Child-care Inspectors
Added Staff To Help Enforce Regulations**

Author: Evelyn Larrubia

To better enforce child-care center regulations, Broward County is hiring more staff to relieve overburdened inspectors - some of whom check on nearly twice the number of centers than the national average. Those changes come too late for Jeremy Fiedelholz. The 3-month-old boy suffocated in January in a center run out of a Plantation home at 5660 SW Third Court, but his story came to light just this week. Yvonne Britt, who supervises the child-care inspection section of the county's Bureau of Children & Family Services, says the additional workers are needed and may even help prevent another death. "We're running our staff ragged. It's difficult to be effective when you're overworked," said Britt. "Hopefully this will make a very big difference."

The three new inspectors, which the county is in the process of hiring, will crack down on both unlicensed centers and law-breaking licensed centers, she said. They join a staff of eight others who check businesses before they're licensed, then conduct two to three surprise inspections on the county's roughly 650 centers each year. The county cited Christina Schwartzberg, the owner of the center where Jeremy died, for keeping 13 children - more than the state allows - and leaving them in the care of an unapproved aide who was not certified in CPR. Schwartzberg's license was temporarily suspended and she voluntarily surrendered it in February in the midst of revocation proceedings. Britt said local and state child-care laws do not allow further punishment.

The Broward State Attorney's Office and the state Department of Children & Families are reviewing Jeremy's death to see whether criminal laws were broken. Jeremy's parents and some child advocates have said his case has shown why child-care regulation is too lax. But others say that enforcing the laws is the real key to preventing tragedy. In Jeremy's case, county officials said the caretaker admitted she had been to a meeting where new state limits on children in the centers were explained. The day Jeremy died, there were five infants in portable cribs in a back bedroom at the Plantation home, plus an infant, six 1-year-olds and a 2-year-old in the converted garage. State limits do not allow any more than four infants in a home-based day-care center.

A county inspector had been to the house just three weeks earlier and seen six children in Schwartzberg's converted garage. The inspector was told that was the only room where children were watched. The inspector did not check out the rest of Schwartzberg's house. **Fredrick J. Murry**, director of the county Bureau of Children and Family Services, said inspectors normally don't search the entire house in the surprise inspections because of privacy issues. But the Broward County Attorney's Office said inspectors have the authority to search any room of a house that is licensed as a day-care center. **Murry's** staff said that they also think they can't be so harsh in the regulation of child-care centers that they encourage caretakers to run unlicensed centers.

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Officials estimate there are about 800 unlicensed day-care centers in Broward homes. The county began licensing homes in 1991 after two children died in home day care. "We licensed so we could go into the homes and ensure safety," said Britt, who supervises the inspectors. Before then, the county could not inspect, she said. But parents shouldn't rely solely on county inspections, officials said. They should go to the center often and report problems or questions to authorities.

Still, enforcement and parental involvement will not correct the issues child advocates say Jeremy's death has brought to light: low state educational requirements and flimsy penalties for some flagrant violations. Florida home day-care operators must take a three-hour course, be trained in CPR and first aid, submit to a background check, be immunized and have a substitute caregiver. The state limits the number of children per sitter, based on the child's age. Currently, state law punishes most violations with a \$100 fine. Lying on a state application, running an unlicensed center or pretending to be licensed is a first-degree misdemeanor, which is punishable by a \$1,000 fine and up to a year in jail.

Larry Pintacuda, chief Child Care for the state Department of Children & Families, agreed on Thursday that people who offer day care out of their homes should have more training - probably a 30-hour course. He said they also should be subject to stiffer penalties for gross violations of the law. He said those may be issues that the department will ask the Legislature to address in next year's session. But Jeremy's father, Mark Fiedelholz, said he thinks the federal government should regulate day care and has begun lobbying federal legislators and child-care advocates.

Currently, the federal government requires minimum safety standards for child-care centers that receive grants, but states set the limits. U.S. Rep. Clay Shaw, R-Fort Lauderdale, who heads the Ways and Means Committee and wrote the federal child-care law, said states adequately regulate the centers. Federal licensing, he said, would do nothing but add more bureaucracy. "I don't think we could do any better than the states. I don't know of any other regulation that the federal government can pass that could've saved this child," Shaw said. "I agree with those that say there needs to be tougher penalties but it's up to the states to impose those penalties."

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The Sun Sentinel
April 13, 1997

Agency Names Three To Board

First Call for Help of Broward, Inc., a private nonprofit agency that serves as the county's only 24-hour/seven-day information, referral and crisis intervention telephone service, has added three new members to its board of directors. They are:

* Patricia Araujo, executive director of Hispanic Unity of Florida, Inc. Araujo has worked as a health care provider, administrator of the Americans with Disabilities Act for Hollywood, educational facilitator and administrator in New York and Florida. She has a master's degree from Columbia University Teacher's College and a degree in nursing from the University of Medicine in Barcelona, Spain.

* Nancy J. Blackwood, a Fort Lauderdale resident since 1957, is the vice-president and manager of the Fort Lauderdale Real Estate Administration Department of NationsBank. Blackwood, who is active with the Girl Scouts and county library's Literacy for Adults program, also serves as a director of the Executive Women's Golf Association of Broward.

* **Fredrick J. Murry**, director of the Broward County Bureau of Children and Family Services. **Murry** is a member of the International City Managers Association, the Florida Planning Association and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators. **Murry** worked as the director of youth and family services in Leesburg, Va., before coming to South Florida.

Anyone in need of information about local health or social service resources, or who is experiencing a personal crisis can call First Call for Help at any hour at no cost. Trained telephone counselors will refer callers to the most appropriate service.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Research
FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
October 3, 1991

NMB Manager Looks to Fill Vacancies At Top
Author: Angie Muhs

North Miami Beach City Manager Michael Roberto will be spending the next few weeks looking to rebuild a staff, after four high-ranking administrators resigned in the past few weeks. Deputy City Manager Ann Toney and Rick Drazenovich, the city's public works director, both resigned last week to take other jobs. Toney, who had been with the city for two years, is leaving to become city manager of Haines City in Central Florida. Drazenovich, who had worked for the city for five years and been public works director for two, plans to leave Friday to accept a job as public works director for the city of Danville, Va.

Toney, who grew up about 45 miles from Haines City, said she probably will leave her job next week. She starts in Haines City on Dec. 1. "It's a unique opportunity to be able to go back, and be near your family as well as the friends you grew up with," said Toney, who had worked for North Miami Beach for two years. Drazenovich said he was looking forward to working in Danville, a city of about 57,000 people in southern Virginia. "It's an opportunity for my family and myself that I couldn't pass up," said Drazenovich, who said he also wants to be closer to family in southern Pennsylvania. "It's gorgeous country, and I'm really looking forward to going there."

Earlier in September, **Fred Murry**, the city's community development director, had resigned, taking a job as director of human services in Loudon County, Va. Assistant public works director Don Kumm also quit. "They're all very talented people," Roberto said. "That's one of the tough things with hiring young, talented people. They end up leaving you." Roberto said that the city has begun advertising the jobs. Gary Brown, assistant public works director, will serve as acting director until Drazenovich's replacement is hired, Roberto said. Toney's job will remain vacant. Roberto said he also plans to ask Public Works employees to elect a representative to sit on the selection committee that chooses a new director. The city has never done this, he said.

Roberto said he was not allowing an employee to sit on the selection committee because of poor morale or because of an investigation into the Public Works department by the Dade State Attorney's Office. "The public works director is going to have to work so closely with employees that they ought to have some input," he said. "It just makes good management sense." Part of the reason that several administrators left so quickly is that other cities and counties are finishing their fiscal years and are more likely to hire people at that time, Roberto said. It's also just a coincidence, he said. "You can go through a long period of time, and people don't leave, and then you get a bunch of people leaving," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Research
FREDRICK “FRED” J. MURRY
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald
October 11, 1990

Mustard- Colored Fence Separates City, Homeowner NMB Looking For Uniformity
Author: Angie Muhs

A North Miami Beach homeowner and city officials are at odds over the color he painted his fence after code enforcement officers asked him to make repairs. Eric Townsend said he chose to paint the wood fence a mustard yellow hue because it wouldn't show dirt or mildew as much as the original white color. Besides, he said, the fence looks fine to him. **Fred Murry**, the city's director of community development, said city officials are pleased that Townsend fixed the fence, which faces busy Miami Gardens Drive. They've just reserved judgment on the color, the only one of its kind in Townsend's Pickwick Estates neighborhood. "He's made the necessary repairs, and now it's a matter of deciding what to do with the color," **Murry** said. Townsend said he spent \$70 on paint and worked about three afternoons preparing and painting the fence during the last week of September. While he was working, he said, a code enforcement officer, whose name he didn't remember, stopped by to check on the work. He didn't say anything about the color, Townsend said. Townsend said he was shocked and upset when he heard that the city didn't like the color. "They should have told me from the start about the color. I'm still upset," said Townsend, who has lived in his home on Northeast 182nd Street for 18 months. "They're using my tax money to do unnecessary things. I told them, 'I don't think it's fair, and I'll take it to the Supreme Court.' "

None of his neighbors has complained about the color, Townsend said. He said he asked city officials before he started painting whether any colors were prohibited, but didn't get an answer. "The color looks nice to us," said Blossom Townsend, his wife. "Why should we change it now?" **Murry** said that city officials had requested uniformity in the area, where most of the slat-type fences are white. They assumed the fence would be repainted its original color, he said. Townsend said a city employee told him that the city would come out and repaint the fence white if he didn't. Since then, he hasn't heard anything, he said. **Murry** said he did not know of any employee making such an offer. He did not know if the city had ever done that in a previous case. Townsend said he wouldn't mind if the city painted the fence white -- as long as it used good paint, paid for it and forced two other neighbors with red and maroon fences to change their color. **Murry** said the red and maroon fences are not being considered because they did not have any code violations. Neighbor Joseph Vitti, whose white fence also was cited for violations, said he didn't have any problem with Townsend's yellow fence. "I like to see a nice neighborhood, but I don't like the way the city's acting," Vitti said. "I think this is a big joke." **Murry** said a decision will be made on Townsend's fence in the next few weeks. City employees also are considering ways to develop guidelines for paint colors of buildings and other structures, he said. "It's an issue that's been brought up several times, by various people in the community," he said.

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