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Property Taxes To Rise As Beach Ponders \$11 Million Budget Shortfall

BY ERIC ROSENBERG, Staff Writer

The Miami Beach City Commission unanimously passed Tuesday a highly controversial property tax increase during a meeting that lasted nearly 10 hours.

The plan is to raise property taxes by 2.5 percent, or \$1.1 million per \$100,000 of assessed property value after October 31. The city's current millage rate is 2.2 percent.

Although the millage rate will have to be approved by voters, the commission is expected to vote on any changes after an extensive public hearing and a referendum.

land value in Miami Beach from \$2.6 billion to \$3.8 billion. Collectively that means an increase of \$1.2 million in operational property taxes. For the average homeowner it means a tax bill that's 2.5 percent higher than last year.

In spite of the property tax increase, city officials are still struggling to find ways to close an \$11 million deficit for the next fiscal year's budget. The commission will discuss the issue next budget on September 10.

To close the gap, Finance Director Tina Walker has suggested holding off on buying additional government bonds already mandated by the commission — such as fixing a \$100 million liability for engine credit (EN-CRED) and obtaining a permit to purchase Miami Beach (MIB-2002).

Walker also suggested a series of cost-cutting measures including charging residents for trash pickup and parking fees. She also suggested a series of cost-cutting measures including charging residents for trash pickup and parking fees. She also suggested a series of cost-cutting measures including charging residents for trash pickup and parking fees.

Cheap Gourmet Food

BY JASON JEFFERS, Staff Writer

During the month of August, several Miami Beach restaurants will be offering full-course meals at discount prices, in part as a new strategy to promote the region's dining scene.

It's all part of the "Miami Beach Restaurant Month" which is being sponsored by the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) and American Express.

The idea was based on programs that other major cities have used to promote their cultures, and, in Miami Beach, was conceived, organized and executed by the GMCVB. Another similar effort was the "Miami Beach Restaurant Month" which is being sponsored by the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) and American Express.

To lure customers, the list of restaurants to participate in the program will include offering full-course dinners for \$29, including tax and gratuity. Some will also offer lunch for \$19.95.

It is hoped that the promotion will provide a boost to the region's restaurant industry, which regularly slows down during the summer months.

"We decided that it made sense for us to put this together during the time of the year when our restaurant scene needs it the most," Aledo said. "The goal is to provide additional value at special restaurants, and really give people an incentive to seek out new dining experiences."

"We're looking for lines down to the end of the block," said Eric Aledo, general manager of Dorelli. "August is a slow time for the restaurant business down here, but even this early in a seasonal area. Through this program, hopefully people will get an opportunity to try restaurants they've never been to before."

By advertising through at least four participating restaurants during the month, diners will be able to enjoy a variety of regional specialties, including a grand prime of beef, Caribbean chicken or the non-traditional, highly popular, Cuban-style pork loin.

Some are hoping that the event will also establish the region as a premier dining destination.

"It really gives us an opportunity to appeal to a broader audience that we're not used to seeing," said Rod Gutierrez, general manager of Juan. "It's not a full-course dinner for \$29, it's a great deal, so we're hoping to attract new customers. There will be a lot more people here to give back to your customers, they are the life and blood of your business. Through this event, Miami Beach hasn't really been known as a restaurant town, and something like this could really create a buzz."

The event has already been promoted at the South Beach Vivaldi & Fined Festival and the Food & Wine Festival in Aspen, said Aledo, who also added that "Miami Beach" could become an annual event.

"I think it's a beautiful concept," said Susan Smith, spokeswoman for the GMCVB. "It's not to happen once or twice, but the dining scene counterparty. Contributions to getting ready to fill the night back to Page 21



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introducing the "Miami Beach" label. Page 12

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HOT COUTURE

WITH ESTHER NASH



(Left) Miami Playgirl & (right) New York Party Girl

While back, we compared the Miami and New York versions of the Playboy. Here are profiles of the Miami Playgirl and her Big Apple counterpart:

THE MIAMI PLAYGIRL: FUN IN THE SUN

Floridian women are very beautiful and, if not born that way, they keep the plastic surgeon busily at work. They wear very skimpy and sexy clothes to show off their amazing figures. When you see a Miami woman coming, guys, check your wallet, your ATM card, and make sure you are carrying all your credit cards. They expect to be treated well. They wear bright, eye-popping colors, so you cannot possibly miss them in a crowd.

The term "Sex Appeal," may have had its origin in South Beach. SoBe girls do not wear black and they do not blend. They are diamonds in a basket of rocks. Everyone looks like a Playboy model or could be one. As a New Yorker, I do not yet know much about them first hand, but I have noticed they like to party 8 days a week.

Miami women sizzle even more in the sun, as they lie oiled, bottoms up and topless on the beach. It is a sight to be seen and remembered. Florida girls make Barbie look bad. If you are ready to join in the "sunsation," then be sure to order an Esther Nash original SoBe thong bikini — and make the Miami summer even hotter.

THE NEW YORK PARTY GAL

New York women let you know what is in their mind. After all, they are urban debutantes. They always have an opinion to add to the conversation and they speak in specif-



ESTHER NASH

ic terms, because they know what they are talking about (usually).

Nothing passes them unnoticed, if they can help it. Yes, you will be questioned, or should I say cross-examined, so have your answers ready to begin your explanation. For the most part NYC girls are well educated and want to be treated as equals socially as well as in the workplace. They are brainy as well as beautiful, and are well compensated in the labor market.

You won't catch a New York City girl having to call 20 people for advice before making a decision. They are strong-minded. New York women know exactly what they want and what their convictions are.

They are stylish and very trendy, which almost makes them appear as if they are wearing the latest fashion "uniform." NYC natives are walking fashion statements, as they strut about in their earrings, watches, hair, make-up, suits, and shoes toting their designer bags. The color of their uniformed attire is nearly always black, and they wear black the best, in my opinion.

If you are thinking about planning a junket to NYC, be sure to consult me on your wardrobe selections for your jaunt. New York is the last place you want to be caught in out of style!

Esther Nash is a hot new fashion designer, model and boutique owner who has been featured in numerous publications including New York, Cosmo Girl and Teen People among many others. For fashion ideas and great bargains, check out her website at www.babydollboutique.com or call 917-286-0614.