

SURFSIDE

Town proceeds with firm to fill manager post

BY CRYSTAL CHEW
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Surfside commissioners — advertising for a new town manager — will move ahead with a local search firm despite “grave concerns” raised by the vice mayor during a meeting on Monday.

The commission hired Colin Baenziger & Associates to find candidates after Michael Crotty, who became town manager in March 2013, resigned in June.

Surfside commissioners discussed the search Monday at a special meeting requested by Vice Mayor Eli Tourgeman.

He called the meeting after reading about Coral Gables commissioners’ complaints about the search firm.

The firm was hired by Coral Gables to find a city manager.

Coral Gables picked James Beard, 50, of Atlanta, but then

pushed him aside after a city-run records check raised concerns among leaders.

Beard was one of five finalists picked by the search firm, which was later criticized by some in Coral Gables for its background checks.

Beard has said the city knew about his background. He has said that he withdrew his own name after he and the city were unable to agree on a compensation package.

Coral Gables replaced Baenziger & Associates, hiring Bud Park, a search firm executive who is well known in the city.

“I have great concerns,” Tourgeman said during the meeting on Monday.

“I am not comfortable with the company that we hired to seek a new town manager.”

Tourgeman said the town has a “history of turnstyle management,” and even though it is in “dire need of a



MATIAS OCNER/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

RESIGNED: Surfside Town Manager Michael Crotty, standing, talks to Vice Mayor Eli Tourgeman during a meeting. Crotty announced his resignation in June.

new manager,” he does not want to rush the process.

“I think it’s time for us to hire somebody that will re-

ally and truly take us to the next level,” he said.

After discussing the concerns and several other options, commissioners decided to keep the Baenziger firm on the job.

“I think it’s responsible to have this meeting,” resident Norma Parron said during the meeting.

“The firm will be held to a higher standard going forward.”

The town had tried to find a replacement in house, but was unsuccessful and hired the firm for \$23,000. The firm started advertising on Tuesday, getting the go ahead to do so on Monday, after the meeting.

The closing date is Oct. 17. The interviews are scheduled for Nov. 20.

“We won’t really know anything until about Oct. 18, after the closing date,” Colin Baenziger said.

“You really don’t know what you have until the very end.”

Coast Guard must keep one span open

As those who use the Venetian Causeway to get between Downtown and South Beach know, there has been a significant history of closures along the causeway.

I understand the need to fully restore the west side of the Venetian, especially following the incident in March, when a part gave way beneath a heavy Metrobus.

However, as a resident of the Venetian Islands, I am greatly concerned that unless the Coast Guard decides to lock down the East Causeway Bridge during the reconstruction period, lives will be put at risk.

The East Causeway Bridge has a known history of mechanical failure and should it get stuck in the open position, as both bridges did simultaneously in early July, emergency services would not have access to the islands.

Even without an emergency, people could not get to work, get home, or take children to and from school.

I urge everyone who lives, works or commutes along the causeway to write to the U.S. Coast Guard and press it to keep the east bridge locked down until the west end is once again safe for traffic.

To submit a comment, go

How to sound off

To submit your letter, e-mail sandron@MiamiHerald.com. Letters must address a specific LOCAL issue, and must be signed with a name, city or neighborhood, as well as a telephone number for verification purposes. Letters more than 350 words will not be accepted, and writers are limited to one letter every four weeks. Letters will run as space allows, and may be edited for length, style and clarity. The deadline for letters is noon Wednesday.

to regulations.gov and enter USCG-2014-0719.

— Mark Samuelian, Miami Beach

NEIGHBORS CALENDAR

HOW TO POST AN EVENT IN THE MIAMI HERALD

Go to www.MiamiHerald.com/events and follow the prompts. To get into print, you must limit the description field to 150 characters (counting spaces) or about two and a half lines in the description field. We do not use all the categories you see in the drop-down. Make sure you choose one of these main categories: community, fairs, festivals; music, performing arts, sports & outdoors, visual arts, then select a subcategory that appears just under the main category. Questions? call 305-376-3430 or email Sue Mullin at smullin@MiamiHerald.com with “Calendar question” on the subject line.

COMMUNITY

3rd Gastronomic Festival- Peru Fest USA: Join us for our 3rd Gastronomic Festival Perufest USA offering Peruvian cuisine and their chefs. Peruvian products, crafts, entertainment, folkloric dances, Horse Show, kids activities and much more. Fun for the entire family. For more information call 305-613-1166 or 786-853-3650
12 p.m. Oct. 5. Fair Expo Center, 10901 Coral Way, University Park. \$20. 305-613-1166 or 786-853-3650.
A Unique Family Adventure: If you’re itching for some adventure, then UrbanQuest has just the ticket for you.

Quests are an Amazing-Race style scavenger hunt.

7 p.m. Oct. 5. South Beach Yacht Club, 400 SE Second Ave., Downtown Miami. www.urbanquest.com.

ACND Prep 24th Annual Alumni Golf Tournament: Join ACND Prep alumni and friends for a fun day of golf out on the green and an evening filled with dinner, socializing, and an exciting silent auction benefiting a fully restored and modernized campus. For more information, visit www.acnd.net, call or email golf@acnd.net.

7 p.m. Oct. 10. Miami Shores Country Club, 10000 Biscayne Blvd., Miami Shores. From \$65. 305.751.8367 *19. www.acnd.net.

ACND Prep Homecoming and New Tennis Courts Dedication: The ACND Booster Club invites all to the dedication of the tennis courts and unveiling of the brand new Tennis State Championship banners. Check presentation by USTA representatives awarding ACND with grant for tennis court benches and bleachers.

2:30 p.m. Oct. 11. Archbishop Curley Notre Dame Prep and Middle School Academy, 4949 NE Second Ave., Little Haiti. Free. 305-751-8367. www.acnd.net.

Afternoon of Bridal Luxury: Modern Luxury Brides South Florida and The Caribbean presents event subtitled “Something Borrowed, Something ‘Bleau.” Begins at Oasis pool for a swimwear and lingerie fashion show and followed by seated luncheon, fashion show and designer bridal showcase.

11 a.m. Oct. 11. Fontainebleau Miami Beach, 4441 Collins Ave., Miami Beach. \$60 (includes swag bag and mini-cake from pastry team at hotel). 305-341-2798. www.eventbrite.com.

Astronomy Day: Join us as we

• TURN TO CALENDAR, 31NE