

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES**

-- MEMORANDUM --



*The City Beautiful*

**TO:** Members of the City Commission,

**FROM:** Commissioner Vince Lago

**DATE:** November 13, 2017

**SUBJECT:** City Attorney

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "V. Lago", is written over the "FROM:" line.

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For six years we have been fortunate to have a formidable City Attorney in Craig E. Leen. Craig joined our City from the Miami-Dade County Attorney's Office and with exceptional qualifications. During his time with the City, he has grown the City Attorney's Office both in size and stature. Craig has led the successful resolution of scores of controversies with his demeanor and intellect. His dedication to the City has been evident throughout his tenure and, in particular, during times of controversy where he has taken an even larger leadership role and helped to navigate the City into the place where it is today. Craig has been a staunch advocate of Home Rule and of inclusion initiatives for all individuals with disabilities. In both areas, his tireless efforts and advocacy have resulted in significant wins for municipalities as well as changes that have bettered the lives of individuals of all ages with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities. Craig is a leader in the Miami-Dade County community and we have been lucky to have him serve as our City Attorney for all these years. His service to and for the City will forever be remembered and appreciated.

With Craig's departure we must now determine who will be the next City Attorney for our City. For the past two and a half years we have had a tremendous Deputy City Attorney in Miriam Soler Ramos, who has fifteen years of government experience. She began her career at the Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office where she served as an Assistant State Attorney in the Domestic Violence Unit (misdemeanor and felony) as well as in the Career Criminal Unit. After completing her commitment to that office, Miriam joined the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust (Ethics Commission) where she remained for nine years, serving under two Executive Directors and ultimately as the Deputy General Counsel to that organization. During Miriam's time with the Ethics Commission, she participated in numerous panel discussions, provided dozens of training sessions, and appeared on radio and television discussing ethics in government. Notably, she was invited by the U.S. Department of State to speak on corruption-fighting initiatives. She was responsible for the drafting and issuing of many ethics inquiries and opinions and spent much of her time at the COE leading prosecutions for violations of the Miami-Dade County Ethics Code and other ordinances under the COE's jurisdiction.

Since joining the City, Miriam has been excellent advisor to each of us, the City's administration and department directors, she has strengthened our ethics processes, guided us in our actions, and helped to grow the City Attorney's Office into the office it is today. Miriam has also taken on the role of City Prosecutor, strengthening the City's enforcement efforts by drafting innovative legislation, working with Code Enforcement to oversee prosecutions, and supervising the Justice Advocate Program. She has organized the office to be more efficient and effective in accomplishing the City's goals and ensures that projects and initiatives that are important to the City are carried out promptly and effectively. Miriam is a well-respected member of the Miami-Dade legal community for her intellect, dedication to public service, character, work ethics and leadership style.

Following in Craig's footsteps, earlier this year, Miriam became board certified by the Florida Bar in City, County and Local Government Law, a distinction held by a small number of lawyers throughout the State of Florida and one that makes her an expert in this area of law. Miriam is also a leader in the Florida Bar, serving as Vice Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. She was also appointed by the Florida Bar Board of Governors to serve on the Special Committee on Parental Leave and had previously served two terms on the Bar's Professional Ethics Committee. She is also an active member of the legal community in Miami and serves on the Board of Directors of the Cuban American Bar Association (CABA) and is a member various voluntary bar associations. Miriam also serves on the Board of Directors of the Children's Home Society.

The vision that Craig has made a reality for the City Attorney's Office was largely based on the Miami-Dade County Attorney's Office, a local government office with a stellar reputation. In order to promote continuity and consistency and to keep the office's apolitical nature, the tradition of that office is to appoint the First Assistant County Attorney as County Attorney, if the County Commission supports the decision. Consistent with that view, Craig created the "deputy" position with the intent that the person would work directly for the City Commission, along with the City Attorney, and that the "deputy" would succeed him as City Attorney.

We have a Deputy City Attorney who is both qualified and eager to step into the position of City Attorney and who enjoys the unequivocal support of our current City Attorney. During her time with the City, she has proven herself to be highly qualified, dedicated and committed to the Office of the City Attorney and to the City of Coral Gables. For these reasons, I support appointing Miriam Soler Ramos as City Attorney during the Tuesday, November 14, 2017 City Commission meeting and directing the Mayor and City Attorney to negotiate with her in accordance with the City's established process and Ordinance 2017-30, and to place the mutually agreed upon terms into a Resolution for our consideration at the December 5, 2017 City Commission meeting. I look forward to our discussion on Tuesday. Please do not "reply all."

CC: City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark  
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen  
City Clerk, Walter Foeman