



Section 5

Thaddeus L. Cohen

*Lake Worth Beach City Manager
Candidate Report*

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Cover Letter and Resume

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May 26, 2021

Attn: Recruiting Team

It is a pleasure to submit my resume to be considered as the next City Manager for Lake Worth Beach, Florida. I share the City's vision to strive to be the best community in America to live, work and play. I also support the mission to deliver high quality, best value, public services, programs, and facilities to your residents and visitors. In part the City Manager is tasked with carrying out the policy direction provided by the Mayor and City Commission. The position functions as the CEO, providing leadership and direction for the day-to-day operations and management of the employees of the Mayor and City Commission. I want to take a moment to match my history with three criteria I feel are important for the position of City Manager.

Leadership and Organizational Direction: I have been the Secretary of a State Agency, an Assistant City Manager, a CRA Executive Director and a Planning Director. Ensuring that the goals set by elected officials and the community are carried out, takes a team effort. I am a dynamic, energetic individual, someone with character and a passion for excellence.

Operational Effectiveness: For me, it is being positive, thinking creatively, and thinking outside of the box to help build consensus on a course of action to effectively deploy organizational resources to achieve operational objectives. I treat operational problems and issues as opportunities to learn and grow rather than stumbling blocks.

Performance Management and Workforce Development: I am respectful of others, delegate and encourage an environment where creativity can flourish. I believe in creating relationships to build an environment of trust, which I feel is important. In other words, mentoring and coaching to make a discernible difference in the advancement of our shared goals.

In conclusion, my broad experience has prepared me to be an ideal candidate. My resume reflects a diverse career in local and state government. My private sector experience includes major work for local and state governments. I look forward to having an opportunity to interview with you. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Thaddeus Cohen

Thaddeus L. Cohen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An accomplished senior executive with hands on experience providing oversight to assigned departmental operations, providing direct supervision to departmental managers, to effectively implement goals and objectives. A leader with excellent team building skills to ensure interdepartmental goals are met and to motivate staff to carry out management decisions in the most efficient manner. An innovative and strategic thinker in the development and implementation of policies and procedures; a history of constructively engaging with communities that are diverse, a record of promoting increased cooperation with businesses, community stakeholders, area local governments, State and Federal officials; a proven consensus builder; a seasoned public servant who finds the complexities of municipal government rewarding and challenging and approaches these challenges with confidence and a positive attitude.

PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS

Policy Formulation and Implementation • Organizational Transformation • Strategic Planning • Citizen Involvement Initiatives • Budget Development / Administration • Economic Community Development Strategies • Service Delivery Methods and Procedures • Program / Construction Management • Contract Monitoring • Negotiation Strategies • Public Speaking Expertise

RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Collier County, Florida

Growth Management, Department Head 2017 – May 2021

The Growth Management Department consists of nine divisions (Airports to Zoning) with a total budget of approximately \$306M with 600 employees serving a community of 360,000 permanent residents and 60,000 seasonal residents. See attachment for highlights from each Division.

Responsible for strategic plans, goals and objectives for the Department. Ensures the Department's strategic plans support the broad County mission, goals and objectives. Provides direction and oversight to division directors regarding individual division work plans; ensures the divisions work together to maximize Department performance and the use of resources. Serves as a member of the Executive Management team, making large scale strategic decisions. Highlights of my tenure include:

- At the 30- day mark on the job with Collier County effectively managed the Department's response to Hurricane Irma. Major arterials cleared in less than 3 days; managed the water debris mission; coordinated building assessments; personally, managed the phone bank information center.
- Post Hurricane Irma instituted revisions to vendor selections to support Traffic Operation's Signal section with contracts that are FEMA compliant. Reoriented storm water debris mission in coordination with Big Cypress Basin.
- Managed the establishment of a Storm Water Maintenance Section to move the organization from a reactive to a proactive posture in the maintenance program. Established a five- year KPI metric to measure progress toward an industry standard for Storm Water asset management. Established a fix it instead of patch it philosophy; presented to the Productivity Committee the new strategy which supported increase staffing in the storm water section to meet the community needs. Obtained 60 million in debt funding to support critical infrastructure improvements over the next three years.
- Managed and participated in the completion of three of the major planning initiatives for the County. Golden Gate Subarea Masterplans; Immokalee Master Plan and the Rural Land Stewardship Overlay

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(RLSA). These restudies are the most extensive rewriting of the areas planning strategies in nearly ten years. Each sets the criteria for further development for the next decade.

- Spearheaded the establishment of the Golden Gate TIF District. Worked to create a vision to increase the economic activity along Golden Gate Parkway through financial and land-use incentives. Created a visual framework for future development.
- Established a working protocol for red tide and blue- green algae information dissemination to the community between Pollution Control, Health Department and Tourism. The Protocol formalized the framework for testing responsibilities and result timelines while providing the technical, clinical and onsite information in a consistent manner for each of the subject matter agencies.
- Currently implementing a Departmentwide budgeting tool to increase awareness for each Division of expenditures and revenues on a daily basis tied to the Agency's SAP system. Its effectiveness is being considered by other Departments as a potential Agencywide tool.
- Continuing to improve our communication strategy through our redesigned website which is customer centric. GMD has taken the lead with a public portal which provides citizens a convenient method to access project information which can be sorted by type, neighborhood or district. GMD has led the Agency in keeping our stakeholders informed by way of our digital newsletter that provides highlights of significant issues regarding our Department.

City of Key West, Florida

Planning Director and CRA 20015 – 2017

A full-service, municipal government with a \$166M annual budget and 489 employees supporting a community of 25,000 permanent residents with 25,000 seasonal and tourist visitors. The City's enterprise units include building department, parking division, and cruise ship port.

Responsible for the Planning Department to management, elected officials, and outside agencies; created, presented and explained departmental programs, policies and activities; resolved sensitive, significant, and controversial land use issues; managed the development of long range plans for the City; identified complex policy issues and worked interdepartmentally to create, present and implement comprehensive solutions; assessed, operational and internal reporting relationships; created new systems for effective service delivery. Responsible for the development and administration of the department's budget; directed the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; directed approval of expenditures as necessary. Responsible for the day- to- day management, administration, supervision and strategic direction for the work activities for Planning and Zoning; Community Redevelopment Agency; Urban Forestry; Historic Preservation, Sustainability; Arts in Public Places; and Truman Waterfront Advisory and their respective boards and committee functions. Highlights of my work include:

- Established the City's first simultaneous permitting review process. An inter-departmental process which ensures major and minor development plans approved by the planning board and city commission and project without those approvals are in compliance with city codes and requirements prior to the issuance of a building permit.
- Developed and passed a parking fee increase projected to add over 3 Million in revenue. The increase is 87 percent paid for by tourist. A local resident exemption for four hours of free parking in selected downtown parking locations was a key selling point in its approval by the city commission. The increase will fund a newly created Transportation Alternative Fund, provide dedicated source of funding for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and additional dollars to the General Fund.

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- Established the Transportation Alternative Fund (TAP) with the parking revenue increase, 1.14 Million in the first year; created a four bus, 15 minute, service downtown transit loop “DUVAL LOOP” working with an additional 425K in technical assistance from FDOT / South Florida Commuter Services in conjunction with Key West Transit. Created the Car Free Key West Campaign to encourage safer biking, walking in the community. <http://keysweekly.com/42/car-free-key-west-plans-first-view/> The fund will also support a newly established Bike Share program and later in 2017 a Car Share program. Managed the RFQ for a 275K Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan which is ongoing. These efforts are to connect more closely transportation and land use to reduce the cost of housing.
- Established with the parking fee increase, approximately 800 Thousand annually, a dedicated source of revenue for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Possibly being the only city in Florida with a dedicated source of funding for affordable housing.
- Managed and participated in the complete rewrite of the Land Development Regulations which was divided into four themes Affordable Housing; Transportation; Sustainability and Disaster Mitigation. Managed citizen participation and workshops. A significant portion of the work redefines the criteria for affordable housing making housing more attainable for city residents by changing the AMI constraints; increasing density in selected areas; reduction in parking requirements and recommending the creation of an Affordable Housing Incentive Zone.
- Represented the City as a non-voting member on Monroe County’s Affordable Housing Taskforce. Several recommendations with regards to access affordable units; height increase; incentives were accepted by the body and the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners.
- Led and managed with a consultant team the Bahama Village CRA Visioning / Capital Work Plan. The first meaningful update of the CRA plan since 2010. Through workshops established the priorities for projects and funding for community improvements in the short term 1-3 years / medium 1-5 years and long term 5- 10 years and beyond. Established funding criteria for future projects as being Critical, Strategic or Important with appropriate definitions and metrics for success.

City of Pensacola, Florida

Assistant City Manager and Community Redevelopment Agency Director 2008 – 2011

A full-service, municipal government with a \$217M annual budget and 860 employees supporting a community of 52,000 residents. The City’s enterprise units include the airport, seaport and gas company.

Duties and Responsibilities as Assistant City Manager:

Responsible for implementing Council policy and Manager directives; Senior budget member developed the city’s operational and capital budgets; accountable for the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; oversaw the approval of expenditures of assigned departments; and the preparations and implementation of budgetary adjustments as necessary. Provided oversight and approval of expenditures of assigned departments; Departments within scope of responsibility included Parks and Recreation, Housing Department, Planning and Zoning, Building Inspection Services, Neighborhood Enhancement Teams, Saenger Theater, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Port of Pensacola. Identified and resolved long range issues with management, staff, elected officials, p/z, and environmental boards and historical preservation commissions, and outside agencies; negotiated sensitive issues with public and private sector entities ranging from economic development to growth strategies. Directed, and evaluated the day- to- day efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and procedures. Assessed and monitored workload, administrative and support systems and internal reporting relationships; identified opportunities for improvement and directed implementation. Developed and represented legislative issues to state and federal delegations. Media representation for the City included television and radio appearances, print and webcast interviews, and preparation of press releases.

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- Management team participant in developing the City's 30-month budget. Developed Citywide departmental priorities that maintained critical City services while reducing staff positions by 12 percent in conjunction with the City's bargaining units between 2008 and 2011.
- Introduced computerized processes to streamline council meetings and reduce cost; placed the city budget on-line with updates for citizens. Transformed web presence of the Parks and Recreation Department and Community Redevelopment Agency with a modern and engaging range of user-friendly tools which attracted and increased resident participation on the site.
- Developed and led downtown traffic signalization management program which reduced traffic congestion and idling and improved air quality. Oversaw with FDOT State Highway 98 pavement rehabilitation program which improved traffic flow and pedestrian access in the downtown core.
- Led citywide citizen engagement effort during the State-mandated update of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The plan was recognized by the Florida Department of Community Affairs for its innovative strategies in transportation and land use.
- Principal author of the Community Redevelopment Agency's *Community Redevelopment Plan 2010* to create a vision for downtown. The *Plan* achieved the first update since 1985, establishing the downtown strategic framework for the next fifteen years.
- Implemented the traffic management "retail strategy" that increased downtown vehicular traffic by 80 percent and pedestrian traffic by 25 percent in the City's retail core.
- Led the Community Redevelopment Agency and City's participation in financing and development of the 16-acre downtown technology park with EDA, Escambia County, and Pensacola Chamber of Commerce. Established strategic storm water drainage program to convert an underutilized 5-acre park to a retention pond / park in support of the 16-acre technology park funded by storm water fees and MSTU agreements.
- Optimized operations at the City of Pensacola Municipal Golf Course by restructuring and reinvestment efforts resulting in a 35 percent reduction in operational cost as part of an investment strategy to redesign and modernizes greens and fairways and renovate and rebrand the clubhouse concessionaire operations.
- Established the City's New Year's event, the *Pelican Drop* TM, gaining regional and national media coverage. The event is now attended by over 100,000 participants, leading to 100 percent occupancy in downtown hotels and increased retail sales.
- Established an annexation framework to create an 864 acre "Midtown" commercial / industrial inland port facility leveraging clean-up of a 60-acre super fund site in partnership EPA and the State of Florida.
- Author of the City of Pensacola's *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Long Term Recovery Plan*. The *Plan* established strategies that align with the Economic Recovery portion of the Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' *America's Gulf Coast Report*. The Secretary's announcement of the *America Gulf Coast Report* in Pensacola and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson's decision to host the first Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force meeting in Pensacola were direct results of the *Plan*.
- Principal team negotiator in the development of the \$52M Community Maritime Park, a 40-acre development that includes a minor-league baseball stadium, 7000-seat amphitheater venue, and 500,000 square feet of private mixed-use development. Financing for the project included a City land donation, Build America Bonds, Tax Increment Funds, and New Market Tax Credits.
- Redefined the strategic direction for the Port of Pensacola, and attracted the first major tenant to the Port in five years, Offshore Inland Oil and Marine Services Inc. Incentives included a relocation package provided

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by the Community Redevelopment Agency with wharfage and dockage relief contributed by the Port. Overall effort produced 50 jobs and \$6.2M in economic activity in the first six months of operation.

- Established an “Enlivening Public Spaces and Branding Strategy” that created a specialty center branded as the “Entertainment District,” credited with the resurgence of the downtown retail core. The Entertainment District increased food and beverage establishments by fifty percent with a twelve percent increase in the labor force over two-and-a-half years.

Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida
Secretary, 2004 – 2007

The State of Florida’s 432million, 450 employee land planning, emergency management, housing and community development agency.

Responsible for the Department’s policies and operations organized into three service areas: The Division of Community Planning develops and administers Florida’s growth management programs; The Division of Housing and Community Development administers State and Federal programs designed to provide community and economic development assistance; and The Division of Emergency Management leads the State’s emergency response team and provides response, planning, and mitigation for manmade and natural disaster.

Reported to the Governor:

- The Division of Emergency Management delivered \$3B in State match for FEMA hurricane disaster dollars in 2004-2005 with minimal State and Federal audit comments. Developed and implemented design of a computerized process to track individual FEMA PWs during the disaster event providing instantaneous status reports to local governments.
- Developed policies and administered \$1.2B in HUD disaster supplemental dollars to hurricane-affected communities in 2004-2005. In coordination with FEMA, the Division of Community Planning prepared the most comprehensive citizen-based, long-term recovery plans to address the catastrophic damages caused by these storms. Asked by HUD to provide training to Mississippi and Alabama on techniques used to provide constituent services.
- Passed SB 360 (2005) “pay as you grow” legislation and associated 1.2 Billion appropriation to ensure that roads, schools, sewer, and water were available to meet the needs of the communities in one of the fastest growing states in the nation.
- Created the Coastal High Hazard Study Commission through an Executive Order from the Governor. The Commission, a blue-ribbon committee, evaluated the State’s regulatory framework related to coastal development polices in the Department of Environmental Protection, the Office of Insurance, the Building Code Commission, the Division of Emergency Management, and other stakeholders.
- Successfully developed and passed legislation with the Florida Building Commission to bring Florida panhandle counties under a unified Building Code, resulting in lower home owner insurance costs under the insurance industry’s community rating system.
- Funded university research on establishing higher residential construction standards to reduce evacuation requirements. The findings have been adopted by the International Building Code Commission.
- Led the State’s first ever development and implementation of fiscal impact analysis modeling and visual planning tools to assist regions in forecasting their community visions and related capital budgets.

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- Launched the State's coordinated effort of SB 444 (2005), tethering the State's Water Management District's regional water plans to Regional Planning Council's Strategic Regional Policy Plans and ensuring a stronger connection between land development and the use of the State's water resources.
- Spearheaded and funded regional planning efforts like the Sustainable Emerald Coast, Sustainable Treasure Coast, Issues 2005 Southwest Florida, and Orlando's "How Shall We Grow?" visioning efforts. Such initiatives positioned these communities to successfully obtain \$11M in Federal funding from the Sustainable Communities program in 2010.
- Negotiated the 40 million bond offering for wastewater improvements in the Florida Keys between Monroe County, the municipalities, the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and the State of Florida.
www.myflorida.com/myflorida/cabinet/agenda05/0823/trans_082305.pdf
- Authored and developed with the late Representative Mike Davis Florida's first Workforce Housing Program (2005) which created housing initiatives for essential service personnel i.e. fire fighters, police officers, nurses, teacher etc.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

MBR Construction, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Project Program Manager, 2013 – 2015

A construction company that delivers infra-structure facilities and related services to municipal governments in the areas of parks; community centers; marinas; administrative buildings; airports; streetscapes; and recreational facilities.

Managed and oversaw delivery of infrastructure projects to governmental clients; Represented the company to government agencies, industry representatives and trade organizations. Coordinated major projects including governmental development approvals for projects such as Boca Raton Airport Authority Administration Building and the Reconstruction of Taxiway A / E at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport which required local, State and Federal FAA approvals. Established and monitored protocols for compliance with M/DBE requirements. Responsible for the development and mentoring of staff. Monitored construction budgets, developed project scopes for subcontractors; contract modifications and requests for change orders; directed resolution of design and construction issues between team members.

Thaddeus Cohen Architect, PA, Delray Beach, Florida
President, 1984 – 2004

President of an award-winning architectural / planning firm providing solution for municipal governments in the areas of housing, economic development, urban design, community planning, transportation, criminal justice, and recreational facilities.

Spearheaded business development throughout Florida. Expanded client base from municipal government to state agencies. Developed new services and funding capabilities for the market sector serviced by the firm. Accountable for, recruitment, development and mentoring of project teams. Developed capital budgets for project sponsor needs and developed project scopes that efficiently meet those needs; monitor project budgets, contract modifications and requests for change orders; directed resolution of design and construction issues between team members; establish and maintain positive relationships with clients and contractors. Special emphasis was placed on maximizing the taxpayer's dollars.

Housing and Community Planning

- Northwest Neighborhood Housing and Redevelopment Plan; West Palm Beach, Florida

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- Sistrunk Housing and Redevelopment Plan, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Bahama Village Housing and Redevelopment Plan, Key West Florida
- Wilton Manors Redevelopment Plan, Wilton Manors, Florida
- Establishment of Community Redevelopment Agencies in Key West and Delray Beach, Florida

Community Centers and Parks

- Hadley Park Community Center and Olympic Pool, Miami Florida, Franklin Park Community Center, Fort Lauderdale Fl, Highland Park Community Center, Pompano Beach Fl, Dyer Park, West Palm Beach, Fl. Orville Bathhouse, Orville Ohio

Transportation

- Developed the architectural design criteria and guidelines for the double tracking and station expansion of the South Florida Tri-County Commuter Rail system. Implemented those system wide designs for the Sheridan Street Station, Hollywood Fl; Opa Locka Station Miami Fl.; Coconut Creek Station

Criminal Justice

- Designed the award-winning Harry and Harriette T. Moore Museum in Mims, Florida dedicated to Harry T. Moore, the NAACP organizer killed on the Christmas Day 1951 bombing of their home. Provided construction administration services for several criminal justice facilities including the 76,000 sf North Broward County, Florida Courthouse, 750-bed Male Correctional Facility in Moore Haven, Florida, and the 1350-bed Male Correctional Facility in South Bay, Florida.

Water and Wastewater

- Responsible for architectural design and construction administration for several Florida municipal water treatment facilities including Miramar WTP; West Palm Beach WTP no 2; Belle Glade WTP renovation.

SELECTED CIVIC ACTIVITIES

United Way of Collier County / Florida Keys, Board Member

Leadership Collier, Class 2019

Florida Community Trust, Chair

Florida's Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, Member

Florida's Sustainable Treasure Coast, Co-Chair

Florida's Growth Management Study Commission, Member Governor's Appointee

Florida's Fiscal Impact Analysis Model Study Group, Member, Governor's Appointee

Florida's Sustainable Emerald Coast, Member

Florida Housing Finance Corporation, Board Member

Florida's Coastal High Hazard Study Commission Co-Chair

FDEP Land Acquisition and Restoration Council, Member

Florida Hurricane Housing Work Group, Member

Florida's Broward Alliance, Board Member

Urban Land Institute – Florida Committee for Regional Cooperation

Metro Broward, Florida, Board Member

Council for Black Economic Broward County Florida, Chair

Florida American Institute of Architects Florida, Palm Beach Chapter, President

Florida American Institute of Architects, Board Member

Delray Beach Housing Authority, Board Member

Partners in Excellence (Education) Broward County Florida, Board Member

Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Commission, Chair

Affordable Housing Task Force, Monroe County, Florida, Member

1000 Friends of Florida, Board Member

Saint Andrews School Boca Raton, Florida, Board Member

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

Candidate Introduction

Thaddeus Cohen

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent Ohio

EXPERIENCE

Department Head/Assistant County Manager Growth Management Department Collier County, Florida	2017-2021
Planning Director/ Executive Director CRA, Key West, Florida	2015-2017
Project Manager, MBR Construction, Fort Lauderdale, Florida	2013-2015
Management Consultant, Tallahassee, Florida	2011-2013
Assistant City Manager/ CRA Director, Pensacola, Florida	2008-2011
Management Consultant, Tallahassee, Florida	2007-2008
Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida	2004-2007

BACKGROUND

Collier County is located at the southern end of Florida's Gulf Coast region. The county has a total area of 2,305 square miles which makes it Florida's largest county by land area and fourth largest by total area. Framed by 34 miles of sandy beaches, the county accounts for 1/3 of southwest Florida's region land mass. Interestingly, the entire southern portion of the county lies within the Big Cypress National Preserve. The county encompasses municipalities of Naples, Marco Island and Everglades City. The population is approximately 368,161 permanent residents and another 60,000 seasonal residents.

Collier County has targeted economic sectors which include corporate headquarters; clean tech; manufacturing; life sciences; defense & homeland security; aviation & aerospace; information technology; financial & professional services. The three major industries currently are tourism, development (258 permits per month) and agriculture which are significant economic drivers for the county's 15,341 business establishments and 151,556 jobs.

Collier County's general fund is 537 million dollars out of a net 1.5 billion budget supporting 1,973 employees. The Growth Management Department for which I was responsible has an operating budget of 112 million dollars supporting 600 employees in nine divisions and a capital budget of 186 million for construction of roads, bridges, beach renourishment, storm water and landscape improvements.

The three most significant issues facing the County are:

Local option infrastructure sales tax: The sales tax is expected to collect 420 million over, its seven- year life. With five years remaining tracking, managing and reporting on

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all aspects related to collecting spending tax proceeds for the enumerated projects within the enabling ordinances.

Funding Growth: Future growth is expected to accelerate in eastern Collier County. The Water/Sewer District expansion has begun and is funded by long term bonds in the amount of 76.2 million. Planning phases two and three will necessitate additional funding in excess of 100 million. Need to continue to work with transportation engineering CIP and the MPO's 2045 LRTP for timing of the road network.

Employee retention/succession planning: Close to one third of the work force is eligible for retirement in less than five years. The county will need to focus on providing a market-based compensation program that is competitive with other local governments and private sector employers in the region. In particular, entry level positions will need support in continuous training, professional development and enhanced career mobility.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT STYLE AND EXPERIENCE

I moved to Florida (Delray Beach) in the late seventy's and have watched the growth of South Florida for decades before taking the position of DCA Secretary in 2004 in Tallahassee. For much of that time the history and charm of Lake Worth Beach was under the radar. I am excited to see that Lake Worth Beach is being "re-discovered again". The collective decisions made today will have a far-reaching effect into the future. I welcome being part of and to continue the momentum garnered in being a best-in-class community.

My experience and interest have been in developing and implementing strategies that have helped communities grow and prosper. I have worked with neighborhood organizations, homeowner associations and business leaders to develop plans of action to deploy resources to assist communities realize their dreams from Pensacola to Key West. Similarly, Lake Worth Beach is poised for tremendous growth in the coming decades.

A significant element of Lake Worth Beach's future success will be the vigorous discussions held with engaged citizens and elected officials. My collaborative approach to managing, I believe, works wells in these dynamic environments. When working with all the appropriate stakeholders it is possible to get to the desired outcome that benefits the community.

Within the organization I feel it is important to support key staff when they exercise their judgment. The strength of an organizations lies in the ability of its personnel. I have found when we work from a common plan of action and the right individuals are given room to perform you can maximize the organization's efforts. If asked my colleagues would agree.

The elected officials I have served would characterize my communications as thoughtful; my actions as attentive; and recommendations as trustworthy. Staff would say I am respectful,

supportive, and fair. I sponsor thinking creatively and treat problems and issues as an opportunity to learn and grow rather than stumbling blocks.

A strength has been to bring groups of varying points of view to a consensus on a course of action that provides the greatest benefit to the community at large. Listening skills have been a trait that has held me in good stead. Collier County is one of two communities to implement the Rural Land Stewardship program covering some 195,000 acres of undeveloped land. The plan had been in limbo since 2005. It was important to distill the issues to its core and provide a series of recommendations to the seven significant landowners, citizens and environmental organizations, to find a path forward to update the Comprehensive Plan for submission to the state. The result will provide 45,000 acres of developable land and the protection of 150,000 acres.

Personnel issues can be complicated. The decisions often have ramifications not only for the employee but also their family. Some feel I may go too far to remedy a circumstance to find a fit within the organization. As a result, I have tried to strengthen employee development services in organizations where I have worked. I have worked with managers to cultivate employees and manage on the front-end their career paths to place team members in a position to succeed.

Measuring performance is a team effort and starts with aligning the organizations actions with the City's strategic plan. Empowering team members to have a stake in the outcomes of the organization provides for thoughtful and decisive decision making. This construct also leads to potential problems being identified by staff, evaluated and strategies implemented to avoid them. Recognition from constituents of improved performance provide confidence the organization is heading in the desired direction. In Collier County the storm water maintenance team developed metrics; Key Performance Indicator- KPI i.e., (control structures inspected; lane miles cleaned; inlets cleaned and inspected etc.) in conjunction with the asset management program to monitor year over year performance and against industry standards. Presentations before the County's Productivity Committee garnered a budget increase from 4 million to 8 million. The team was able to add a crew and be proactive in the community to address storm water improvements rather than reactive.

Collier County had been negotiating with a property owner for some five years on a four-thousand-acre new town Rural Land West. In the spring of 2018, the proposal was pulled. The landowner instead moved forward with three villages approximately 950 acres each rather than a town and its resultant employment base. The move to say the least was controversial. I reached out to the landowner to propose a strategy to overcome the issues of affordable housing, transportation i.e., the road network and other infrastructure development using tools to change the Comprehensive Plan's Rural Land Stewardship Program; codifying the MPO's LRTP for future roads and working with Utilities to provided appropriate water and sewer. Over an 18-month period working with the landowner and several environmental organizations we were able to reach an agreement for a framework to transition the proposed Villages of Rivergrass, Longwater, and Belmar to the Town Big Cypress an approx., 3,500-acre community with

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appropriate land reserved for economic development and 2.5percent of the gross acreage reserved for affordable housing. At completion, the Town of Big Cypress will have a population equivalent to the city of Naples. The agreement set a framework for future towns and villages as growth continues in eastern Collier County.

Ambitious plans do not always come to fruition during your tenure. I was disappointed that I was not able to establish a ferry service between the City of Pensacola, Pensacola Beach and Fort Pickens. The moving pieces of the local governments, the National Park Service takes patience and more time than I could imagine. The service was eventually established. When I look back, I can be grateful that the idea stood the test of time. It took an awfully long time. Working with the federal government can be a marathon and a measure of one's endurance.

Termination of an employee is often the result of a process. In the organizations in which I have served there are administrative policies that escribe to each team members the expectations of job performance and behavior. I have been a Hearing Officer who has taken testimony to render a decision. The decisions have fallen within the guidelines of the organization.

BEACH – Bold / Exciting / Ambitious / Compassionate / Home

I see Lake Worth Beach as a dynamic community of neighborhoods not as a challenge but endless opportunities. The town core is redeveloping, how is that balanced with maintaining community character; how will a post COVID environment change the delivery of services; what strain was placed on the social fabric and how can a customer/ citizen centric service delivery model enhance our resiliency. My sense, these may be some of the pressing issues faced by the community.

BEACH – Beautiful / Enthusiastic / Artsy / Confident / Home

Clearly, Lake Worth Beach has created a framework for its future. My first six months would entail: Meet regularly with the Mayor and Council members to understand their goals and objectives and their insights into the organization's performance; do a deep dive into the soon to be adopted budget to see where the focus has been placed and how it relates to the delivery of exceptional service; meet with community and business leaders, advocacy groups, adjoining local governments to understand our partnerships as a force multiplier to realize the community' goals. Meet with staff to assess how our performance aligns with the Commission's goals and objectives and the City's strategic plan. Reach out to the PBCSO and PBCFR to build a relationship in the public safety arena. Meet with the City Attorney to be briefed on any pending legal issues that affect the City's operations. Regular meetings with CAO and planning staff to be updated on development issues; meet with the CRA to be familiar with the redevelopment plan and the various projects that are ongoing and pending. It will still be hurricane season, review the emergency management plans with staff to have a clear understanding of the team's role, responsibilities and corresponding FEMA approved disaster contracts.

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During my career I have held press conferences when asked by the elected official; tv and radio interviews; been a keynote speaker at various growth management and disaster preparedness conferences. I have written op-eds to promote a particular issue to promote citizen engagement. I am not aware of any negative information that would arise to the detriment of your client.

Social media has been a slow adoption in the organizations in which I have served. I feel it is a powerful tool to keep residents informed about the working of their local government. The Lake Worth Beach Website is customer friendly; the utility department is able to broadcast power outages through their platform. It appears there is foundation to find various ways to tell Lake Worth Beach's story.

I am not aware of any activist that will contact the City of Lake Worth Beach with negative comments.

In my spare time I read, and travel.

SIX ADJECTIVES OR PHRASES I WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE MYSELF

Thoughtful
Visionary
Straightforward
Empathetic
Knowledgeable
Honest

REASON FOR LEAVING CURRENT POSITION

The County Manager for whom I was hired and worked for retired. The new County Manager re-organized by Department into two separate groups, eliminated my position, divided my duties between two individuals. I was not offered an opportunity to remain with the organization.

CURRENT / MOST RECENT SALARY

My final compensation with Collier County was \$156,000 excluding benefits.

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CB&A Background Checks

**Background Check Summary for
THADDEUS L. COHEN**

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Collier County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Collier County, FL	No Records Found
Monroe County, FL	No Records Found
Broward County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	No Records Found
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Credit

Excellent

Personal Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Sex Offender Registry

Not Listed

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

Social Media

Nothing of Concern Found

**Background Check Summary for
THADDEUS L. COHEN**

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. Also, some states have limited the reporting to seven years, so any records older than that will not be available in those states. In addition, motor vehicle reports are limited to three to seven years, depending on the state.

**Background Check Summary for
THADDEUS L. COHEN
Personal Disclosure**

Personal Disclosure Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: _____

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 charged with driving while intoxicated?
Yes ☐ No ☒
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes ☐ No ☒
8. Please list all your social media accounts (Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Twitter, etc.) and your personal web page if you have one. FACE BOOK
9. 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 ☒
10. Please provide a list of any lawsuits in which you are or have been a party either as plaintiff or defendant.

Attested to: _____

THADDEUS L. COHEN

Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via PDF DOCUMENT to Lynelle@cb-asso.com or via fax to
(561) 621-5965 no later than 5:00 PM PST 06/28/2021.

(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

CB&A Reference Notes

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Leo Ochs – Former County Manager, Collier County, FL 239-919-6843

Mr. Ochs hired Mr. Cohen in 2017 to run the Collier County Growth Management Department, which was one of the County's biggest operations. Mr. Ochs hired Mr. Cohen in a competitive process among other highly qualified individuals, and Mr. Cohen rose to the top of the hiring list. Mr. Ochs was the former Collier County Manager until he retired in 2021.

Mr. Cohen strongly advocated for his team. He stood up for his position while having excellent collaboration with colleagues, internal counterparts, industry leaders, and outside community leaders. He had good interpersonal and public speaking skills, which he used to calmly diffuse potentially hostile situations.

Mr. Ochs and Mr. Cohen shared outstanding interactions. Although they may have had professional disagreements, Mr. Cohen was a pleasure to work with. Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Ochs well informed via primarily verbal and electronic communication, although Mr. Cohen also used phone calls, in-person meetings, and occasional memos. Mr. Ochs continuously knew what Mr. Cohen and his team were doing.

Mr. Cohen absolutely had good experience dealing with the public, whether one-on-one or in groups. He may have been more effective with individuals due to not having to compete with others in a conversation, but he was equally comfortable in differently sized public settings. One of his greatest strengths was how capably he interviewed, most likely due to prior experience with state, county, and local government. He brought a wealth of experience to Collier County.

By the nature of his job, Mr. Cohen was frequently out in the public. His major responsibilities in Growth Management included issuing permits for developing the community and involvement with transportation projects. He managed a number of public meetings with planning and zoning commissions. Additionally, he dealt with members of the public and organizational leaders. He also had experience with elected officials from state, county, and municipal government levels.

Mr. Cohen was quite customer service oriented. He showcased this characteristic when facing challenges the COVID-19 pandemic brought. He searched for new methods to effectively and quickly serve the public while protecting his team from the virus. He moved to electronic formats to protect people during the pandemic crisis.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made good decisions as he applied a specific analysis approach. He also brought in other opinions. Once he listened to those perspectives, he took responsibility for the final decision. He hired well and was responsible for hiring the staff in his division, which included approximately 350 people. He met his deadlines appropriately. For tasks in which he had direct control, he accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. Sometimes planning initiatives were delayed. However, such delays were due the Board deciding to tweak an idea or asking for more work on the plan, which had been submitted to the Board on time.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Furthermore, Mr. Cohen had good financial skills, though he relied heavily on his financial operations team. While being involved with the budget process, he collaborated well and relied on the expertise of his staff.

As a good problem solver, Mr. Cohen was fair and weighed all sides. He consistently tried to make decisions in the best overall interests of the county and the community. Indeed, he was quite successful with this approach. For example, Mr. Cohen dealt with a fairly controversial situation. Collier County was conducting a study to re-plan its eastern area, which had a rural land stewardship. This somewhat contentious study became more contentious when it resurfaced after initially being shut down during the pandemic. Many conflicting interests arose between environmentalists, conservation groups, and redevelopment communities. Mr. Cohen came up with a long-range sustainable habitat while maintaining good redevelopment land. He also brought the general business community, field leaders, and interested community leaders to find as good a consensus as possible to present to the Board. The Board accepted the proposal, thus demonstrating Mr. Cohen's abilities in bringing people together to find common ground and make a satisfactory plan.

Mr. Ochs is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Cohen had been involved with some professionally controversial issues, such as the eastern land study. He also dealt with a few difficult personnel issues, though he handled these situations adequately. In addition, Mr. Cohen worked on a couple initiatives to bring a stormwater utility to the Board, which was not ready for this initial plan and chose to not implement the initiatives. However, Mr. Cohen's team handled the matter well. When Mr. Cohen worked with his team and the Finance Department to find a different way to find funding for the stormwater initiatives, they were able to leverage that funding into a large bond. Now, the County has one of the best stormwater maintenance programs in Florida.

Mr. Ochs would absolutely rehire Mr. Cohen if possible. Though a couple of individuals might disagree with Mr. Ochs's opinions, such differences may be due to possibly disliking Mr. Cohen on a personal level. Regardless, Mr. Cohen will do well in any environment. He is highly professional. As a leader, he is a strong communicator with excellent interpersonal skills. With these attributes, he is a strong candidate who will make a good municipal manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Personable,
- Task-oriented,
- Determined,
- Team-oriented,
- Advocates for his team,
- Smart, and
- Innovative.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Strengths: Articulate, speaking skills, writing skills, interpersonal skills, public speaking abilities, handling potentially hostile situations, interviewing experiences.

Weaknesses: The only possible criticism regarding Mr. Cohen might be that he did not manage his staff closely enough. However, Mr. Ochs never personally noticed any issues with Mr. Cohen's hands-off management style. Mr. Cohen strongly believed in delegating responsibilities while retaining authority and holding ultimate responsibility. He hired good people and delegated. He supported his staff and redirected them as necessary to ensure the organization approached a matter well.

Verdenia Baker – County Administrator, Palm Beach County, FL 561-355-6726

Ms. Baker has known Mr. Cohen since approximately 2000. He used to live in Palm Beach County and was an architect who had done some work for the County when Ms. Baker was Deputy County Administrator. Later, Mr. Cohen was hired as Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Eventually, he went to work with a Florida county when the elected leaders who had appointed him as Secretary ended their terms.

When Mr. Cohen designed buildings for Palm Beach County, the County was well pleased. He was responsive to their needs. After he began working with the DCA, Ms. Baker worked more closely with Mr. Cohen on a personal basis because she was over planning and zoning. Mr. Cohen was reasonable and worked with the County on issues to accomplish many of the County's goals.

Mr. Cohen kept Ms. Baker well informed via writing or phone calls to give her a heads up. As far as Ms. Baker knew, he had good experience dealing with the public. His one-on-one skills were great, and he performed similarly in the public view.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made thorough decisions and refrained from being rash. He was thoughtful and was customer service oriented with the County. He accomplished his tasks in a timely manner. Sometimes he made difficult decisions, but Ms. Baker was unfamiliar with any situation in which he indicated he was unable to handle stress. Additionally, he had good financial skills, which was critical in his job as an architect.

Mr. Cohen was a combination of an innovative change agent who maintained the organization at a high performance level. Certainly, he was creative as he designed creative facilities for the County. As necessary, he was definitely a change agent. For example, as DCA Secretary, he helped the organization as it changed many of its procedures and streamlined various processes.

Mr. Cohen had fairly good problem solving skills and listened to both sides of an issue. He was quite detailed and thorough. In fact, many faced difficulty arguing with the solutions he found because he tried to be fair. He had multiple instances of leading teams in solving problems, such as being the architect of his own firm and when leading the entire Florida DCA as Secretary.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Ms. Baker is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background that might concern a future employer. Due to his position with the DCA, he frequently encountered division. However, Ms. Baker cannot remember any controversial issues or major headlines involving Mr. Cohen. She would hire him if given an opportunity. He was dependable and reliable. As a conscientious hard worker, he observed issues from multiple angles and made sustainable recommendations. He possessed compassion, an important characteristic for any Municipal Manager. Mr. Cohen will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Meticulous,
- Dedicated,
- All around good person,
- Compassionate,
- Conscientious, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: Responsiveness, detail-orientation, a reasonable person who helped others achieve the overall vision they wanted to accomplish.

Weaknesses: Some people might consider Mr. Cohen to sometimes be too detailed. However, this quality was also one of his strengths. Depending on the position he filled, such detail-orientation might be a problem. However, in his roles working with Palm Beach County, Mr. Cohen did well finding missing details that could have caused delays.

Steve Sanderson – President and CEO, United Way of Collier and the Keys, FL 239-261-7112

Mr. Sanderson has worked with Mr. Cohen since approximately 2018. Mr. Cohen serves on the United Way Board and shares a collegial relationship with Mr. Sanderson. As such, Mr. Sanderson does not have supervisory experience over Mr. Cohen. However, the Board has encouraged and welcomed Mr. Cohen. They are quite happy to have him on the Board.

Mr. Cohen is punctual, prompt, and thoughtful. He speaks up when essential and refrains from speaking unnecessarily. He has kept Mr. Sanderson well informed of his area of responsibility. During the few projects they have worked on together, Mr. Cohen regularly provides updates and calls on feedback. He follows through and is someone Mr. Sanderson trusts to accomplish tasks.

As a thorough customer service oriented individual, Mr. Cohen has continuously interfaced with customers in several roles, such as in his position with Collier County government. Although Mr. Sanderson is somewhat unfamiliar with Mr. Cohen's financial skills, Mr. Cohen has experience

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

reviewing part of the United Way's financial documentation and information. Additionally, based on Mr. Cohen's government roles in overseeing several budgets, Mr. Sanderson assumes Mr. Cohen does well with finances.

Though Mr. Cohen is a change agent who capably maintains the organization at a high performance level, he is primarily innovative. Rather than sticking with traditional models, he looks for new and better methods. He seeks for improvement and increased efficiency. For example, he helped advocate for some of the social changes the United Way wanted to create in the community. He met with different community leaders to help them better understand the work the United Way did and acted as a liaison between both parties. Indeed, he tried to be a connector across these different groups.

Mr. Sanderson has only seen Mr. Cohen with the public and rallying others, as opposed to seeing Mr. Cohen in his office. However, Mr. Cohen is unafraid to ask questions. He shares comments to help conversations and is proactive in bringing up topics to improve work tasks. Additionally, Mr. Cohen has good problem solving skills. He wants to solve actual problems instead of simply addressing a symptom. Rather than fixing issues on the surface to receive praise, he seeks substantive solutions that actually work for the long-term. Although his work with the United Way is quite stressful at times, Mr. Cohen is calm and rational. He can be passionate, but he does not exhibit negative reactions to stress. He is unafraid to accomplish goals.

Mr. Sanderson is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. Mr. Sanderson is unaware of any United Way positions fitting Mr. Cohen's qualifications, considering how Mr. Cohen's background is somewhat different from what the nonprofit organization specifically does. In fact, Mr. Cohen is overqualified for what the organization does. However, Mr. Sanderson would hire Mr. Cohen if the United Way had an appropriate role open. Most people on the Board would generally mirror Mr. Sanderson's comments regarding Mr. Cohen. United Way Board members have been pleased with his performance. He has been quite transparent, which they appreciate and value.

Mr. Cohen is a great guy for the right fit. His direct team members respect and support him. Mr. Sanderson has honestly had good experiences with Mr. Cohen. Indeed, Mr. Cohen is unafraid to tackle tough issues some people might find to be difficult to handle. He manages well and will make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Thoughtful,
- Thorough,
- A thinker,
- Punctual,
- Prompt, and
- Innovative.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Strengths: Thoroughness, thinking abilities, thoughtfulness.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Anita Jenkins – Planning and Zoning Director, Collier County, FL 239-825-9322 239-478-3701

Ms. Jenkins worked with Mr. Cohen approximately between 2017 and 2021. As Collier County Planning and Zoning Director, she reported directly to Mr. Cohen, who was the Growth Management Department Head at the time. He later left when a new County Manager reorganized all of the departments.

Mr. Cohen was inspiring because of his mentorship. Prior to Mr. Cohen's employment with the County, engineers generally led the Department. Unfortunately, these engineers generally had little vision and gave the planning team little attention. However, Ms. Jenkins' entire team was thrilled to have Mr. Cohen because he connected with the planning team. For example, he was a great mentor in the public sector, an area in which Ms. Jenkins was less experienced. He also understood the team's perspective and helped them formulate a vision of the next 10 years for the County, which the team greatly appreciated. He was politically savvy. Additionally, Mr. Cohen was a great listener and manager. Rather than micromanaging, he led and supported his team. He pulled people aside to discuss how they might improve themselves, such as with project management skills. Ms. Jenkins appreciated the attention he gave the planning team.

Every time Ms. Jenkins approached Mr. Cohen with a problem, he addressed the issue promptly. He was available and open to the planning team. He also worked directly with planning managers. Indeed, Mr. Cohen constantly tried to improve personal connections with every person in his department, which was difficult with almost 1,200 staff. However, Mr. Cohen recognized the challenges between constantly solving problems and finding time to walk around to talk with Growth Management employees.

Mr. Cohen kept Ms. Jenkins well informed of his area of government through biweekly department meetings. During monthly meetings with individual directors, he determined each director's needs, matters he needed to be aware of, and any political issues he needed to know. He was quite informative and transparent. Ms. Jenkins found his willingness to actually share information to be refreshing because previous Growth Management Department heads were generally less willing. When sharing information, Mr. Cohen also stated how he was sharing that same information with his other directors. He sought to change some processes to have greater detail and increased accessibility in providing everyone with the same information.

Mr. Cohen was quite active in the community, such as being on the Board of the United Way and in many other engagements. Though the COVID-19 pandemic made meetings more difficult, he was instrumental in supporting the planning team during hybrid meetings. During the pandemic, if Mr. Cohen or the team were unable to go somewhere, they held remote meetings with county

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

commissioners, board examiners, and other groups. For example, the team was part of a large study, which shut down at the start of the pandemic. The study's consultant required hybrid meetings, and Mr. Cohen ensured the County had access. He supported the Department through this transition to hybrid meetings and made sure the County had access to the technology it had purchased. In fact, public participation improved because people had fewer obstacles to overcome in attending meetings, such as having to take off work or drive to the meeting. This remote access transition was a tremendous benefit for the County and allowed a greater extension of public connection.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made great decisions because he worked with his team and analyzed data before making decisions. He refrained from micromanaging. When making decisions involving Ms. Jenkins, he made sure to call her before making a final decision. Furthermore, Mr. Cohen was a collaborative leader who preferred a multidisciplinary team approach. If Ms. Jenkins discussed a problem, they listened as a team. Each individual had an opportunity to share input, and they all debated the solution before coming to consensus.

Mr. Cohen had good financial skills and was quite transparent. He wanted his directors to understand their budget and move forward. He mentored Ms. Jenkins in public sector finances and budgets to ensure she satisfactorily understood the process.

Mr. Cohen did well when hiring directors. He was customer service oriented. He also was an innovative change agent. As a visionary, he foresaw where the County was moving and what the Department might do to sustain the County, such as with affordable housing. Additionally, Mr. Cohen possessed great skills and experience in redevelopment. He recognized which areas needed attention in redevelopment and how the planning team might promote policy for green-field areas, instead of solely looking into residential development. He also looked at economic development. As opposed to simply maintaining the status quo, Mr. Cohen continuously challenged his team to think about how an issue might affect the County and help its growth. He identified what barriers the Department faced and how to change code to break those barriers.

When faced with stress, Mr. Cohen was calm and collected. If the planning team did not present at a meeting, Ms. Jenkins asked her staff to watch the hearing to observe how Mr. Cohen responded at board meetings. When a topic became contentious, he jumped in to provide further explanation to board members. Moreover, Mr. Cohen recognized when others needed a little extra coaching, such as with nervous younger planners. He took the time to help coach these individuals on the side. Mr. Cohen was a calming force during stressful situations.

Due the nature of his position, Mr. Cohen was involved with controversial matters regarding land-use planning. With Florida being a private property state, property rights were an especially argumentative topic. However, Mr. Cohen consistently followed the code and comprehensive plan. He followed the Board of County Commissioners as far as the state laws, policies, and code said. He recognized the planning staff as the official interpreters of that code, and he presented their recommendations. He encouraged staff to provide professional recommendations and move

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

on after commissioners made their final decisions. Throughout several exceptionally controversial issues, Mr. Cohen capably led commissioners and staff.

Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Cohen frequently used sports analogies to describe their relationship, such as him being her blocker to move obstacles out of the way so they might move projects to the end zone. Mr. Cohen was responsive and supportive. No responsibility was beneath him. He was inspiring and funny.

Ms. Jenkins is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. If possible, she would hire him. In fact, she would greatly consider working for him again if he were to call her. He is a great leader and a great team builder. He will absolutely make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Mentor,
- Informative,
- Politically savvy,
- Transparency,
- Visionary, and
- Responsive.

Strengths: Mentorship abilities, sharing information, promptly addressing problems, availability.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Chris Johnson – Growth Management Department Financial Operations and Support Manager, City of Key West, FL 239-252-5812 239-572-1393

Mr. Johnson began working with Mr. Cohen in 2018 when Mr. Johnson became the Collier County Manager of Financial Operations and Support for the Growth Management Department. Mr. Cohen later left the County in 2021 due to a management change. Because Mr. Cohen's position as Growth Management Department Head was close to the County Manager, the reorganization affected his position.

Mr. Cohen empowered his staff. Instead of micromanaging, he allowed employees to come up with ideas and plans to solve solutions. He fostered creativity in his team. Mr. Cohen was a good speaker and was well tempered. He capably and articulately conveyed messages. Because he empowered his staff and relayed their mission, he allowed his staff to achieve a common goal. He adeptly used others' strengths to address the needs of the organization.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Mr. Johnson had friendly, professional, and cordial interactions with Mr. Cohen. Communication between the two men was good over the phone and through emails. Mr. Cohen also physically stopped by the office to brainstorm and to let people know about a project's direction. When staff members had an issue, Mr. Cohen listened and helped his employees formulate a plan. Even though a team might not agree with the plan completely, these efforts were collaborative. Mr. Cohen strongly supported the importance of making team decisions. As a department head, he made the final decisions and did well on issues with which Mr. Johnson was involved.

Typically, Mr. Johnson worked with Mr. Cohen on internal issues and had little experience seeing Mr. Cohen out with the public. However, based on how well Mr. Cohen treated his staff, he most likely had good interactions with the public. He did well with groups or one-on-one.

Most of Mr. Cohen's work with Mr. Johnson was customer-oriented, especially regarding development services dealing with the public. Mr. Cohen was customer service oriented, as seen with his internal customers. For example, he had worked with Mr. Johnson on implementing a software program. Mr. Cohen even went out of his way to work with other departments to demonstrate how they might also utilize the program. Although he did not need to do so, he wanted others to see how this program might benefit different departments.

Depending on the situation, Mr. Cohen was a change agent who capably maintained the organization at a high performance level. If the organization functioned well, he upheld the status quo. However, if he discovered an opportunity to increase efficiency, he at least explored that option. Mr. Cohen was a leader who rallied his employees around the organization's vision.

As a problem solver, Mr. Cohen used his people appropriately. He recognized how he was not an expert in everything and instead trusted his team, who collectively were experts. During various projects of building roads, doing water samples at the beach, and handling airports, he relied on his staff's specialties to address issues and solve problems. For example, he saw an opportunity to improve the Department's financial aspects when he first arrived at the County. The Department managed its budgets solely with paper, and Mr. Cohen looked at which software to integrate with the Department's current System Applications and Products software program. He wanted to find a method of allowing others to see dashboard updates in real time. In another area, Mr. Cohen wanted to increase efficiency with asset management. Prior to Mr. Cohen's arrival, the asset management team had daily maintenance work assignments. However, Mr. Cohen helped the team integrate a schedule to help staff provide more proactive maintenance on the system, rather than delivering mostly reactive maintenance.

Mr. Johnson is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's personal or professional background that might concern a future employer. Mr. Johnson would hire Mr. Cohen if given an opportunity. Mr. Cohen was a pleasure to work with because he trusted his staff and valued their opinions. Indeed, he clearly displayed how much he valued their opinions and trusted their work because he refrained from micromanagement. These attributes are great for someone in his leadership position. Mr. Cohen will make a good Municipal Manager.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Friendly,
- Strong leader,
- Motivated,
- Knowledgeable,
- Willing to learn something new,
- Leadership skills,
- Punctual, and
- Ability to trust and work with a team.

Strengths: Attention to detail, punctuality, prioritization, a team player, management skills, leadership skills.

Weaknesses: Initially upon coming to Collier County, Mr. Cohen was new to the financial system. The County had a specific accounting structure, which forced new county employees to initially face a steep learning curve. However, Mr. Cohen overcame this weakness. Being astute, he learned quickly and was sharp as he went over which funds were restricted.

**Michael Dalby – President, Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, FL 239-403-2901
614-371-6265**

Mr. Dalby worked with Mr. Cohen between 2017 and 2021 when Mr. Cohen was the Collier County Growth Management Department Head. As president of the Greater Naples Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Dalby lobbied for businesses and the community. He typically interacted with Mr. Cohen on policy issues and was otherwise unfamiliar with Mr. Cohen's daily operations. Additionally, Mr. Cohen participated in the Chamber's leadership program, which involved 10 full-day sessions where individuals learned more about the community and how to help the community be more engaged in decision-making. Mr. Cohen left his position after county leadership changes.

Mr. Dalby and Mr. Cohen shared professional interactions. Mr. Cohen thought innovatively. He diplomatically grappled with difficult challenges regarding planning, development, and growth as he creatively found solutions. Most people held negative opinions about community growth because such growth usually involved crowding people within an area or using practices that harmed the environment. However, Mr. Cohen demonstrated how these results were not inherently true. He showed how growth might positively impact a community and address problems if dealt with properly.

When working together, Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Dalby well informed of his area of responsibility via phone calls, personal meetings, and email. Because of the proximity of the Chamber and Mr.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Cohen's experience with the leadership program, Mr. Cohen comfortably communicated directly with the Chamber. He provided updates, sought feedback, and asked if the Chamber supported certain initiatives.

Mr. Cohen appeared to have good experience working with the public, both with individuals and in groups. Mr. Dalby infrequently saw Mr. Cohen out in the community amongst its many meetings and gatherings. However, Mr. Cohen was certainly present whenever the community needed him for growth management. For example, he dealt with an issue on a storm water maintenance fee. Mr. Cohen both developed an approach to the issue and dealt with the public during this especially contentious issue. He constantly worked with the Chamber and the public to help everyone understand the concepts behind the issue. He presented the facts. Eventually, his plan was overwhelmingly voted down, and the advisory board Mr. Dalby sat on was asked to look at the issue. However, the board came up with essentially the same conclusion as Mr. Cohen and his team. Though decision makers chose to not support Mr. Cohen's plan, Mr. Cohen accepted their decision and moved forward.

Mr. Cohen was customer service oriented. He tried to be innovative, although such innovation was difficult in his position where he deferred to the larger decision-making body. He presented ideas to that body, but policy makers were sometimes unreceptive. Mr. Cohen was calm under stress. He had a sense of humor under pressure, usually seeing the irony of a situation and being able to laugh at the challenges he faced.

Mr. Dalby is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Dalby would hire Mr. Cohen if possible because Mr. Cohen is a bright, insightful person whose knowledge and experience can improve Mr. Dalby's organization. Mr. Cohen has a strong presence due to his height and great voice. Because he is well spoken and communicates clearly, he conveys how he is a leader in his organization. He seeks the best interests of the community. He will make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Smart,
- Calm,
- Clear communicator,
- Strong presence, and
- Serves the best interests of the community.

Strengths: Good communication skills, calm in the face of challenges, knowledgeable in his field.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Eddie Todd – Architect, Pensacola, FL 850-434-0325

Mr. Todd first met Mr. Cohen approximately in 2006 when Mr. Cohen was serving as Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Director for the City of Pensacola. Although they worked professionally together until 2011, they have since kept in touch.

Mr. Cohen is a good person who is a true pleasure to work with. He is professional and quite courteous with everyone. Possessing good ideas, he does well with presentations and organization.

Overall, Mr. Cohen had a fantastic work performance. With his creativity, he analyzed problems and produces satisfactory solutions. During city projects, he took multiple facets into consideration, such as dealing with the needs of each particular project, financial aspects, and community impacts.

When working together, Mr. Cohen kept Mr. Todd well informed. For example, Mr. Cohen tested and balanced numerous projects he developed for the City as CRA Director. He invited Mr. Todd and other professionals to come by and do preliminary work. If these professionals recommended adjustments, Mr. Cohen took their suggestions with great consideration. Mr. Todd and Mr. Cohen also worked closely on a water development for the City. During this project, Mr. Todd was chairman of the board for that development team. Mr. Cohen's CRA team was responsible for the 30-acre property and financial aspects of the project.

Generally, Mr. Cohen made excellent decisions because he analyzed several perspectives of whatever situation or problem occurring. He worked well alongside his staff, who enjoyed working and being on his team. Mr. Todd worked with Mr. Cohen's staff, who praised Mr. Cohen without complaints. Mr. Cohen's staff were sharp and astute.

Mr. Cohen was most definitely customer service oriented. He recognized the needs of the community, the neighborhood, and any agencies with which he was involved. He was particularly conscientious of these groups' needs.

As a leader, Mr. Cohen rallied whatever resources he needed, whether people, supplies, or equipment. He handled stressful situations quite well. Whereas some employees let stressful coworker interactions or home circumstances negatively impact their professional life, Mr. Cohen effectively handled each situation he encountered. For example, he dealt with the public during the water development project. This project involved much controversy due to split public support. However, Mr. Cohen dealt well with the public on this 30-acre development as he handled each situation properly and in order. Even several years after the project's completion, the development is still a success, and people love the development.

Mr. Todd is unaware of anything in Mr. Cohen's background or conduct that might concern a future employer. Mr. Cohen left the City due to incoming administration board leadership. Typically when a new governor or mayor came into office, many staff changes occur as new

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

leadership bring in personnel. Mr. Cohen's departure was a loss for the City because the prior administration had performed well. He set many projects into motion before leaving, which the incoming administration picked up and followed through. Although the projects were successful, Mr. Cohen must be credited with putting everything into place.

If possible, Mr. Todd would hire Mr. Cohen. They accomplished quite a bit together during the water development project. The project was quite successful, pleased the public overall, and won the City many awards. Mr. Cohen truly is a good professional. He will make a good Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Seasoned professional,
- Competent,
- Personable,
- Excellent team player,
- Excellent leader, and
- Good person.

Strengths: Creativity.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Enid Torregrosa - Historic Preservation, Senior Planner, City of Key West, FL 305-809-3973

Ms. Torregrosa worked with Mr. Cohen from 2015 to 2017. He did a fantastic job as Planning Director. In fact, in the several years Ms. Torregrosa has worked for the City of Key West, she has reported to five different Planning Directors. Mr. Cohen has been by far the best.

While Mr. Cohen was strict with his staff, he was also flexible. He willingly listened to them and their ideas. He allowed those who were capable of performing their tasks with little supervision to do so, but he required progress reports frequently. When he first came to the City, he came off as shy and quiet. It took a little time for people to get to know him. Once they did, they found that he was outgoing and a great person to talk to. He hired at least two individuals for the department, both of which have done a terrific job for the organization.

Working in historic preservation, Ms. Torregrosa has had a difficult time connecting with other planners and even directors. However, Mr. Cohen's background in architecture meant that he understood the topic and was able to communicate with her intelligently about specific projects. His leadership was refreshing because she knew that her boss understood what she was doing and could offer positive insight.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Mr. Cohen was very much involved in what happened in his department. He was a manager but more so a leader. He did not just give direction and then hide in his office to complete his own tasks. Rather, he walked around and was involved.

Through Mr. Cohen's past position with the State Department of Community Affairs, he accumulated a great deal of experience working with other agencies. The need to work with outside agencies did not arise during his time with Key West. He did work well with land developers and even provided workshops for them to get to know their goals and explain the City's goals.

Key West is an extremely laid back community. Employees come to work in sandals and business casual. On Mr. Cohen's first day he showed up in a full suit and continued to dress more professionally than the majority of the staff. He had a difficult time assimilating to the culture. Additionally, he struggled with the culture of friends asking friends for favors. If a developer wanted something to happen, he/she went to their friend on the planning commission or council to help push it forward. These actions resulted in some illegal work being done. Although Mr. Cohen was unable to completely stop the favors game, he did put an end to everything that was not in accordance with the policies and procedures of the organization.

Mr. Cohen has the ability and skill level to oversee a large and complex department. He knows every function that is associated with growth management and planning. He will make a phenomenal Municipal Manager, and Ms. Torregrosa recommends him for a position like that. He is well qualified, and Ms. Torregrosa's experience with him was just amazing. He might start shy, but once he starts he does a great job.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Initially shy,
- High integrity,
- Accessible,
- Become outgoing,
- Laid back, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Vision, promoted professionalism, listens to staff and available to staff.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Maren DeWeese – Former Councilmember, City of Pensacola, FL 850-316-7671

Ms. DeWeese worked with Mr. Cohen from 2009 to 2011. Mr. Cohen is a brilliant man. He visualized how all aspects of the City worked together and how they affected each other. Mr.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Cohen first became acquainted with the City of Pensacola when he was the State Secretary of Community Affairs and collaborated on hurricane disaster relief efforts. When the City hired him, he was already familiar with many of the issues and jumped right in. He is a fantastic public speaker. Capturing an audience's attention came easy to him.

Pensacola is a historic city, so zoning and land use issues are complex and difficult to grasp. Because Mr. Cohen understood this mindset, he set up an open house every Wednesday night for developers or homeowners who wanted to start a project. They sat down with all of the appropriate department heads and laid out their plans to receive input on what they needed in order to proceed. They left with the knowledge of whether their idea was plausible and what changes they needed make.

Mr. Cohen was instrumental in turning the downtown around. He developed a plan, convinced the Council to approve it, and moved forward. The City now has outdoor family movies on the weekend, a restaurant district, and great retail shops. The downtown has been transformed and enlivened due to his efforts. Additionally, Mr. Cohen was helpful in completing the largest Community Redevelopment Agency project in the City's history. He worked closely with the City Manager and Council to construct the Maritime Park, which consisted of a minor league baseball stadium, private mixed-use development, and an amphitheater. The total price for this project was over \$50 million. Mr. Cohen's background in architecture was especially useful, and he thought of superior ways to design the complex that had not been identified before. His leadership in this project was an accomplishment for Pensacola and for all the residents in the region.

Mr. Cohen shared his vision for the future and rallied employees to achieve that vision. He explains his vision in a way that it became real to those listening. Because of his architectural background, one might almost have photographic conversations with him. Pensacola was transformed through his wisdom and leadership.

While he was in Pensacola, the City went to an emergency finance mode because the Finance Department had miscalculated parts of the budget by millions of dollars. Mr. Cohen was irreplaceable as he helped put in place a 30-month budget to alleviate these damaging effects. His knowledge in finance was surprisingly good. He knew all the functions of the process, and along with the City Manager, guided the Council through the process.

The only reason Mr. Cohen is no longer with the city is because of restructuring. If she could, Ms. DeWeese would hire him back. Mr. Cohen will make an incredibly good Municipal Manager and will be perfect for the job.

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Firm,
- Listens to ideas,
- Community oriented,
- Confident, and
- Can be intimidating.

Strengths: Multifaceted, problem solver, consensus builder and sees the big picture.

Weaknesses: None identified.

Sherry Morris – Planning Services Administrator, City of Pensacola, FL 850-436-5655 850-435-1670

Ms. Morris worked with Mr. Cohen from 2008 to 2011. He did an excellent job in the City of Pensacola as he brought bold initiatives and spearheaded the downtown revitalization.

Mr. Cohen believed in following the rules. He was open about everything he does, so he was unable to be dragged into any controversy. He was team oriented and did not pay strict attention to the hierarchy of the departments. For example, if he knew that Ms. Morris had a problem that someone in the Parks Department might address, no matter what their title was, he invited them to be a part of the discussion. Previous to Mr. Cohen's leadership, the departments were closed off from one another. However, he opened the departments up to one another as he encouraged people to talk and become involved with each other's projects.

Public speaking was a definite strength of Mr. Cohen's. He capably took an audience with differing opinions, put together a good argument for his side, and in the end found a compromise that fits everyone's needs. He kept Ms. Morris and others well informed because he was in constant contact with them without micromanagement. One of the most amazing things Mr. Cohen did for Pensacola was help them realize that even though they are not a big city, they still were capable of doing things that big cities did. For instance, he created the City's signature New Year's Eve Pelican Drop event, which has continued to grow in popularity every year.

When Mr. Cohen started, the City was in the midst of a land development code amendment process that had become very heated. Mr. Cohen was instrumental in interjecting rational conversation and mediating between the City and developers. Without his help, the debate might possibly still be raging today. Furthermore, he helped the City overcome its fear of changing traffic patterns. The downtown was made up of one-way streets that were confusing for tourists and difficult for pedestrians to navigate. Merchants were afraid for how deliveries might be made, among other concerns. Mr. Cohen explained all the benefits for changes and convinced the Council to take a chance. The streets are now two-way with improved pedestrian crossings,

Reference Notes Thaddeus Cohen

and businesses have seen a difference in their visibility to passersby. He knew this project would improve the City, and he did an incredible job of bringing people together to making this project work.

Mr. Cohen is on par with any top-level administrator. He is skilled in letting elected officials see his point of view and expressing his opinion. Even if they end up disagreeing with him, they respect him for his courage to stand up for what he thinks is the best strategy. Mr. Cohen will make a good Municipal Manager.

Words or phrases used to describe Thaddeus Cohen:

- Energetic,
- Passionate,
- Open,
- Friendly,
- Direct,
- Honest,
- Calm, and
- Knowledge of wide range of subjects.

Strengths: Sees the big picture, thinks outside the box for fresh new ideas, and takes what people think they cannot do and makes it happen.

Weaknesses: Moves quickly and does not always size up the political barriers.

Completed by: Danielle Dayton and Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

CB&A Internet Research

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches**Thaddeus Cohen***(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Marco Eagle
March 22, 2021

Collier County files \$1.2M lawsuit over delayed completion of Marco Island airport terminal

Author: Omar Rodríguez Ortiz

Collier County has sued a contractor over the delayed completion of the Marco Island Executive Airport terminal building that opened earlier this month. The lawsuit filed March 17 in Collier Circuit Court against West Construction and its insurance company Philadelphia Indemnity demands \$1.2 million plus other costs and fees. "Despite being responsible for planning, organization, supervision, management, control and coordination of work performed on the project, West continually failed to satisfy these responsibilities in breach of the agreement," the lawsuit states.

The lawsuit alleges other contract violations like failing to protect internet and sanitary utilities during construction, failing to maintain permits necessary for the work, and "attempting to manipulate the schedule and the project's critical path to obtain additional time to achieve substantial completion and, in turn, limit exposure to liquidated damages." The lawsuit alleges that West Construction and Philadelphia Indemnity have failed to pay liquidated damages allegedly owed to the county. "Collier County does not comment on pending litigation," wrote county community liaison Connie Deane in an email Monday. West Construction and Philadelphia Indemnity did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday about the lawsuit.

Collier, contractor keep tight lid

The Florida-based contractor West Construction received a notice to proceed with the construction of the terminal on April 30, 2018, and was required to achieve substantial completion in 320 calendar days, according to the lawsuit. Substantial completion is the date when construction is sufficiently complete so the county can utilize the building for its intended use. The lawsuit states West Construction achieved substantial completion on Jan. 22 of this year.

Thaddeus Cohen, who oversees the airport as growth management department head with Collier County, said prior to the lawsuit being filed that the county had difficulties in finishing the project on time, but he declined to go into detail about the reasons for the delay. "Clearly this has taken longer than what the contract documents have for completion," **Cohen** said March 2. The contract with West Construction states the county will suffer a financial loss if the contractor fails to complete the project on time, and that the county is entitled to assess \$3,645 in liquidated damages for each calendar day until substantial completion is achieved.

Cohen also declined to go into detail about the contractor's performance and said his focus was to finish the project. "I'm not in a position to discuss either our position as to the contractor's performance. That will be adjudicated on a later date," **Cohen** said. **Cohen** said the county

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

provided communications to West Construction "to have the contractor understand the importance of being able to move this project forward."

Matthew West, vice president of West Construction, declined an interview request last week. "We are currently in discussions with the county and at this time have no other comment," West wrote in an email March 19. **Cohen** said the county will do a self-assessment, which will include the evaluation of the performance of county employees, to prevent long delays in other county projects. He said he is hopeful that the company in charge of improving the airport's apron, Quality Enterprises USA, will finish in April before a ribbon-cutting ceremony. "We are focusing on trying to meet a completion date so that we can have a ribbon cutting in mid April. The issues as to how we got to where we are, it will be something that we will point to in the future," **Cohen** said.

Marco Island airport expands

The new \$9.5 million terminal opened its doors to the public on March 8 after almost two years of delays. The two-story, 16,000-square-foot terminal was built to make the airport compliant with Federal Aviation Administration safety regulations, said Andrew Bennett, interim executive airport manager with Collier County. "The primary objective of the project is pertaining to safety to allow more room for aircraft to maneuver in and out, while also addressing capacity needs to accommodate a greater number of aircraft during the peak season months," Bennett said.

A second phase costing an additional \$3.7 million is underway to improve the airport's apron where aircraft are parked. The old 4,500-square-foot terminal built in the 1970s was demolished earlier this month to make room for the new apron space. Bennett said the terminal includes features such as pilot and passenger lounges, flight planning stations, rental car concessions, airport administrative offices and office space for flight schools and other companies. The first phase also included construction of new parking spaces, landscaping, lighting and stormwater retention features.

The lobby of the new terminal at the Marco Island Executive Airport, photographed on Monday, March 1, 2021. County Commissioner Rick LoCastro, who represents Marco and surrounding communities, said the upgrades increase the airport's capability and safety. "I'm not happy with the late delivery of the final product, but I'm glad once we pulled the team together and provided tighter oversight we were able to ensure the job was finished," LoCastro said last Friday.

Tenants settle in at new terminal

Alan Davis, president of Career Flight Training and Aircraft Rental, said his flight school students now have a bigger and quieter space to study. "It was always so noisy in the old office because the airplanes would park right outside our office. You had to put ear protection on and off sometimes," Davis said. Davis also said the improvements will make the airport safer. "It makes it a safer environment because the building is further away from the runway," Davis said.

Jim Fogarty, owner of the flight school Fogarty Flying, said the construction of the terminal took longer than expected but that he likes the final product. He said he now has double the space

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

office he had in the old terminal. "It took a long time but as you can see it is a beautiful terminal," Fogarty said. Fogarty said the expansion will increase his school's business and improve aircraft traffic flow at the airport. Davis said he has never had so many flight students outside summer, when high school students are out of school. He attributes the business to the airport expansion and COVID-19. He said many adults are taking flight classes to buy and fly their own planes instead of flying in commercial flights. "It seems like things are picking up," Davis said.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Naples Daily News
February 21, 2021

Development - Collier planning board delays vote on concept for new town

Author: Laura Layden

The Collier County Planning Commission has put off hearing about a new town proposed east of Golden Gate Estates. The commission voted Thursday to kick an information-only presentation planned by the county's head of growth management down the road after the concept stirred up controversy. The unanimous vote came after about an hour of debate by planning commissioners on how to handle the presentation, in part due to "last-minute" information they received from the League of Women Voters of Collier County and the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which both vehemently oppose the town proposal by Collier Enterprises. The town would link the developer's three new rural villages.

The opponents have raised concerns about everything from how the town would impact traffic to how much money it would cost taxpayers. Commission chairman Edwin Fryer led off the discussions, saying he wanted the advisory board to have a formal hearing and vote on the town agreement, not just to merely hear a presentation on what county planners and the developer ironed out behind closed doors. Collier county commissioners are scheduled to vote on what's been dubbed a framework agreement for the town in April.

Fryer argued the planning commission and the public should weigh in on the "deal points" in the agreement – and that the agreement between the county and the developer is "quintessentially a planning matter" for the advisory board to formally take up. He said he felt as though the planning commission had been circumvented in the negotiation process. "It is our responsibility to hear this," he said. "Today is premature."

Other commissioners had their own ideas about how the issue should be handled. **Thaddeus Cohen**, who oversees the county's growth management department, explained that there isn't a requirement for the planning commission to vote on the town agreement, and that it can go directly to county commissioners without its input, as part of the normal approval process. With the presentation, **Cohen** said he was just trying to keep the commission informed about the negotiations.

The agreement that has been negotiated will benefit all of the county's residents, he said. He also noted that after a formal application and plan for the town is submitted to the county for review, it would go to the planning commission for a public airing and recommendation before a final decision by county commissioners.

Naples land use attorney Rich Yovanovich, who represents Collier Enterprises, objected to the planning commission's discussions about some of the points in and objections to the town agreement, arguing that it was not officially on the table for a public hearing. He urged the

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

commission to move forward with its hearings as planned for two of the three villages that would be melded together with the town.

The county has already green-lighted one of those villages, known as Rivergrass. The commission agreed to follow the order of its agenda – and not to discuss the town agreement any further before separately hearing and voting on the remaining petitions by Collier Enterprises. Yovanovich criticized the Conservancy and League of Women Voters for submitting their point-by-point letters of objection at the last minute, when they knew they were required to share the information with staff seven days in advance of the planning commission's meeting. He said it wasn't given to him, leaving him in the dark and forcing him to make a public records request to get it.

In a statement, Rob Moher, the conservancy's president and CEO, said its comments and concerns about the developer's town concept and two other villages – Longwater and Bellmar – were "timely submitted." "Moreover, the conservancy's analysis shows that Longwater and Bellmar will cost taxpayers millions of dollars and will severely exacerbate traffic congestion in Collier County," he said.

In their letters to planning commissioners, both the league and the conservancy accused Collier Enterprises of using the prospect of a town to gain favor on the two villages. "Don't be swayed," they urged. While planning commissioners intended to take up Longwater at Thursday's meeting, they ended up not hearing it, moving it to their next meeting after Yovanovich said he'd rather they do that than proceed because of the late hour.

The debate about the town proposal – and the subsequent hearing on an unrelated village proposal – took hours. Knowing that the Longwater presentation, discussions and debate would take hours longer, Yovanovich suggested that it be taken up March 4. The developer's other petition, for Bellmar, is also scheduled to be heard on that date – and now possibly the town agreement.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Naples Daily News

December 7, 2020

Rivergrass lawsuit filing, internal county memo raise conflict of interest questions

Author: Patrick Riley

A lawsuit against Collier County over a controversial 1,000-acre village proposed east of Golden Gate Estates has taken another turn following allegations of conflict of interest involving a county official. The Conservancy of Southwest Florida, which sued the county in March after county commissioners approved plans for Rivergrass Village, on Monday filed a motion to exclude testimony from the county's planning and zoning director in the case because her son receives a college scholarship with ties to landowner Collier Enterprises, which is looking to develop the property, according to the motion. "This is an obvious conflict of interest," lawyers for the Conservancy wrote in the motion.

A June memo from County Attorney Jeff Klatzkow addresses the same questions about the scholarship but found only the appearance of a conflict of interest that Klatzkow advised represents a "very fine line." The environmental group's lawsuit contends that the planned village, which would sit in the county's 185,000-acre Rural Lands Stewardship Area, does not follow the county's growth management plan. The RLSA provides for a voluntary program that allows developers to build towns and villages in areas with lower conservation value in exchange for preserving more environmentally sensitive land.

Collier County commissioners to consider final approval of changes to rural growth plan
In its motion to exclude testimony from Anita Jenkins, the county's current planning and zoning director, the Conservancy references Klatzkow's memo from June 12 titled "Ethics inquiry." The three-page memo details the following: Jenkins, then a community planning manager, contacted the county attorney's office via email on June 3, seeking guidance "on a potential conflict of interest." "My son receives a substantial college scholarship each semester from the Collier Family Office, Inc., established by Miles Collier," Jenkins wrote. "Mr. Collier is also affiliated with Collier Enterprises."

Jenkins wrote that our "ethics direct us to avoid projects where we have an associated financial interest with the applicant, therefore I am not directly involved in commenting on individual Collier Enterprises projects." She added that she occasionally sees emails on their projects where she's copied "as part of the supervisory chain of command." Jenkins wrote that Collier Enterprises is "a property owner involved in larger planning efforts that affect multiple property owners," such as the RLSA. She wrote that her review of the county's planning ethics policies finds working on projects that affect multiple property owners equally would not constitute a conflict. "Please advise," Jenkins wrote.

According to the memo, Jenkins' adult son is a student at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg with an academic scholarship. "The scholarship does not include the additional costs of room and board, so Ms. Jenkins' son applied to Mr. Collier for an additional scholarship which he was

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

awarded," the memo states. It is not clear from the memo the value of the scholarship, how Jenkins' son qualified or how many are given out each year. Efforts to reach Jenkins were unsuccessful as of late Monday afternoon. A Collier Enterprises spokeswoman said in an emailed statement to the Daily News Monday that there is "no connection whatsoever between the scholarship initiated two years ago by the Collier Family Office and the businesses of Collier Enterprises."

"We understand that Mr. Miles C. Collier has made a number of educational gifts to deserving students over the years," the statement from Collier Enterprises continues. "These are private initiatives of Mr. Collier and are unrelated to Collier Enterprises. We also understand that Ms. Jenkins proactively and transparently sought advice from the county attorney regarding Mr. Collier's contribution to Eckerd College, as her adult son was an ultimate beneficiary. We understand that she received an opinion that there was no conflict of interest and no breach of the ethical code."

The county attorney's memo notes that the inquiry "raises potential issues with respect to both the State Ethics Code and the Collier County Ethics Ordinance." However, as far as the state ethics code is concerned, the executive director of the Florida Commission on Ethics advised that there is no state ethics issue, the memo states. State law regarding unauthorized compensation "specifically applies to an employee of a local government, like Ms. Jenkins, however the restriction does not include her adult child," according to the memo. "In addition, there is no indication that the scholarship was provided to Ms. Jenkins' son in an attempt to influence a vote or other action by Ms. Jenkins," the memo states, noting that Jenkins has never met Collier.

"The Executive Director of the Florida Commission on Ethics advised that given these circumstances, there is no legal conflict, though arguably there might be the appearance of a conflict," Klatzkow and his assistant county attorney wrote. "Ms. Jenkins is aware to not provide any special consideration to Collier Enterprises as a result of her adult son's scholarship." Jenkins should continue to work with others when possible so that the recommendation is a department one rather than the recommendation of one person, the memo states.

The county's own ethics ordinance is more stringent than the state's code. The county attorney's office found that as long as Jenkins continues to work as a community planning manager, "there is no violation" of the county's ethics ordinance, "although one could argue that there may be the appearance of impropriety." But the memo further notes that during conversations between Klatzkow and **Thaddeus Cohen**, who heads the county's growth management department, "we were notified that Ms. Jenkins is being considered for a promotion to Interim Director of Planning." That could change things, the memo notes, because Jenkins would then be considered a public official.

And per the county's ethics ordinance, a public official shall not solicit or accept, directly or indirectly, anything of monetary value from someone who the public official knows is seeking zoning, permitting or inspection approval from the county department or board with which the official is affiliated. Although Jenkins herself is not accepting anything of value from Collier,

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Klatzkow wrote that he "views this as a very fine line," especially considering the "broad prohibitions" intended by the county's ordinance. He urged Jenkins and **Cohen**, even though there is no legal conflict of interest, to review the matter with County Manager Leo Ochs "in an abundance of caution" before Jenkins accepts the position of interim director of planning and zoning.

By June 20, Jenkins was made interim planning and zoning division director and by Nov. 14 she was made the permanent director. Voicemails left for Ochs were not immediately returned Monday. Klatzkow declined to comment Monday beyond what his memo says. "The opinion stands for what it stands for and we'll leave it at that," he said. In addition to asking for Jenkins' testimony in the court case to be excluded, the Conservancy's motion requests a "brief 60-day reopening of fact discovery limited to allowing the Conservancy to conduct any other discovery necessary to understand whether there are additional financial payments made from Miles Collier to County officials (or their families), or other conflicts of interest related to Rivergrass Village."

The motion also requests to allow the county to name a "new corporate designee" to cover the topics previously covered by Jenkins. "The citizens of Collier County deserve to have confidence that County employees are making objective, disinterested judgments about proposed development in this County, free from conflicts of interest and free from appearances of impropriety," Conservancy President and CEO Rob Moher said in an emailed statement, echoing the motion. "Unfortunately, in the case of Rivergrass Village, this is not the case, and thus, the Conservancy had no choice but to file today's motion."

The memo at the heart of the motion has also drawn concern from at least one county commissioner. Commissioner Penny Taylor said in a phone interview late last week that she intends to discuss the matter at Tuesday's commission meeting. "The appearance of a conflict is terrible," she said. "And we can't let this stay." The planning and zoning director touches everything and makes final decisions oftentimes on zoning issues that may not be as clear as they should be, Taylor said. She said she didn't know how a planning and zoning director could recuse herself from major projects. Taylor said Jenkins' promotion should not have happened. "I think that the county manager has to reconsider his decision in the light of our own Collier County ethics ordinance," she said.

Taylor said one can't separate Miles Collier from Collier Enterprises. "You can't," she said. Collier Enterprises, in an amendment to its original statement to respond to Taylor's comment, said that Collier's private initiatives were "made without the company's prior knowledge." "Mr. Collier has not been involved with the day-to-day management of Collier Enterprises for a very long time, having retired as its CEO in 1993 and then from its board of directors in 2011," the revised statement continued. The county's ethics ordinance was written in the wake of the Stadium Naples scandal that rocked the commission two decades ago and is a "strong" ordinance, Taylor said. "But it's there so the public has confidence" in how we run our business, she said.

Naples Daily News

October 22, 2019

Commissioners approve growth plan changes for eastern Collier County

Author: Karl Schneider

Collier County Commissioners approved proposed changes Tuesday to a plan that outlines growth and development in the eastern part of the county. "From here, the benchmark only improves," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, head of the county's growth and management department. The amendments were moved forward with a land development plan and a water policy. All three will ultimately be sent to the state for approval before coming back to the commissioners for a final vote.

The Rural Land Stewardship Area Overlay Program, or RLSA, is an incentive-based way to develop lands in eastern Collier County while protecting wildlife corridors and habitat and maintaining natural flow ways for water. The RLSA was created after the state issued a final order in 1999 that found the county was not doing enough to protect the environment. Commissioners adopted the RLSA in 2002 in response to the state's order and planned a five-year review. When the five years were up, and amendments were suggested, disagreements arose over funding and the RLSA restudy was shelved until now. It's become a controversial point for some conservation groups in the area. The changes commissioners approved Tuesday didn't sit well with representatives of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. The RLSA program offers developers a credit system. Credits for preserved land are then able to be used to develop other land within the RLSA's boundary. Nicole Johnson, the Conservancy's director of environmental policy, asked the commissioners not to pass the amendments and called the credit system the real issue. "The credits were rarely talked about," Johnson said. "It's such a complex crediting system and the math is critical."

Part of the problem, groups opposed to the amendments say, is old data used to determine where primary panther habitat was located. Land is rated differently depending on the location of endangered species or water flow ways. The credit system is based on this rating and old data may not fairly represent where wildlife is located. **Cohen** said the approval of the amendments is a step in the right direction. "We're trying to move forward," **Cohen** said. "We can only encourage and do those kinds of things if we move forward." A representative of a consortium of landowners in the RLSA had urged the commissioners to move forward with the amendments. Neale Montgomery said she represented the Eastern Collier Property Owners and said the county cannot take away landowner rights. "Adopt this five-year review and reevaluate that and come back with any changes," she said. Brad Cornell, a policy advocate with Audubon of Western Everglades, was a member of the five-year review committee. "If we cannot figure out how to protect land and make large private landowners part of the conversation, we will fail to protect species in wide-ranging habitats," Cornell said. "We will fail to solve water quality and quantity problems." Commissioner Andy Solis called the RLSA incredibly successful. "(The RLSA) preserved 55,000 acres at zero cost to the tax payer," he said. "This is a successful program by any stretch of the imagination."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Naples Daily News

November 14, 2018

Tax fatigue? Collier to continue studying stormwater fee

Author: Patrick Riley

Despite concerns from one commissioner about tax fatigue, commissioners on Tuesday gave county staff the green light to continue revising a potential stormwater fee and come back with additional alternatives. Commissioners voted 4-1 to allow staff to tinker with a stormwater fee that made waves among residents earlier this year. Commissioner Burt Saunders cast the lone dissenting vote. After residents flooded commissioners with complaints about the proposed fee during a September budget hearing, commissioners decided to put it off for a year.

Tuesday's move preserves the county's ability to meet deadlines for legal advertising should commissioners ultimately decide to want to move forward with a revised fee, said **Thaddeus Cohen**, who heads the county's growth management department. Moving ahead with the advertising does not obligate the commission to proceed with the fee. "We now have that opportunity to go back out and talk to the community about what we think we can be able to do," he said.

Collier County owns and operates an extensive stormwater management system that is designed to control flooding, protect personal property, manage water quality and keep up with regulations. The county had proposed the fee to provide what supporters said would be an equitable and dedicated funding source to maintain the aging stormwater system. Commissioner Bill McDaniel, a longtime opponent of the fee, suggested Tuesday that county staff work with the county's Productivity Committee to come up with alternatives to fund Collier's stormwater needs and come back before the board. "I don't want to foreclose an idea that might be out there that we haven't yet explored," he said.

But some commissioners questioned what, if any, alternatives could be found. "We're asking the Productivity Committee to do something that I'm not so sure is possible," Saunders said. Saunders said he was in favor of ditching the fee altogether, saying it was too complex, and pointing to voters' approval Nov. 6 of a 1 percent sales tax increase he said could free up money for the county by covering other unmet needs. "I think our citizens are starting to get a little fatigued with tax increases," he said. "And this is just another tax increase."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Naples Daily News

June 30, 2018

Commentary: Why not use road impact fees, gas taxes instead of extra sales tax?Author: **Thaddeus Cohen**

Question: With a local-option sales tax proposed for the November ballot, the Naples Daily News editorial board asked Collier County staff which road and intersection projects would be pursued and why road impact fees and gas taxes won't cover the cost of these. Below is the answer provided by **Thaddeus Cohen**, department head for Collier County Growth Management.

Answer: The road and intersection projects on the list for the 1-cent sales tax are a mix of operational and capacity improvements. These improvements are those that enhance the flow of traffic along a roadway or at an intersection leading to reduced traffic congestion and a more efficient road network.

These improvements would allow the transportation network to handle more vehicles. Adding lanes to existing roadways and new roadways would help alleviate the demand on existing roadways. The road and intersection projects that would be constructed include:

Vanderbilt Beach Road extension (Collier Boulevard to 16th Street Northeast)

Pine Ridge and Livingston roads intersection

Randall Boulevard and Immokalee Road intersection

Airport-Pulling Road widening (Vanderbilt Beach Road to Immokalee Road)

Triangle Boulevard

Impact fees may only be used to fund capacity improvements necessitated by growth; for example, added lanes, new roads, etc. Several projects on the list are not eligible to receive funding from impact fees. Backlogged projects, operational improvements or stand-alone bike lanes or sidewalk projects cannot utilize impact fees. In 2007, impact fees collected for roads were approximately \$70 million. Following the recession, these impact fees have averaged just under \$12 million annually, a reduction of approximately 75 percent, resulting in project deferrals and an increased backlog of projects.

Current impact fee collections aren't keeping pace with the need and don't cover the cost of these roadway projects, which have an approximate total shortfall of \$114 million. It would take 9.5 years to cover this shortfall with impact fee collections, assuming no new projects. Gas taxes are a flat per-gallon cost that haven't been indexed for inflation and don't fluctuate with prices. For years, car manufacturers have been mandated to develop more fuel-efficient vehicles. These vehicles produce the same wear and tear on the roadways as less fuel-efficient vehicles, but with the fuel-efficiency generate less revenue from gas taxes.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

In Collier County, more than half of the gas tax is utilized to pay off debt from the major transportation network construction from the 2000s. The remaining revenue doesn't cover the cost of ongoing operations and maintenance, nor the backlog of projects that were deferred during the Great Recession. The revenue generated from the 1-cent sales tax would allow the county to construct the needed infrastructure sooner. It takes approximately seven years to have roadway improvements open to the public. In the current environment, roadway demand exists before the funding can be collected and the needed infrastructure can be built. The sales tax would allow the advancement of projects that are needed now or the immediate future, rather than waiting to accumulate funds or issue debt.

Cohen is the department head for Collier County Growth Management. Throughout the summer, the Daily News editorial board is posing questions to government and civic leaders about the sales tax referendums on the ballot in November in Collier and Lee counties.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Naples Daily News

July 4, 2017

Collier County hires former Bush appointee to lead growth management

Author: Greg Stanley

Collier County Manager Leo Ochs has hired **Thaddeus Cohen**, former secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, to fill one of the county's top jobs. **Cohen** will lead the Growth Management Department, which runs much of the daily operations of the county, including construction, road maintenance, engineering, zoning and urban planning. **Cohen** will be paid a base salary of \$145,000 a year to oversee the department's \$119 million budget and almost 500 employees. He will be responsible for implementing the county's growth plans. Many of those plans are being revised for the first time in more than a decade as the population continues to surge, especially in the east.

Cohen led the Department of Community Affairs from 2004 to 2007 under Gov. Jeb Bush. The department was tasked with managing growth and development in the state, and reviewed county and city comprehensive plans before it was shut down under Gov. Rick Scott. **Cohen** is an architect and ran his own firm for 20 years before joining the state. After leaving community affairs, **Cohen** worked as the assistant city manager of Pensacola. In 2015, he was hired as the planning director of Key West. He served there until March, when he was asked to resign by the Key West city manager, according to local news reports.

Cohen was found through a national headhunting firm, Ochs said. His appointment was approved unanimously in June by county commissioners. "His extensive local and state government experience make him an ideal candidate," Ochs told commissioners. **Cohen** said he is ready to start. "Great things are happening in Collier County," he said. "I'm excited and I look forward to being a part of the process."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

March 8, 2017

Lopez: Revisit planning director firing

Author: Scott Unger

Key West City Commissioner Clayton Lopez made a public plea to city staff to revisit the recent termination of Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen** at Tuesday's meeting. After a proposed add-on to the agenda addressing the firing didn't obtain the required unanimous vote to have the issue heard (commissioners Billy Wardlow and Jimmy Weekley voted against), Lopez took his portion of the commissioners comments to address a situation that he said could've been handled better.

Since arriving two years ago, **Cohen** worked with various commissioners on projects including affordable housing and the trust fund associated with it, the bike and pedestrian master plan and the downtown circular bus, Lopez said. Lopez acknowledged issues within the planning department but took issue with the characterization that **Cohen** was "aloof." "If you know him, he just doesn't have much to say until you ask him about planning," Lopez said. "He's taken the hits and responsibilities that a leader of a department should take."

"It's never too late to reconsider, we can get through this. I ask that we please look at reconciliation or reconsideration." Under Key West city charter, City Manager Jim Scholl is given the responsibility of staff management decisions but the opinions of commission members can be shared with the manager.

The resolution sponsored by Lopez included 22 letters from community members supporting **Cohen**. "The firing of Planning Director **Cohen** must be a mistake," wrote Beverly Mingo. "No one releases a professional of his character in such a short period of time." The board also unanimously approved the second reading of an ordinance banning the practice of sexual orientation "conversion therapy" in Key West. Although there are no known practitioners of conversion therapy in Key West, the ordinance was brought forth to establish standard practices of protecting the city's youth, said sponsor Jimmy Weekley.

The ordinance will apply to licensed professionals covered under the Florida statute and violations will be classified as a civil penalty, according to City Attorney George Wallace. Issues over placement of solar panels at City Hall were also addressed by Scholl, who said the planning and engineering departments recommended leaving them where they are after an evaluation of the issue. "The staff's evaluation was that (the panel's placement) met every one of the milestones necessary for approval and location where they are," Scholl said. "The staff's recommendation obviously is to leave them where they are and not to move them." Scholl's response came after an inquiry from Commissioner Margaret Romero, who has frequently questioned the decision to mount the panels on carport structures as opposed to the roof of the building.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)
March 2, 2017

City fires planning director

Author: Scott Unger

Key West Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen** has been fired after holding the position for two years. Ineffective day-to-day management of the department and a lack of customer service were cited by City Manager Jim Scholl as reasons for **Cohen's** termination. "There's just been a lack of support for the day-to-day operations," Scholl said. "We've had some very good success on some big picture items ... but I'm just lacking that day-to-day customer service piece."

"We were just not keeping up with all of the more mundane planning staff requirements." The planning department's failure to properly issue public noticing for proposed zoning changes on College Road last week was a factor, Scholl said. "That was an issue, one issue in a series of minor things, but it adds up," he said. "It was just time for a change." **Cohen** will remain on-call until his official end date on March 31. Senior Planner Patrick Wright has been named interim director of the department until a permanent replacement is hired, Scholl said.

City Commissioner Sam Kaufman expressed frustration at last week's planning board meeting over the planning department's handling of this year's Building Permit Allocation System allocations that determined only 22 of the 91 available units will be used for affordable housing. A commission resolution allocating 100 percent of BPAS units was shot down by the Department of Economic Opportunity in November for contradictions with the city's comprehensive plan and inconsistencies with guidelines in the Florida Administrative Code.

The ruling delayed the release of the 2016-17 BPAS units and attempts by **Cohen** and planning to correct the inconsistencies were also denied, leading to the current allocations. "We've been asking for development plans for moving forward with affordable housing and the BPAS units (and) I had a big problem with the allocation for this year," Kaufman said. "Quite frankly when the City Commission directs that 100 percent should be affordable and the end result is 36 percent, I think that's a poor result."

"I just think that the Planning Department could use improvement and I'm very optimistic that city management is moving in the right direction." Before coming to Key West, **Cohen** was secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs under former Gov. Jeb Bush and assistant city manager of Pensacola. As Planning Director, **Cohen** received an annual salary of \$122,500, according to city officials. The search for a replacement will begin quickly and while the position will be open to all candidates with proper credentials, those familiar with local issues such as hurricane evacuation would be a benefit, Scholl said. "It helps to have somebody that had some Florida Keys credentials because (it's) an area of state critical concern," he said. "It's helpful; it's certainly not required, but it's helpful."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen
December 16, 2016

Housing plan changes cause rift

Author: Scott Unger

Proposed comprehensive plan changes were met with confusion by members of the Key West Planning Board and allegations of unfair practices by members of the community. The changes were proposed to satisfy the Department of Economic Opportunity's objections to a city ordinance allocating all Building Permit Allocation System units to be used for affordable housing for the 2016-17 allocation cycle, instead of the previously stated 50 percent, according to Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen**. "We have an objection from the DEO and what we're to do is to clear that objection," **Cohen** told the board. "We are specifically responding to a point that they made ... and that's what this language does."

The DEO complaint centered on restrictive language and a table displaying the BPAS allocation schedule, **Cohen** said. The city doesn't agree that the changes are necessary, but accepted recommendations from the department in order to move the process along ahead of the deadline to release BPAS units on June 30, 2017, **Cohen** said. "Internally we are confident that we could appeal DEO's decision," **Cohen** said. "We do not have the time to do that. We have a need to move forward with affordable housing. That's why we accepted the DEO language."

The legislation moves to the city commission, then will be sent to the DEO and other interested municipalities, which will then have 60 days to approve (the DEO has indicated it would expedite the process to 30 days). It will then go back before the commission where public readings will take place over two meetings, before going back to the DEO for final approval, according to Planning Staff Patrick Wright.

The changes also allow the city to pool units between allocation periods and gives the city the option to allocate units to itself without going through the application process. Board member Greg Lloyd said he was concerned the pooling of units could lead to a major developer taking all the units for a massive project. "I'm concerned about unintended consequences, I'd really like to be careful," Lloyd said. Community members raised concerns over the public notice and lack of relevant data given to support the changes, a possible violation of a memorandum of understanding between the city, Monroe County and the DEO that stipulates unused BPAS units go to other municipalities and language that nullifies current applications for the 2017 BPAS allocation cycle.

The cycle doesn't begin until the DEO approves, **Cohen** said. "In essence there is no year four application cycle right now because we don't have final approval from the DEO." **Cohen** said the MOU is not violated because it only applies to unused units, which the city won't have once the allocation cycle commences. Board members Cristy Spottswood said pooling units and city self-allocation are good things. "Hopefully we can get some more affordable projects on the books soon," Spottswood said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Board member Michael Browning urged the planning department to clarify the language and reasoning before presenting the changes to the city commission. “I don’t have a problem voting for this because of our alleged timeframe, but I again urge you guys to better articulate (the changes),” he said. The board also approved plans to renovate a Duval Street property into four commercial units and seven residential units. The estimated \$2.7 million renovation of 725 Duval St. will partition the first floor into four separate businesses and construct four market rate and three affordable residential units on the second and third floors, according to plans.

Construction on the 10,892-square-foot building will begin as soon as the project is approved, with an expected timeline of one year, plans say. The board also approved a parking variance for the property, reducing its off street parking lot from 20 spaces to nine.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

August 27, 2016

City looks into micro-units

Author: Scott Unger

To solve the city's big housing problem, officials may need to think small. Micro-unit apartments of 400 square feet or less are gaining in popularity in cities like San Francisco, Seattle and New York and some Key West officials say the idea could work locally. "I think they're very interesting and if we had a space going forward that'd be great," said Mayor Craig Cates.

The Key West City Commission recently voted to allocate all 91 of the annual Building Permit Allocation System (formerly known as Rate Of Growth Ordinance) units to affordable housing and the Planning Board recently approved easing density limits to 40 units per acre for city-owned property on Stock Island. That land could be a good place for micro-units, according to Cates. "I'd like to use (BPAS) for that and they'd be affordable," he said.

The idea is being discussed during Land Development Regulations revisions, but there are still questions to be answered, according to Planning Director **Thaddeus Cohen**. "I still believe a unit is a unit so I would be disinclined to go to fractionalized units, but it's something we're trying to consider," **Cohen** recently told members of the Planning Board. "I understand the point, which is you can get more of them, but our living style doesn't say that because you have a smaller unit that there is a smaller impact necessarily."

Board members Michael Browning, Sam Holland and James Gilleran agreed the idea is worth exploration. "Every time I turn on (the TV) there's something about this trend for people in small housing now. Instead of McMansions, people are figuring out ways to build in a storage container and all these other things," Holland told **Cohen**. "I would just encourage you to think outside the box. Obviously this has been an ongoing crisis situation."

"I think it really deserves more review because other communities that have this type of issue of extreme high density and lack of affordable housing, these type of micro units are pretty amazing and they would provide some relief," Gilleran said. "I would like to see us move forward on that." The idea would help solve the shortage of efficiency units, but other strategies need to be in place for families, according to CITY Commissioner Clayton Lopez. "I'm a proponent of the micro-units but I don't want to invest everything we have in micro-units and ignore the fact that there are full families that also need houses," Lopez said.

Commissioner Sam Kaufman called micro-units "a great idea" as long as plans are in place for hurricane evacuation. "We're limited to our allocation anyway and as long as the state approves of the development plans... then it's good," Kaufman said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The idea was discussed in the LDR 2015 workshop presented by consultants Calvin, Giordano and Associates. Those plans called for 300-400 square foot units that would account for half of a BPAS unit, although no official zoning has been determined for micro-units. A 49-story, 328-unit tower was recently proposed in Miami by mogul Moishe Mana, according to the Miami Herald. Utah tycoon David Hall wants to take micro-units a step further, with plans to spend \$250 million on a micro community with 20,000 residents in 200-square foot apartments, according to the Wall Street Journal.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

July 14, 2016

Controversy over art at City Hall

Author: Scott Unger

Several art projects for New City Hall are being included in Art In Public Places funding, despite not being approved, according to members of the AIPP board. Under city ordinance, 1 percent of new projects costing more than \$500,000 and renovations costing more than \$100,000 are required to be set aside “for the commission and installation of works of art to be placed on the site.”

Three pieces of art for the \$18.8 million New City Hall have been called into question by the AIPP board: the tiger sculpture that has called the site its home for more than 30 years; the historic murals that were preserved for the project; and a city-owned piece of art by Antonio Jacobsen. AIPP Chairman Richard Tallmadge said the costs of all three pieces — totaling more than \$100,000 — are being attributed to the AIPP fund despite the board not approving any of the works.

The six-foot-tall, 15-footlong steel tiger was refurbished pro bono by Key West artist Cayman Smith-Martin. Now the city is charging \$16,000 for the refurbishment out of the AIPP fund, according to Tallmadge. “A pro bono refurbishment has turned into a \$16,000 renovation bill,” he said.

Commissioner Margaret Romero said the refurbishment deal was made with the Monroe County School District so they should be in charge of any payments for the work. There is also an ongoing argument over where the statue should be placed. City Hall Architect Bert Bender originally wanted to move it to the corner of Varela and United streets, but earlier this year city officials directed it back to its original perch at the corner of White and United streets after receiving public input. AIPP members want the sculpture at the Varela Street location or the new butterfly garden at the western end of the property.

In a recent meeting with City Planner **Thaddeus Cohen**, Assistant City Manager Greg Veliz, Engineering Director Jim Bouquet and Senior Construction Manager Kreed Howell, Tallmadge said it was made clear that the final location of the sculpture hasn’t been decided. However, in an April 18 information bulletin from Bender, it states, “The tiger will be installed by the City at the NE corner of the site at a future date,” meaning the White Street location. Mayor Craig Cates confirmed the location.

The preservation costs of \$75,000 for two 1936 murals by William H. Hoffmann were included in the April 2013 Executive Summary approving the contract of Bender and Associates Architects. In the AIPP ordinance it states that the 1 percent set aside will exclude architectural fees. Cates said the public should be able to decide how the money is spent. “I can understand

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

that's in the contract already but it's a question for the taxpayers and how they want to spend their money," he said.

In the minutes of an April 28 meeting between city officials, Bender and Associates and Contractor Burke Construction, it was stated, "The question of whether the money spent on restored murals counts against the AIPP money has not been resolved. (City Manager) Jim Scholl will write a memo to City Planner **Thaddeus Cohen** stating the City's position." At Monday's AIPP meeting, **Cohen** indicated that Veliz has a ruling from the legal department that the mural restoration can be applied to part of the one percent.

Veliz wanted to be at the meeting but is currently on vacation, **Cohen** said. "It is his intent ... to come and say what he told (Tallmadge), which is their perspective of their view," **Cohen** said. The AIPP board expressed the most collective disgust over the inclusion of a city-owned painting by Antonio Jacobsen.

The picture was found on Mallory Square and is owned by the city, according to Tallmadge. At the Monday meeting, **Cohen** indicated he was unsure if the painting is owned by the city or was gifted to them. The "phantom picture," currently hanging in a hallway at the Habana Plaza offices is an attempt by city officials to save money on the project by over-appraising it and attributing it to AIPP funds, according to Tallmadge. "They're grasping at straws trying to make some savings on the project," he said. "It's stupefying to me that in an \$18-plus million renovation ... they are using the 1 percent as a form to come in under the budget."

"I think it's our collective view that it's a non-issue, it's a nonstarter, it doesn't even belong in this conversation." AIPP members haven't seen or had a chance to vote on the inclusion of the painting, according to board member Connie Gilbert. "I have not seen it, this board has not seen it, I am offended we are expected to pay for something when we haven't seen it," she said.

The painting shouldn't be included in the one percent and more attention needs to be paid to appointed boards, according to Romero. "Whatever the value of it might or might not be, it is already in the city's possession and should not in any way be counted towards the one percent fee. If we have boards who have been appointed by commissioners ... we should be listening to what they have to say and listening to their ideas."

The AIPP board is drafting three separate resolutions concerning the projects to bring before the Key West City Commission at the August 7 meeting. **Cohen** recommended the board bring each issue individually to the commission. Tallmadge said he is working to bring all art enthusiasts in town to the meeting to express their opinions. Repeated calls to **Cohen**, Scholl and Assistant City Attorney Ron Ramsingh were not returned. Veliz and City Attorney Shawn Smith are currently on vacation.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

September 4, 2015

City planners hash out new zoning laws

Author: Gwen Filosa

In Key West, locals pride themselves on living on a tropical island that doesn't resemble the typical South Florida tourist town, city planning director **Thaddeus Cohen** said this week. "We don't want to be like 'name that community'," **Cohen** said during a workshop on updating the land development regulations that govern development, outdoor signs, landscapes and other aspects of urban design.

The problem is, **Cohen** said, aerial photographs of Key West neighborhoods show that the island is headed in the direction of mainland mainstream development. "When we look down on us, we're slowly becoming that type of place we don't want to be, because of the pressure to continue to build and build and totally build out our lots," **Cohen** said. "As we write this code, we will wind up with a community we want to have." The workshops Wednesday and Thursday, held at the Florida Eco-Discovery Center on the Truman Waterfront, are being recorded and videos will become available at keywest.cgasolutions.com, the consultants' website where the videos of two workshops held in July - on affordable housing and parking - are posted.

Under state law, Key West must update its land development regulations (LDRs) to make them consistent with the city's comprehensive plan, which the city updated in 2013. The consultants and planning departments will host a fifth community workshop in December. By March 2016, the planning board will hold public hearings on the proposed updates and by May, the city commission will take the final look at it at two meetings. During the workshops, the city's hired consultants have been frank about naming Key West's shortcomings they say come from inadequate zoning. "In New Town, we see that there are signs everywhere," said Gianno Feoli, of Calvin, Giordano and Associates, at Wednesday's workshop. "So much signage is competing against each other that at the end of the day you don't see it. It becomes visual white noise."

The solution, Feoli said, is to install size requirements for signs in New Town and offer business owners up to 10 years to comply. Other zoning laws can prevent Key West from paving over land needed to soak up rainfall, said consultant Richard Cannone. During Wednesday's workshop, the consultant team showed one aerial photograph of a New Town home at an undisclosed address. From above, almost the entire lot appears paved over. "I apologize if this is your house," Cannone said. "It's almost all completely paved over. I'd be willing to bet \$100 the majority of [rain runoff] from that roof is going onto the neighbors' property."

Cohen urged locals to drive around their neighborhoods and participate in the process. "What we put down in this code is going to last for the next 35 years or so," **Cohen** said. "It's very important as to how we treat the spaces on our properties, between our properties and what happens on the public part of the properties."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Key West Citizen (FL)

February 5, 2015

City names top planner

Author: Gwen Filosa

A former state official who was a finalist for the city manager's job in 2012 is Key West's new planning director. **Thaddeus Cohen**, an architect who was secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs under former Gov. Jeb Bush and later assistant city manager of Pensacola, starts March 30. "He has verbally, formally accepted," city manager Jim Scholl said Tuesday night. "I spoke with him yesterday." **Cohen's** annual salary will be \$122,500, Scholl said.

Cohen succeeds Don Craig, who resigned last year but was hired back as a consultant. Craig attended Tuesday's commission meeting. **Cohen**, of Delray Beach, recently has been working as a consultant and director of operations at MBR Construction of Fort Lauderdale. He has also been job-hunting in various city governments since being fired without explanation in Pensacola. "The new administration is moving in a different direction, that is all I was told," **Cohen** told the Pensacola News Journal in May 2011.

"I left on good terms with the city," **Cohen** wrote in his 2014 application for Oakland Park's city manager job. In 2013, **Cohen** had been a finalist for Miramar city manager. The next year, he made the short list for Delray Beach's city manager.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.

May 19, 2011

Mayor terminates city official's job

Author: Jamie Page

Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward on Monday fired **Thaddeus Cohen**, a top city department head, as part of what the mayor says is a streamlining of city government. **Cohen's** last day is June 3. "The new administration is moving in a different direction; that is all I was told," **Cohen** said. "I am an at-will contract employee, so it's not unusual that this happens when an administration is going in a different direction." **Cohen** was hired in January 2008 to manage both the downtown's Community Redevelopment Agency and its Community Development Department.

Mayor's Office Spokesman Travis Peterson sent the PNJ this response about **Cohen's** termination: "As the mayor has indicated in past public statements, he is initiating a reorganization and streamlining of city government. As part of this process, there will be personnel and departmental shifts, promotions, and deletions," Peterson wrote. "Out of respect for the individuals impacted by this process, the mayor will reserve comment on personnel matters until these decisions are finalized and the appropriate staff and employees are notified. "Under the new city charter, the mayor has the ability to "remove a department head with or without cause, and without the consent of City Council."

Cohen came to the city after serving as secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs from 2004-07. Prior to that he owned an architectural firm for 20 years in Delray Beach. **Cohen** is a registered architect in Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio and New Jersey and has more than 33 years of private and local government experience in Florida, and experience in urban planning and growth management. Within months of being hired, **Cohen** began launching new programs. He asked permission from former City Manager Tom Bonfield to use \$50,000 in CRA funds set aside for downtown events to create a downtown entertainment scene. This created events such as Sunsets at Plaza de Luna, Friday Family Flicks, Live After Five, and the Palafox Farmer's Market.

"I enjoyed the opportunity I have had in Pensacola," **Cohen** said. "I would like to think we have made some significant improvements in our downtown and neighborhoods. I have an outstanding staff who contributed greatly to any of the successes we had. They are creative and those are the things you are supposed to have to progress at any organization." **Cohen's** compensation is a \$105,000 annual salary, plus \$35,893 in fringe benefits.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.

June 28, 2010

City, county eye old cleanup site

Author: Jamie Page

The Pensacola City Council wants to annex 831 acres into city limits surrounding the old Escambia Wood Treating Co. Superfund site off Palafox Street. The mound of polluted soil known as Mount Dioxin -- which stood on the Superfund site for 18 years -- is gone and the soil has been cleaned. The plan for what to do with the site after it's clean, for the past 10 years, has been to build a commerce park. A county-contracted study about 10 years ago cited 117 acres -- which includes the 31-acre Superfund site and adjacent residential areas -- as ideal for industrial development.

But Community Redevelopment Director **Thaddeus Cohen** envisions something much grander: annexing an 831-acre area around the Superfund site that includes mostly commercial or vacant properties already. Few occupied residential properties remain. And the site is relatively close to the airport, rail lines and Interstate 110. "So it's really an ideal location for creating a very large commerce park area," **Cohen** said.

When the City Council heard **Cohen's** presentation earlier this month, it agreed and asked city staff to begin moving forward in concept with the effort. "I am ecstatic about this," Councilman P.C. Wu said. "I am looking at taxes and jobs. Personally, I don't see a downside. I am in support of the whole thing."

Meanwhile, Escambia County -- which will act as the developer and eventually the primary owner of the land surrounding the Superfund site -- is in the process of obtaining ownership of roughly 117 acres owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This area already is within city limits. But hearing of the city's much larger annexation plans came as a surprise to Keith Wilkins, the county's deputy chief of the Community Services Bureau, who has been handling the Superfund property issue for the county. "We could not get a response from the city on this project so we were moving on without them," Wilkins said. "For the community, as long as it gets redeveloped it doesn't matter, as long as it's for the benefit of community. But the county has put several million dollars in getting this thing turned around, and it seems once the hard work is done then the city can come in and scoop it."

The area proposed to become the MidTown Palafox Commerce Park is bounded by a CSX rail line to the east, Fairfield Drive to the south, North Pace Boulevard to the west, and Brent Lane to the north. Councilman Sam Hall's initial reaction was that the city should not only annex the larger area but consider making it a Tax Increment Financing District. TIFs are for low-income areas in great need of revitalization, which allows a city government to collect additional property taxes there. "District 5 is the poorest district," Hall said. "You are looking at having a piece of property that is worth basically nothing right now that we could make into a TIF before it becomes valuable property."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Without a TIF, the city and county would benefit from property taxes. But under a city TIF, only the city would collect taxes. If that approach is taken it is likely to create a problem for county officials, whose plan to develop the property relies entirely on collecting county taxes from the site, Wilkins said. "If they do vote to annex it, obviously we could still move forward but we would have to rethink our development plan and our marketing strategy," Wilkins said. "This really takes it back several years."

Annexation area

The 831 acres the city is looking to annex includes 581 parcels of land. Here's how they are currently zoned:

- 181: Vacant
- 161: Residential (mostly vacant)
- 166: Commercial
- 37: Industrial
- 36: Church/school/hospital

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.

May 24, 2010

ECAT seeking ways to make service quicker

Author: Jamie Page

A plan is afoot to cut wait times to only 15 to 20 minutes for most Escambia County Area Transit bus routes in order to boost ridership. Long waits for bus service is the primary reason the local public bus system is underutilized by residents, a city official said. Right now, riders wait between 35 minutes to an hour and a half to catch a bus. And most routes take an hour to run full circle.

"Today the ECAT system is discouraging at worst and inconvenient at best, characterized generally by long waits and long trips," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, the city's Community Development director. Instead of just complaining about it, **Cohen** has written what he's calling a transformational plan that slices and dices ECAT's traditional routes into a streamlined system that will make most have a 15- to 20-minute wait time. Perhaps the dangling carrot here is that the changes, he says, will not cost the county additional money.

The poor, the elderly and the disabled are often cited as the only people filling the seats of the public bus system in Pensacola because they often don't have a choice. City and county officials have recognized this for years, but say they don't have the money to add buses and new routes to the ECAT system to create more efficient wait times where more average working people can justify taking the bus. The City of Pensacola withdrew its funding for ECAT in 2008, and left all local transit funding to the county.

There is a version of **Cohen's** plan adding one more bus route. However, ECAT has a fleet of 42 buses and currently only runs 28. An additional bus may not have to be purchased, **Cohen** said. County commissioners will discuss the proposed transit plan at Thursday's committee meeting. The goals of the proposal came from the Mass Transit Advisory Committee. They were fleshed out by stakeholders polled throughout the community, then gelled into a proposal by **Cohen**. "A rider-centric transit model would encourage a more diverse population to become transit dependent," **Cohen** said. "In other words, transit would become their first choice for mobility."

Warrington resident Shari Drew is one. She's a full-time student at Virginia College and relies on the bus to get to her classes on Garden Street in downtown Pensacola. Her trip from her home near the Navy base to downtown takes five hours to attend a single class that lasts less than two hours. Between waiting on the bus and travel time, she spends three hours en route to one class. And if she misses her bus, it will be an hour wait until the next one arrives. Having a shorter wait time would ensure she continues to use the bus system, she said.

"The drivers are friendly and helpful, the bus is always on time, the fares are reasonable and cheaper than owning a vehicle, but the wait time is just horrendous," Drew said. "Otherwise, I

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

don't mind taking the bus. That's the only thing I hate about the bus is the wait time. "But they could cut out the stops on the small side streets and make the routes faster."

Actually, that's primarily how **Cohen's** proposal achieves shorter wait times: By avoiding side streets and minor stops, and mostly keeping routes focused on major thoroughfares. "We have what some may call a peanut butter spread approach to transit "[broken bar] same level of service spread thinly throughout the area," **Cohen** said. "This approach is not necessarily conducive to building ridership. The current headway of 60 minutes is a nonstarter if we want transit to be a first choice for mobility."

Interim County Administrator Larry Newsom's initial look at the plan was positive. "I think his plan has a lot of merit," Newsom said. "He is looking at this from an economic development standpoint, and I commend him for that. Still, it does have to be a cost benefit analysis. We have to be able to justify these changes."

The proposal comes just as commissioners on Thursday approved a new ECAT route change plan, which will be implemented within 45 days. These route changes -- entirely separate from **Cohen's** plan -- were mostly to improve on-time performance and safety, and reduce complaints, ECAT General Manager Kenneth Gordon said. "The routes were scheduled so tight that bus drivers were driving too aggressively to maintain the schedules," Gordon said. "These changes will provide slightly more time on the routes to make it safer, and we have tried to modify routes with as little inconvenience as possible."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Pensacola News Journal - Pensacola, Fla.
April 28, 2010

Cohen's vision of future

Author: DeeDee Ritchie

The regional commercial real estate family gathered last week to hear Community Redevelopment Agency Director **Thaddeus Cohen** present the blueprint for Pensacola's future. Joe Buehler, Bo Johnson, John Tice and Florida House of Representatives candidate Doug Broxson were among those at the impressive presentation.

Cohen has been responsible for many innovative downtown programs, including the New Year's Eve Pelican Drop, Sunset Concerts at Plaza De Luna and Friday Flicks. If he can pull off this plan, he has my vote for strong mayor. If he moves here, that is.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Outdoor Movie Events

May 18, 2009

Pensacola, Florida: Friday Family Flicks Come Back to Pensacola

By Open Air Cinema on in

When **Thaddeus Cohen** came to work as the city's Community Redevelopment Agency director in December 2007, he immediately started identifying ways to bring people downtown.

One of those ideas was "Friday Family Flicks," a series of free outdoor family-friendly movies shown on a three-story inflatable screen every third Friday from May through August, at Commendencia Slip Pier. And it worked. The average crowd at last year's Friday Family Flicks was about 900 people, **Cohen** said. Last year's final showing in August drew 1,400. This year's flicks start Friday.

It takes about \$5,000 a year in CRA funds to offer the movies. Vendors sell popcorn and snacks. Families, teens and older couples alike bring yard chairs and blankets and have a picnic while watching a G- or PG-rated movie. Some folks just sit in their parked cars and pretend it's a drive-in. "We think the downtown restaurants did well because of it last year, too," **Cohen** said. "We would see a lot of people with takeout boxes before and after the movie." Music and activities start at 7:30 p.m., and the PG movie, "Bedtime Stories," starts about 8 p.m.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 20, 2006

County sends bad tier maps to state to meet deadline

Author: Ann Henson

The Monroe County Commission has agreed to submit incorrect development maps to the state, with the promise that the state will correct 147 improperly designated parcels before approving the documents. Property owners fear the corrections - mostly to allow development where the maps now prohibit it - will fall through the cracks after a new governor and state department heads take over Jan. 1. If the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) overlooks the detail, the county must go through a process that can take up to nine months to change each lot one by one.

Several property owners who attended the second and final public hearing on the issue Monday asked the county to submit corrected maps and questioned why commissioners were rushing the vote. Even freshman Commissioner Sylvia Murphy, the lone board member to vote against sending the incorrect maps, questioned the hurry. "I understand that a great deal of the 147 lots have come from the Upper Keys and we have not had a public hearing there?" she asked.

Debra Harrison, the World Wildlife Fund's Keys manager, said 105 of the 147 lots are in the Upper Keys. "You are costing the taxpayers thousands of dollars and are denying public participation," she told the commission. "[DCA Secretary] **Thaddeus Cohen** called each of you and told you to do this" now, so he can claim credit that it was done during his tenure, she said. "You have never said we will not hear from the people of the Upper Keys."

The state required that the maps be sent no later than today, and that they match the draft set DCA already has on file, according to County Attorney Suzanne Hutton and County Administrator Tom Willi. Gov. Jeb Bush, frustrated that the county kept changing the maps after DCA gave them preliminary approval, ordered Monroe to stop tweaking them. "Ideally it would be better to have one [public hearing] in the Upper Keys, but that's not legally required," Hutton said during Monday's meeting.

The maps, part of the county's new growth management system, divide all land into three categories, or tiers: buildable, not buildable and buildable but with more restrictions to protect native habitat. Once DCA approves the maps, the Tier System and its maps will become a part of the county's comprehensive plan that guides development. Tom Wyatt of Upper Sugarloaf Key owns one of the misidentified lots. "It's important to me, my wife and our family that this error gets corrected," he said. "I've heard that it will not fall through the cracks, but I urge you to correct it now."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 13, 2006

Gov. Bush reviews debated meeting

Author: Ann Henson

The governor is reviewing the Florida Cabinet's Dec. 5 approval of an annual report assessing Monroe County's progress on state-mandated environmental and housing goals, as well as statements county officials made before the vote, according to Jeb Bush's spokeswoman. "We understand that there are concerns and we are reviewing the report of the Cabinet meeting and may have more to say later this week," Kristy Campbell said.

The accuracy of County Administrator Tom Willi's statements about wastewater funding and hurricane evacuation times has been questioned since the meeting. Willi told the Cabinet an 18-hour hurricane evacuation time had been incorporated into the county's comprehensive land-use plan after public hearings, and he denied that the county used Key Largo wastewater funds to purchase a waterfront restaurant and help fund an artificial reef project.

County documents appear to contradict both statements, and two former county officials who wrote the phased hurricane evacuation ordinance dispute Willi's interpretation and time calculations in the evacuation issue. A spokeswoman for Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said the state agency stands behind Willi's conclusions, despite an agency attorney acknowledging the county's comp plan does not specifically cite an 18-hour evacuation time. "The plan is what guides the evacuation process and has been accepted into the comprehensive plan, when we run the models the number [18] comes out," Alexis Antonacci said.

The state requires Monroe County to be able to evacuate in less than 24 hours before it can build more homes. Willi said a staff report explained the county could shave 3.5 hours by eliminating tourists, as they must leave 48 hours before the general residential population, and another three hours because mobile home residents must leave 36 hours in advance. Although the report states no total hours, Willi told the Cabinet it refers to 24 hours and that time could be saved "if we early evacuate these two groups."

Marlene Conaway, a former county planning director, and Tim McGarry, a former county growth management director, said mobile home residents never were meant to be counted in the hours saved through a phased evacuation for hurricanes of Category 3 or greater. Further, a document summarizing what county and municipal emergency managers approved during a 2004 hurricane symposium did not refer to mobile home residents in their endorsement of the phased evacuation plan.

Conaway and McGarry said the 18-hour time frame is far-fetched, considering the intent of the ordinance, which Conaway said she worded specifically to include mobile home owners in the general population of full-time permanent residents. "You can ask them to leave early, but you

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

cannot force them," she said. "It's in the language very clearly. And if you cannot force them, you cannot include them in your calculations [to reduce clearance time]. And I will testify to that in court."

Comments she made during an April 2005 Planning Commission meeting support her perspective. She told planning commissioners the phased evacuation clearance time "will drop from 24 hours to 21 hours and 41 minutes," indicating only tourists were to be eliminated from the calculations. "Sounds like her opinion, not the view of the people that she works for," Willi wrote in an e-mail to The Citizen last week. He has not returned repeated phone calls seeking comment.

McGarry said Willi's interpretation involves legal and policy issues. "If you want to count the mobile home residents as leaving early, you will have to amend the comprehensive plan" to say they are something other than full-time permanent residents, McGarry said, referring to the term "Keys residents" in the ordinance. "Residents and tourists are two different things -- tourists are in hotels that you can close down." He said the evacuation plan becomes more dangerous with every group that is eliminated, as it increases the margin for error. "It becomes a safety issue," he said.

The legal issue stems from what constitutes a resident, he said. Because evacuation and growth management are tied, if mobile home residents are classified as less than a full-time permanent resident, the building allocation earned by their early evacuation would be less than a full building allocation, McGarry said. He also noted that all of the calculations would be meaningless if a storm were to form quickly off the Keys coast.

The topic of updating the county's hurricane evacuation time arose in September 2004 when **Cohen** called a hurricane symposium. "As I came into office, it appeared that the only issue that is still out there is the hurricane evacuation component," he told the group of county and municipal emergency managers assembled at the time. The ensuing series of meetings focused on developing a hurricane plan for the county and municipalities to adopt.

Cohen's concern stemmed from the fact that the Keys technically were built out, because the evacuation time was 23 hours and 38 minutes. To continue with that time frame would mean cutting off all building permits. But with the new 18-hour evacuation time, the county theoretically could add as many as 12,000 building permits to its yearly allotment, as it could gain 2,000 permits for every hour under 24. At the Department of Community Affairs's suggestion, officials formally approved a phased evacuation plan that informally had been executed for years.

Tampabay.com
October 17, 2006

Growth law will protect way of life

A Times Editorial by **Thaddeus Cohen**

Every citizen values something and holds those values over something else. The family over the job, the job over the ball game; we all live within a pyramid of values that help define us as a society. Florida's new growth management law passed last year, formerly known as Senate Bill 360, has given local government officials a new opportunity to show citizens what values they hold dear as well.

Local officials should have a good idea about what residents value and what growth challenges have emerged during Florida's recent population boom. The values piece comes into play when these two factors are added into proposed changes by a local government to add new development to communities, known in the world of community planners as changes to a comprehensive plan.

This landmark growth legislation requires local governments to consider much more seriously how they plan to pay for services like water, sewers, schools and roads. Not surprisingly, most local officials have responded to these new requirements with enthusiastic efficiency. After all, why shouldn't they? The new growth management legislation is in synch with what most Americans value most.

For example, say a development is built in your community for 2,500 new single-family homes. They'll need services, won't they? Has the local government figured out how to make the changes in its comprehensive plan to accommodate this new development, including how these services would be paid for? If not, how can they even approach the state in good conscience and ask for approval?

Should a new homeowner in this community have to send his or her children miles from home to get them to the closest school? Are the homes built in an area that will make the cost of building sewage facilities and providing clean drinking water a drain on the pocketbooks of these new residents? Will the roads be able to accommodate all the cars, or will all the members of this community regularly miss their child's soccer games and school plays because they're stuck in traffic on the way home from work?

Regardless of age, income or political affiliation, don't we all hold these values dear? Helping to ensure that all of these elements are accounted for is what makes the legislation a great contribution to our state. It helps provide new and former residents with a way of life that continues to make our state the best place to live and work in the country. Local governments are getting on board, taking the steps necessary to make concurrency a reality, to ensure that all major development impacts are accounted for and ensuring that the local plans are financially feasible, with meaningful links to local budgeting.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Of course, this requires more work for local governments, but they don't have to face this work alone. The state Department of Community Affairs is not just enforcing the new growth management law; it is also working hand in hand with local governments to provide technical assistance to help them meet the challenges that come with growth. Using the new law, local governments can focus on development that provides services necessary to ensure that Florida families enjoy the best possible day-to-day living conditions. What value can a local government hold above that?

Thaddeus Cohen is secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Ledger
August 25, 2006

PCOC to Try to Avoid Legal Fight

Author: Rick Rousos

BARTOW -- The chairman of the Polk County Opportunity Council says he will attempt to mend the rift with the state agency that is attempting to pull \$911,000 from PCOC's budget. PCOC boss Kevin Roberts said he would rather talk things over with the head of the state Department of Community Affairs before a formal legal proceeding begins.

Roberts said Thursday night during a PCOC meeting that he and Executive Director Gary Hartfield will ask state Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** to hear their contentions that the agency has vastly improved and the withdrawal of funds is unnecessary. Roberts is asking for a meeting in Tallahassee, on **Cohen's** turf, "before the whole legal route" of fighting the pulling of funds takes place. Hartfield said he will send a letter to **Cohen** next week requesting the meeting.

The \$911,000 that the DCA is attempting to take away from PCOC is used for job training and tuition for poor people. The DCA will continue to fund the program until all of PCOC's legal appeals have been exhausted, and if the money is taken from PCOC, the state will find another agency to provide those services.

Roberts also said Thursday night that he and Hartfield were scheduled to meet today with U.S. Rep. Adam Putnam, a Bartow Republican who has been a frequent critic of PCOC. Roberts said he was grateful for the opportunity to meet with Putnam and will attempt to demonstrate to the congressman that PCOC has come a long way. PCOC has been without a finance director since April, but that's expected to change Monday when Gail Adderley starts as finance director. For the past five years, she has served as the finance chief for a community action agency in Lake County.

During an interview Thursday, Hartfield declined to divulge her salary, saying her contract has not been completed and won't be until the paperwork is filled out and signed, either today or Monday. The salary range for job is between \$49,000 and \$73,000. During the meeting, board member Ozell Wilson mentioned that Adderley will be paid \$72,000. Wilson wondered what would happen a year from now when Adderley can't get a merit raise of more than \$1,000 because she's reached the top of the salary scale. PCOC is also attempting to set up a meeting, at Roberts' insistence, to learn more about the state's open meeting and open records laws.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)
April 14, 2006

DCA head mum on lawsuit backing

Author: Ann Henson

The Department of Community Affairs secretary wants to assure Florida Keys residents that his department is always watching for signs that Monroe County has run amok. **Thaddeus Cohen** heads the agency that has overseen growth management in Monroe County since it was declared an Area of State Critical Concern in the 1970s. On the phone from Tallahassee Thursday, **Cohen** said he understands residents' concerns and apprehension about a proposal to lift the designation. He freely discussed how the state-county partnership would continue, but said he'd have to consult his attorney before answering one of the most important questions: Would the state back the county in lawsuits that property owners file when they can't do what they want with their land Monroe officials have said that could cost the county hundreds of millions of dollars.

"What the future looks like, I don't want to speculate," he said. "We feel there's been a real change, from a regulatory oversight role to a partnership where we crafted a framework that works for everyone. It has been a struggle to get to where we are today, but with time we can both look back at the accomplishments we have made. "But we're not done; we need to continue to be vigilant, review the actions of local policymakers, and citizens can still express concern to the state when actions are not consistent with the land-development regulations," he said. The state seized control 30 years ago when the county was failing to control development. The state has mandated that the county upgrade wastewater systems to clean nearshore waters; provide affordable housing; protect habitat for endangered species; and control growth enough to evacuate the Keys within 24 hours of a hurricane. State Rep. Ken Sorensen, R-Key Largo, said he believes Monroe is complying with state regulations now, and should be set free to handle its own affairs. A year ago, county officials asked the governor and Cabinet to lift the designation, but the state denied the request. This year, Sorensen, now in his last term, sponsored a dedesignation bill.

Weeks of wrangling brought a compromise between the state, environmentalists and Sorensen, who will add the resulting amendments when his bill is heard on the House floor sometime before the session ends May 5. The amendments allow the county to retain the benefits afforded to critical-concern areas, such as letting the county tap into special funds and keep its Land Authority. **Cohen** said he believes the county is in fine shape and will continue to work toward meeting a list of goals the state set. "I'm not talking of being completely sewerred, but of making meaningful progress in changing nearshore water quality," he said. "That had been of great concern to the department." **Cohen** doesn't think future administrations, either state or county, will renege on the growth management plan after the designation is lifted. "We feel the schemes we have in place and the issues the bill talks of, the interlocal between the county and Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority," he said, "all these things provide for folks to move forward regardless of who the players are."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Naples Daily News (FL)

February 8, 2006

**Florida growth management law, Thaddeus Cohen local
State official defends new growth management law**

Author: Larry Hannan

No one can fully explain a growth management law that went into effect in Florida in 2005. But **Thaddeus Cohen**, secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, knows the new law better than most. **Cohen** believes, despite vociferous criticism from Collier County officials, the growth management law has a chance to be beneficial to all of Florida. On Tuesday he met with the Naples Daily News editorial board. The law has been roundly criticized by Collier officials, who believe it will damage their concurrency management system of collecting impact fees and prohibiting growth until capacity improvements are made to an area. DCA will be responsible for enforcing the new law.

Cohen said the law, often referred to as Senate Bill 360, needs time to work before changes are made. He said the county commissioners have some valid concerns, but they haven't looked into some of the benefits of the new law. "We don't think this is a straitjacket," **Cohen** said of the law. Throughout most of the state, the new law has been received positively. Collier is the exception. "You are unique," **Cohen** said, speaking of Collier County. "We have not had this in other places." Collier's main complaint is that the law doesn't let the county create a tougher growth management program than the state allows. Collier County's current program is tougher than the state's, so commissioners fear the local program will become moot and they'll have to abide by weaker state requirements under the new law. If the law is given a chance to work, Collier might be surprised at how much the county benefits, **Cohen** said. The key to the new law is the paying of proportionate fair-share mitigation. That means a developer or homeowner has to pay a fair amount to the local government so capacity improvements can be made to offset the effect of the new development. If the fair-share payment is made, development can proceed, even if the capacity improvements have not yet been made. "This says everybody pays because everybody impacts the system," **Cohen** said.

"Under proportionate fair share, local governments can handle backlogs" of infrastructure needs. Impact fees can't do that because by law they only can pay for future infrastructure needs, not existing needs. "A lot of people were unhappy with growth management throughout the state" before this law was passed, **Cohen** said. "There was a sense that people were taking advantage of the system." Under the new law, it will be easier to get funding for schools, water and road improvements needed because of the growth within the state, **Cohen** said.

Collier officials are pushing for a glitch bill in the next legislative session that would make changes to Senate Bill 360. That bill would address their concerns and allow them to keep collecting impact fees. **Cohen** isn't thrilled about the idea of a glitch bill. He thinks it's too soon. If a glitch bill is passed, he'd like it to be narrowly focused.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Collier Commissioner Fred Coyle has been vocal in his criticism of the new growth management law. Coyle believes it will decimate the county's concurrency management system. Coyle said he wants two things from a glitch bill. "We want to retain our impact fee system," Coyle said. "We also want the ability to have a concurrency system that guarantees transportation capacity before development is approved." The existing law prohibits Collier from doing both, Coyle said. If the county can get those things, it will be fine with the rest of the growth management law, he said. Coyle said sacrificing impact fees for proportionate fair share makes no sense. "We know our impact fee system works," he said. "Why should we give it up for something that we're not sure works?" Coyle also said the proportionate fair-share system isn't as effective. If one development pays \$1 million for proportionate fair share, that's not enough to make a road improvement. But that development could be up and operating before they get money from other developers, Coyle said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
January 27, 2006

**State Paid FEMA Without Checking
Audit Criticizes Lack Of Oversight**

Authors: Megan O'Matz and Sally Kestin

Florida paid \$155 million for its share of federal disaster aid to residents after the 2004 hurricanes without checking the legitimacy of the claims, a state audit has concluded. The Federal Emergency Management Agency regularly provided the state with details of individual payments, yet for more than seven months Florida "did not perform any sampling or verification" on roughly 471,000 awards, according to the report released Thursday by Florida's auditor general.

Only after the audit began did the state's Division of Emergency Management make any attempt to check out the claims -- by calling 2,000 people. "We just paid the bill without any accountability or oversight," said state Sen. Ron Klein, one of three legislators who requested the audit after a South Florida Sun-Sentinel investigation revealed waste and fraud in FEMA payments in Miami-Dade County.

The county was spared the devastating effects of Hurricane Frances, which struck 100 miles to the north on Labor Day weekend 2004. Yet the president, at the request of the governor, declared Miami-Dade a disaster area. The designation allowed residents there to collect \$31 million from FEMA. The audit focused on the Division of Emergency Management's oversight of aid payments by FEMA statewide.

Each month, FEMA billed Florida for 25 percent of the aid given for damaged belongings, medical and dental costs, transportation, funerals, clothing, tools, generators, chain saws and other clean-up items, according to the audit. From September 2004 through June 2005, FEMA paid \$618 million to residents for the losses. Of that, Florida paid FEMA \$155 million but did nothing to verify the accuracy or appropriateness of the payments until May 2005, after the audit began, the report states.

At that point, the state sampled 3,500 claims, reaching 2,000 of the applicants by phone, the report states. Officials asked claimants to confirm, "both the type and dollar amount of assistance received," the audit states. Florida determined that only 10 claims required additional scrutiny. At the close of the audit, emergency officials still had not taken steps to verify the remaining 1,500 claims in the sample, according to the report. "The state has done a terrible job, just like FEMA, in making sure that there's verifiable payments of losses," said state Sen. Walter "Skip" Campbell, D-Tamarac. "They're choosing not to get involved intentionally, but that's the wrong way to spend the state's dollars."

In a written response to the audit, **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, which oversees emergency management, said it would cost the state more to

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

further verify the FEMA claims and could slow payments to disaster victims. "The Division will continue to review and revise as necessary, its verification of the process," he wrote. "This verification process involves contacting applicants for each disaster and determining if they have actually received FEMA financial assistance ..." Klein said Thursday that he would push for additional funds for the department to ensure that it has the resources to properly oversee the program. "Why are we just writing a check for 25 percent of the cost of this program without even knowing where this money is going?" the Boca Raton Democrat said.

State Sen. Nan Rich, D-Weston, also called for greater accountability by the state, citing problems with the automobile reimbursement program. The audit criticizes the state's policy for replacing destroyed automobiles, saying that it resulted in some people collecting more in aid than their vehicles were worth. "We have people who received nothing, and yet we're giving someone \$6,500 for a vehicle that's worth \$850. It's kind of outrageous. We obviously need to revise these procedures," she said.

Auditors suggested that the state work with FEMA to come up with a more reasonable method of paying for destroyed automobiles than setting a standard amount, which in 2004 was \$6,500 per vehicle. A U.S. Inspector General audit in May of Miami-Dade claims found more than a dozen recipients collected \$6,500 even though the value of the destroyed car was less. That same month, Florida revised its agreement with FEMA, lowering the rate for destroyed cars to \$4,000.

Cohen, in response to the state's audit, wrote that his department is reviewing its practice for setting standard amounts for cars and other items, such as generators. The Sun-Sentinel reported in December that FEMA reimbursed numerous Floridians a set amount -- \$836 each -- for generators after Hurricane Wilma, even when people paid less. The state is considering discontinuing the reimbursements for generators altogether, **Cohen** wrote.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 9, 2005

DCA- County doing OK on growth

Author: Ann Henson

The county's growth management report card from the state shows that of 17 requirements, the county has completed 12 items and nearly completed another three. But one of the key requirements for the county -- that everyone be able to leave prior to a hurricane -- may become an obstacle over which the county has no control, due to the growth in South Florida. The state Department of Community Affairs and the state Division of Emergency Management will take a regional look at hurricane evacuation with a report out by September 2006 that considers evacuation behavior and population growth of the entire area, according to the state's report card on Monroe County. Overall, DCA Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said the county has made substantial progress, and recommends giving the county a passing mark. However, **Cohen** said he believes the designation as an Area of Critical State Concern should continue. And he did not make a recommendation on how long the designation should remain. "I recommend that we continue the designation in order to ensure completion of the work program recently adopted by the Governor and Cabinet," **Cohen** stated. The governor and Cabinet will make the final determination on whether or not the county has made substantial progress in its yearly plan as well as the critical concern designation. It will also decide how many new housing units should be allowed in the county. Should they find the county in compliance, the nutrient reduction credit program would be eliminated.

That program requires eliminating a cesspit or improperly functioning septic system for each building permit the county issues. **Cohen's** report also included challenges that lie ahead for the county -- aside from the hurricane evacuation issue, the county must continue to find funding for construction of wastewater facilities, for land acquisition and preservation and for affordable housing. What the county has not completed includes:

- Completing the new growth management plan called the Tier System. Overlay maps for the Tier III Special Protection Areas have not been finalized. However, following a joint field trip to review some of the areas, this item should be finalized and adopted in January.
- Amending land development regulations to prohibit natural areas as receiver sites for development that is exempt of county regulations and to limit clearing. This item, too, should be complete in January, according to **Cohen's** report.
- The county has hooked up only 28 percent of the homes in the Key West Resort Utility service area on Stock Island. **Cohen** wants these hookups completed as soon as possible.
- Assuring that affordable housing will remain affordable. The county has met a portion of this requirement.
- Providing \$10 million in bond financing from the Tourist Impact Tax for acquisition of land for workforce and affordable housing. The county has done its part but awaits approval from the state for the bond issue.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Key West Citizen (FL)

December 7, 2005

State DCA secretary hears concerns about sprawl

Author: Robert Silk

LAYTON -- Meeting with the Layton City Council Thursday, Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** sought to assure officials that his department weighs regional hurricane evacuation when making rulings that will impact growth in South Florida. "It disheartens me to read the articles that say the DCA is not concerned about evacuation issues, when to me that was the first thing I was concerned about," **Cohen** said in reference to his early days as head of Florida's lead oversight agency for growth management. **Cohen** became DCA secretary in the spring of 2004.

But the secretary stopped short of agreeing with the suggestion of Layton City Councilman Scott Shamlin that the DCA should not approve any expansion of Miami-Dade County's Urban Development Boundary until the department develops a tool that quantitatively measures regional evacuation times. For years the DCA has used a similar tool, called the Miller Model, to measure Florida Keys hurricane evacuation time and to set Keys growth-related policies. Shamlin, echoing the view of many officials countywide, told **Cohen** that the rapid development in Homestead and Florida City could make all considerations of Keys evacuation moot. Once on the mainland only the Florida Turnpike, U.S. 1 and Krome Avenue provide evacuation routes to points further north. "Unmanaged growth is putting families in the Keys in danger and I mean that in the most literal sense," Shamlin said.

Cohen's visit to Layton City Hall, which was arranged on short notice, came the day after the Miami-Dade County Commission decided to forward for DCA review nine applications for expansion of that county's UDB. Development is restricted to one home per five acres in areas outside the boundary. The boundary is designed to provide a buffer between urban, agricultural and environmentally sensitive land.

On Friday, Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez vetoed the commission's decision. The commission was to weigh an override at its meeting on Tuesday. Lennar Corp.'s plan to build a 6,000-home development near Card Sound Road, south of Miami-Dade's UDB, is not among the nine applications in question. In August the South Florida Regional Planning Council told Lennar officials that its application for the so-called Florida City Commons project was incomplete. The company has until the middle of this month to resubmit the application, or it can ask for additional time.

Cohen's Layton visit also came on the heels of a decision by the DCA to allow 2,616 new homes in Homestead despite the fact that the South Florida Regional Planning Council recommended against approval of the homes. Under Florida Statute, the regional planning council reviews large development plans, called Developments of Regional Impact, and makes a recommendation to the DCA. The Miami Herald first reported on the DCA's Homestead decision

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Nov. 17. Shamlin told the secretary that the DCA's Homestead decision gave reason for pause. "Judging from what we saw in Homestead, we are concerned that the DCA might approve these [Developments of Regional Impact] without lengthy review on the impact of evacuation on the Florida Keys," he said.

But **Cohen** said that despite the ruling, the DCA does want Homestead to consider the regional impact of developments in the city. "It seems to be prudent policy for them to think about how their actions will affect their neighbors," he said. **Cohen** also hinted at a planning tool that the state Division of Emergency Management is devising to measure regional evacuation times. He provided no details but said he hoped to know more about the matter in the near future. He defended the Homestead decision as just one frame of a much bigger picture. "You can focus on each decision as it is made," he said. "But you can also look at it as a large puzzle and some of the puzzle units can be more beautiful than others."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)

December 7, 2005

Cohen: Bus tour to check parcels goes 'very well'

Author: Alyson Matley

Monroe County Commissioner Murray Nelson and state growth chief **Thaddeus Cohen** are calling a bus tour of the Keys a success. Friday, Nelson, county staffers and **Cohen**, secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs, set out to "ground truth" up to 200 lots that Nelson has argued do not belong categorized with larger unbuildable properties. "We were looking at lots one acre or less," he said, "and agreed not to have them fall in the [most protected areas.]"

"The trip went very well. It was a constructive fact-finding mission," **Cohen** said Tuesday. "I had an opportunity to talk with Monroe County officials and review the maps before our bus tour. The bus tour enabled the group to visualize some of the concerns Commissioner Nelson has. DCA will continue to work with local officials to build consensus on important habitat preservation issues."

In an agreement with DCA, county officials agreed last year to designate contiguous parcels of sensitive native habitat of more than one acre as protected. In October, Nelson began pushing to change the agreement, saying many lots, especially in the Upper Keys, would be unfairly restricted from development. The mapping of lots is part of a larger agreement between the county and DCA. It commits the county to invest millions in sewer projects and land acquisition. In return, DCA agreed to provide additional building permits as well as reinstate past permits the county lost because it was not complying with state mandates to protect the Keys environment.

Nelson challenged a provision in the agreement that does not allow most roads to count as breaks in vegetation. As it stands, a somewhat wooded lot across the street from a wooded parcel of more than one acre would count as part of that acre and likely be nearly impossible to build on.

After looking at each lot, Nelson said, "Everybody agreed there was no connectivity." Overall, he said the tour addressed about 11 acres, some 200 lots. "They are still protected," Nelson told the Keynoter. "They are restricted to a maximum 40 percent clearing." Nelson said county staff is drawing up the maps to document the lots this week. He hopes to have them in hand Monday when he plans to attend a meeting with state Cabinet aides in Tallahassee.

"We hope to present them at the Cabinet board meeting Tuesday for their approval," he added, though the maps are not part of the Cabinet agenda. "Then they will come back to County Commission for adoption. After that they will go to [the U.S.] Fish & Wildlife [Service] as our habitat protection program."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Reporter (Tavernier, FL)

August 4, 2005

DCA Secretary plays broker

Author: Ann Henson

The county mayor and water utility chairwoman met with state officials in Key West to hash out their wastewater differences. **Thaddeus Cohen**, Secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA), said the purpose of the meeting was to encourage both sides to come together and get the relationship between the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority and the county back on track. "Both acknowledge that the relationship is not where it needs to be," he said following the meeting. "They recognize that there has been too many voices so they cannot see clearly what their goals are."

County Mayor Dixie Spehar said the meeting was productive. "He concentrated on the partnership and gave us some tasks, which I cannot talk about, to take back to our boards for the August meeting," she said.

Cohen said his goal is to reunite a marriage between the county and the Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority (FKAA). At last month's county commission meeting, Spehar's motion to withhold future funding from FKAA unless it would guarantee "reasonable rates" for sewerage passed in a 3-2 vote. Commissioners George Neugent and David Rice voted no. **Cohen** won't settle for that. "If the goal is to get pipes in the ground and connected, they can work through the issues," **Cohen** said in a phone interview last week. **Cohen** sees his role as more marriage counselor than referee. "They have lost the ability to talk to one another, lost their vocabulary," he said. "Direct conversations are the best because you don't have intermediaries to skew the message," he added. "The goal is to get sewers built efficiently, cost effectively and expeditiously."

During the luncheon meeting held on Wednesday, Aug. 3, the two women agreed to pick one individual each to resolve the issues and confer with **Cohen**. Spehar said that County Manager Tom Willi will be her point person. Last week Spehar was frustrated by the chain of events. "I want to see the most affordable and efficient project and I don't mind who does it as long as it's affordable and efficient," she said. Spehar said that she sent her resolution to Mary Rice in time to put it on the FKAA meeting agenda, but it was not added. "That's the second time she's refused to put our resolution on their agenda," Spehar said. Rice said last week that she would try to be cooperative and discuss the issues at this week's meeting, but it was clearly **Cohen's** agenda. "Historically, the county's two roles were to locate and purchase the sites and to assist in funding," Rice said. "It kind of got corrupted from there into the county wanting the authority to approve the project and telling what the project would be."

Rice said the two entities need to stop the fighting and spreading misinformation. "Second, we need to work out something that's equitable to all the county - it's not fair to give Key Largo \$20 million and not give Big Coppitt the same." Rice could not be reached for comment Wednesday evening.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

During the meeting, **Cohen** laid out the ground rules that there would be no finger pointing. Instead, **Cohen** said the focus was on how the two agencies could partner and provide the best possible service to Keys residents. The county could face dire consequences if it doesn't resolve its differences with FKAA. An attorney for DCA contacted the county attorney's office and raised the spectre of non-compliance if the county continues on its present course. **Cohen** acknowledged responsibility for the DCA's deputy general council's comments and the big stick the state wields on such matters.

The governor and Cabinet meet in September to review the county's progress. Should the county be found lacking, the state can withhold building permits. And, the county may be on a short timeframe to work something out with the FKAA. "Often it takes folks time to work their way to possible solutions," **Cohen** said. "But there is a sense of urgency to makes these things happen, that's why we offered our office to get on track and do what they feel is necessary."

Spehar said the Secretary told her he must update the governor on the situation in late August. **Cohen** initially asked for time to speak to the commission at its July meeting, but was turned down by Spehar. Spehar said it was simply a timing issue, that **Cohen** wanted an hour and the agenda was already packed. **Cohen** said his discussion with Spehar was not about the agenda. "The fact of the matter is that the mayor said that she had made a commitment to bring the [FKAA funding] issue forward," **Cohen** said. "If that's the direction she needs to go, to explore her concerns with the colleagues, maybe the time was not right to have our conversation," he said.

The DCA's other concern with the county is its tier system for controlling growth and protecting endangered species and habitat. **Cohen** said he was looking at the two-tier system submitted by the county. A three-tier system was originally proposed, but commissioners found tier two to be too ambiguous. Instead, commissioners approved two tiers -- build and no build. **Cohen** said he had concerns that some of the sensitive land and habitat may fall through the cracks in new system. "We think there is more work that needs to be done so all will feel comfortable," he said. He proposed ground truthing lot by lot any questionable areas. "Our goal is to provide required protection for habitat," **Cohen** said. "We have \$93 million to buy land that the county has identified as sensitive."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Englewood Sun (FL)

June 7, 2005

Hurricane recover, funds filtering down

Author: Steve Reilly

PUNTA GORDA -- Charlotte County Commission Chairwoman Sara Devos and Punta Gorda Mayor Steve Fabian were more than happy Monday to accept a token check for \$9 million from Lt. Governor Toni Jennings and Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen**. "Every time I see (**Cohen**) he's bringing us money," Devos quipped. "He's my new best friend. We really do (appreciate the) support we've been getting," she added in a note of seriousness.

The check symbolized the county and city's share of \$100.9 million in federal community development special reimbursement grants for hurricane recovery. The state DCA was given the authority to distribute the money statewide. The actual money wasn't deposited into county and city coffers Monday, since county and city staffs have to work out details with state officials on what projects and how the money is to be spent. County and city officials will divide the \$9 million equally.

Jennings and **Cohen** are actually touring the state and meeting with officials from the hurricane-damaged counties. Besides Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, St. Lucie, Indian River, Santa Rosa and Escambia counties all received a \$9 million share of the money. Brevard, Martin, Palm Beach, Polk, Orange, Okeechobee, Volusia and Osceola counties received \$4.4 million each for their hurricane recoveries. To date, state officials estimate \$780 million has been distributed for public assistance and reimbursement for debris removal, emergency response and other recovery projects. "I said we weren't coming with bags of money, but what we would be doing is coming with ways you could access money," **Cohen** said, referring to a recent statewide workshop on grant applications.

The city and county are now anticipating another \$20 million in July, specifically for affordable housing, when the state's budget goes into effect. When asked whether the first hurricane of this season or state housing money will be seen locally first, Jennings said she didn't want to think about any more hurricanes hitting Florida. She also said the state will not be just be handing the city and county \$20 million. "They will have to have plans," Jennings said.

Bob Hebert, the county's disaster recovery director, said county and city officials are already working on those plans. But while state officials say they see recovery funding being processed at faster than normal bureaucratic speed, Hebert said after his most recent meetings with state and federal officials, he thinks the processing of that funding may be slowing down a bit. "I think (federal and state officials) may be getting nervous about all the money that was promised in the beginning," Hebert said.

Cohen said after the \$20 million, the state plans to work with Charlotte and other local officials in identifying funding sources to make long-term recovery plans a reality. Much has been done

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

to recover from the damages left by Hurricane Charley and last year's hurricane season, but Hebert said he could see Charlotte County ultimately facing \$100 million in recovery costs. "You can see places that are all new and rebuilt, but you go two streets away and it's just like the day after the storm," he said. "Those are the hard-core problems."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

North Port Sun (FL)

May 14, 2005

Time to look forward**New hurricane season approaching**

Author: Bob Reddy

TAMPA -- It became clear very quickly that a different approach to recovery would be needed after Hurricane Charley blew through Southwest Florida nine months ago. "Helping desperate people at the moment of need became the focus, and we need to do better," Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** said Friday during the last day of the 19th annual Governor's Hurricane Conference. William Gray, a renowned hurricane forecaster, also hinted he might increase his forecast for the upcoming hurricane season.

Cohen said communities that had their economies destroyed by the hurricanes of 2004 needed to recover quickly, and a long-term recovery process was established on the fly thanks to the efforts of many people. With the bleak forecast of two decades of increased hurricane activity, the lessons learned this past season need to be applied to the next community that suffers from disaster. With the help and initiative of Derek and David Dunn-Rankin and the Charlotte Sun, **Cohen** said, the state and Federal Emergency Management Agency created a housing strike team and started the long-term recovery process. "If you had one thing that you would want your community to do, it is to move forward with your future plans right away," he said. "Using the existing comprehensive plan, which is your list of future goals and wishes, is the ideal place to start." **Cohen** repeatedly cited examples in Southwest Florida about how to plan for the future after disaster based on the plans created thanks to the collaboration of a government and public cooperation. "In DeSoto County, we are trying to develop the tourism of the Peace River," he said. "In Charlotte County, we have the community group called Team Punta Gorda, which is planning the revitalization of that city."

Southwest Florida should be commended because of the amount of public input into the process, what **Cohen** calls the "silver lining" to the storms. More than 1,100 people attended a FEMA planning meeting in Charlotte County, and 400 went to meetings in DeSoto and Hardee counties. "We don't want to restore a community to where it was," **Cohen** said. "We need to take it beyond that point and make each community better and stronger for the next storm."

Gray warned the next storm may hit Florida this year, but then again, it may not hit Florida for another decade. "Think of how lucky you've been for the past four decades," Gray said. "We are in a new era -- with more major storms than ever before," He also said he believes the Atlantic is in the type of environment when more land-falling hurricanes are likely. "It's a bleak picture which could last another 15 to 20 years," he warned. Gray said that if anyone says he can predict a hurricane can hit any one point on the U.S. coastline, he is lying. "Nobody can tell for sure, but I can give you the odds," he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Those odds, based on extensive research of salinity levels in the ocean, water temperature and a look back at history, do not look good for the upcoming season.

Gray forecasts a busier-than-normal season, with 13 named storms, seven hurricanes and three intense storms forecast. A normal season sees 10 named storms, 4.5 hurricanes and 1.5 intense storms. An intense hurricane is a Category 3 or greater, with maximum sustained winds of 111 mph or higher. The hurricane season runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

Gray said there is a 73 percent probability a major hurricane will strike the U.S. mainland. He gives the U.S. east coast, including the Florida Peninsula to just north of Tampa, a 53 percent probability. Gray and his team at Colorado State University will come out with their next forecast on May 31 and he said he will likely increase the numbers then. "Right now, the Atlantic looks very favorable for hurricane development," he said. "A weak El Niño and above normal sea surface temperatures and the numbers do not look favorable for a slow hurricane season." Gray's team updates its forecast three times during the season on Aug. 5, Sept. 2, and Oct. 3. The National Hurricane Center issues its own seasonal forecast Monday.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Business Wire
February 3, 2005

Department of Community Affairs Secretary Thaddeus Cohen to Address the South Florida Regional Planning Council at its February 7th Council Meeting

Dateline: HOLLYWOOD, Fla.

South Florida Regional Planning Council, Hollywood Isabel Cosio Carballo, 954-985-4416
On Monday, February 7th, Florida Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** will meet with the South Florida Regional Planning Council Board at its monthly Council meeting to discuss the Department's recommended growth management reforms for the 2005 Florida Legislative Session. The Department's "Principles for Reform" of Florida's Growth Management System include focusing state activities on priority state interests; increasing local government accountability in local land use decisions; emphasizing citizen role in community forums, rather than in judicial forums; updating the Development of Regional Impacts review process and removing duplication; and improving regional coordination. Secretary **Cohen's** biography follows below.

The Council Board will also hear from Commissioner Sidney C. Calloway of the Florida Transportation Commission regarding Florida's Transportation System and needed investments that are needed to manage congestion and keep South Florida's economy growing. Commissioner Calloway is South Florida's representative on the Florida Transportation Commission. The Commission was created by the 1987 Legislature to provide policy guidance and public accountability for the Florida Department of Transportation. Commissioner Calloway was appointed by the Governor in December 2001 and is serving a four-year term. He is a Partner in the law firm of Shutts and Bowen, LLP, and a member of the Urban League of Broward County, the Broward League of Cities, and the Port Everglades Trade Association.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council's meeting will begin at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, February 7th and will be held at the Council's offices at 3440 Hollywood Boulevard, Suite 140 in Hollywood, Florida. For additional information please contact Isabel Cosio Carballo, Legislative & Public Affairs Coordinator, at 954-985-4416.

About Secretary Thaddeus Cohen

Thaddeus Cohen was named by Governor Jeb Bush as Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs on March 10, 2004. Secretary **Cohen** has over 30 years of experience in architecture, urban design and community planning. He has provided economic and development strategies for public and private clients. His areas of design expertise include urban planning, health care development, educational, recreational and water treatment facilities. In his approach to planning, Secretary **Cohen** will place specific importance on the need for comprehensive planning in order to achieve a working relationship between public and private sectors.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Secretary **Cohen** has a history of proactive involvement in his community through professional and community organizations. Secretary **Cohen** is the past chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County; past chairman of the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County, a former member of the board of directors of the Broward Alliance, and a former Broward Workshop member. On a state level he served on the boards of 1000 Friends of Florida and the American Institute of Architects Florida Chapter.

Prior to his appointment as DCA Secretary, he was asked by Governor Jeb Bush to serve on the 2000 Growth Management Study Commission. He quickly garnered the respect and admiration of his fellow board members establishing himself as a creative thinker and charismatic speaker. Born in California and raised in New Jersey Secretary **Cohen** attended Kent State University in Ohio where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture. He currently resides in Tallahassee, Florida with his wife, daughter and grand daughter.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

January 22, 2005

Push for growth changes envisions power locally

Author: Hector Florin

When it comes to managing Florida's explosive growth, the state should play the role of "marriage counselor," not judge or referee, while local and regional governments set the stage for their futures. That's the crux of the statewide growth initiative that **Thaddeus Cohen**, Department of Community Affairs secretary, presented Friday to the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council. **Cohen** said he hopes the bill that has been drafted will pass in the state legislative session that begins in March.

This year, **Cohen's** first as the state's top land-planning official, is also the 20th anniversary of the state's Growth Management Act that **Cohen** hopes to tweak. The initiative urges local and regional bodies to collaborate with citizens and among themselves and forecast growth trends, while working within the state's priority interests. With available technology, "there's the opportunity to think about where we might want to go," **Cohen** said, adding that planning should start "when you're thinking about thinking about a road."

The initiative is currently being discussed at House committee meetings. State Rep. Mike Davis, R-Naples, who sponsored the bill's draft, said the measure would reverse the current "top-down approach" of growth plans, in which the Department of Community Affairs sits atop of the organizational chart. Responsibility should lie at the local level, in particular with citizen involvement, Davis said. "This initiative seems to be turning that around," Davis said. "If there's more of a regional approach, you're looking at the bigger picture to maintain and develop the character of an area in a certain way."

Davis said the initiative's language is still a work in progress. The draft does not spell out how the state and local governments would forge common goals. But like **Cohen**, Davis is optimistic the initiative will be heard. Warren Newell, Palm Beach County commissioner, said the Department of Community Affairs should act more as a partner with local and regional bodies. "Land-use issues are really local issues," Newell said. "Local governments really have the resources and the connections with the people."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Englewood Sun (FL)

December 22, 2004

Task force launches weekly hunt for recovery money

Author: Barry Millman

Members of a high-level task force representing dozens of federal and state aid agencies scattered from Washington, D.C., and Atlanta to Tallahassee and Orlando have begun weekly teleconferences to find money for the ambitious projects outlined in hurricane recovery plans for Charlotte, DeSoto and Hardee counties. The task force, co-chaired by **Thaddeus Cohen**, secretary of Florida's Department of Community Affairs, and Todd Davison, mitigation division director for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region IV, met for the first time last week and scheduled continuing meetings every Thursday to devise and develop funding packages to finance long-term recovery plans.

"There was a multitude of agencies and groups on the line," Davison said Tuesday of the first meeting, at which he estimated more than 40 government and municipal entities participated. "It lasted about an hour and was largely spent on introductions, getting familiar with one another and what everyone has to offer, and setting up a schedule and strategies for getting the job done."

"I'm enthusiastic about the level of commitment shown by our state and federal partners as we continue with the recovery process," said **Cohen**, who attended the Dec. 7 formal presentation of the long-term recovery plan to Charlotte and Punta Gorda officials. "I'm looking forward to more productive meetings as we continue to find solutions to the issues facing the communities impacted by this hurricane season."

Davison, who led similar task forces following widespread weather-related disasters in North Carolina and North Dakota in 1996 and 1997 respectively, was flown in to mobilize and run FEMA's Port Charlotte "Charley Command" center in the weeks after the August storm. He said the long-term recovery process he now helps oversee is the most sophisticated he has experienced to date. "The level of public outreach, input and participation has been quite cutting edge," Davison said. "And with the Tri-County Recovery Collaborative in place, we should really be able to address the counties' needs on an individual and regional basis effectively." The collaborative is a nonprofit agency formed by public and private interests in the three counties to leverage and coordinate relief and recovery efforts within Charley's impact zone. Davison said FEMA is taking its commitment to the long-term aspect of the recovery seriously, having already made provisions to staff its Port Charlotte office through August 2007, and to train and transition local county employees to take their places to continue recovery efforts.

Meanwhile, as the task force gears up to find the funds for rebuilding the storm-struck counties, DCA and FEMA representatives are huddling with local officials to draw up job descriptions and strategies for three full-time managers who will be stationed in each of the hurricane-ravaged counties to guide their rebuilding efforts. The managers will be employed by the DCA with salaries paid by FEMA.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The managers and a regional coordinator are expected to be in place early next month. Bob Hebert, Charlotte's former grants manager who has been drawn by the post-storm scramble for relief funds into his current role as county recovery director, said he welcomes the additional firepower that a full-time recovery manager plugged directly into state and federal financial resources will bring to the county's recovery battle. "I think it's critical for each county to have a full-time DCA recovery manager on board to streamline the process," he said. "I'm sure they will benefit from our work as we benefit from theirs, and together we'll be able to get the county everything it needs in the most efficient way."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Daily News

December 5, 2004

Architects win awards for design

Author: Robert Janjigian

On Nov. 16, architectural professionals from Palm Beach County gathered in The Breakers' Circle Dining Room for drinks, dinner and the presentation of the Palm Beach chapter of the American Institute of Architects' annual honor awards for design. The organization has held the annual competition and awards ceremonies for the past 57 years. There were 21 entries in this year's competition, in three categories: built projects, unbuilt projects and renovation. Smith Architectural Group of Palm Beach won two awards. The firm was cited for its renovation of the Graff diamond salon on Worth Avenue and for its design of a Mediterranean-style residence in Naples.

Also receiving honor awards were: Currie Sowards Aguila Architects of Delray Beach for their proposed design for the Savage Creatures of the Ancient Seas Museum in Boynton Beach; Jupiter architect Thomas Kirchhoff for his design of a Jupiter Island residence; Retzsch Lanao Caycedo Architects of Boca Raton for their design of The Ellington, a town house block in Fort Lauderdale; and REG Architects of West Palm Beach for their unbuilt Bay Shore Golf Clubhouse in Miami Beach.

After the design awards were presented, Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen**, now serving as secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs in Tallahassee, received the AIA Gold Medal, the highest honor an AIA chapter can bestow on one of its members.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

April 1, 2004

Friends of Florida's loss of Cohen is Florida's Gain

About the March 22 article "Governor's choice for growth chief seen as curious," on the appointment of **Thaddeus Cohen** of Delray Beach as secretary of the Department of Community Affairs: I write to express 1000 Friends of Florida's appreciation and support for one of its own.

As an officer and valued member of our board of directors, and as an architect and officer in the American Institute of Architects, he is an ardent proponent of smart growth, citizen involvement and good urban design. We know he will work to keep the best interests of all Florida's residents in mind as he assumes this critically important leadership role in helping improve the state's growth management programs.

We always have known him to encourage people to speak out and make their ideas known, as he did while a member of the governor's Growth Management Study Commission. Pa County should be proud that his local knowledge will be brought to bear on the far-reaching Scripps Research Institute project now under way. We look forward to his stewardship and pledge our support in working together for a better Florida. 1000 Friends of Florida's loss will be Florida's gain.

CHARLES PATTISON,
Executive director
1000 Friends of Florida
Tallahassee

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Florida Keys Keynoter (Marathon, FL)

March 24, 2004

New DCA chief has Keys links**Thaddeus Cohen worked with Bahama Village**

Author: Alyson Matley

Calling the Keys "romantic," the newly appointed secretary of the state Department of Community Affairs is heading to Tallahassee this week to look for a place to live. "There's a lot of romance associated with the Keys, and everyone has a special place in their heart for what they see them as," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, an architect from Delray Beach who was tapped by Gov. Jeb Bush to fill the shoes of outgoing Secretary Colleen Castille. Bush moved Castille, who has worked closely with Monroe County, to head the state's Department of Environmental Protection. Although **Cohen** doesn't begin officially until April 14, he has a steep learning curve ahead of him, especially when it comes to the intricacies of the Keys. Add to that the stress of finding somewhere to live and closing down his architectural firm.

Despite it all, the easy-going **Cohen** is amiable. He took a few minutes Monday to talk with the Keynoter before heading north. **Cohen** is no stranger to the Keys. In the early 1990s, his firm worked on the Bahama Village Redevelopment Study, and later the Neighborhood Preservation Plan. "From a professional standpoint," said **Cohen**, "it got me into the Keys, working with Norma Jean Sawyer. An outgrowth of that plan is the [Bahama Village] Community Development Corp., and that moved forward to the land trust. At that time, it was the only one in the state." The Bahama Conch Community Land Trust, which **Cohen** calls successful, is a system of keeping local homes affordable in Key West through various rules.

Connection to the Keys apparently runs in the family. **Cohen** tells the tale of his father who drove straight through from New Jersey to the Southernmost Point before turning around and visiting his son in Delray Beach - just to stand in the Keys and see if he could see Cuba. "He was a merchant seaman," said **Cohen**, "and he remembered the ferry that ran to Cuba."

Cohen, 53, grew up in New Jersey and moved to Florida in 1978.

He has served on several boards, including the environmental group 1000 Friends of Florida, a position he will resign before taking over DCA. He formerly chaired the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County and the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County. Although he says he needs more time to study the details, he is well aware of a recent agreement drawn up between Castille, Monroe County, Marathon and Islamorada. That agreement is aimed at bringing the county into compliance with the state's requirements to protect habitat, provide affordable housing and protect nearshore water quality. It provides a mechanism for the state to begin funding some of the projects as well as an impetus for the county to begin raising some of its own money to reach those mutual goals. Balance, says **Cohen**, is the key. "What happens when the world becomes your market?" He said. "That creates pressures. How do you handle those pressures and keep that special place in your heart so your grandchildren can stay there?"

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

He says he hopes, with the help of the recent strides made through Castille, to find a balance in the Keys. He says working with local government is a key to dealing with what he calls "the inevitability" of what happens in the Keys. "We need to have a balance between accommodating more folks, the issue of affordability of housing, and infrastructure issues. How can you manage all those things and still preserve the romance? I don't think anyone on any side of the issues is in favor of losing the essence of the Keys. If you do, then it's Plain Jane Anywhere."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post (FL)

March 22, 2004

Governor's choice for Growth Chief seen as curious

Author: Jane Musgrave

Less than a month ago, **Thaddeus Cohen** was doing what has consumed him since he hung his shingle on a Delray Beach storefront 20 years ago. "I was just down here toiling away, trying to make a living," said the architect, who has a staff of one. Three weeks later, he found himself at a news conference standing next to Gov. Jeb Bush. **Cohen**, the governor announced as news cameras flashed, was to become the secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs, a far-reaching agency that has roughly 360 employees and a \$625 million budget. "I'm basically having an out-of-body experience," the 53-year-old said last week of the dramatic turn his life has taken in what alternately feels like a nanosecond and a lifetime. **Cohen** is far from the only one stunned by his appointment.

Unlike his predecessors, who were well-known in political circles, **Cohen** is barely known in southern Palm Beach County, much less the state. "Never heard of him," said state Sen. Ron Klein, who was miffed that Bush didn't alert him that someone from his district and his political party was being considered for the powerful post. Still, the Delray Beach Democrat said that since the surprise March 10 announcement he has heard good things about **Cohen**. "He has a reputation as a very committed person," Klein said. "As an architect, he's very well respected."

While not questioning **Cohen's** ability, others question Bush's motives for tapping an unknown to head the agency that has long been at the apex of the state's ongoing war over development. The appointment bears an eerie similarity to Bush's decision to name Mary Hooks head of the Department of Labor and Employment Security six years ago. Like **Cohen**, Hooks was a black Democrat from Palm Beach County who ran her own business and had no statewide political experience. Ten months after Hooks' appointment, the Labor Department was torn apart, 3,800 of its 5,712 full-time jobs cut and many of its programs eliminated. Hooks died March 4.

In the months before he appointed Hooks, Bush made no secret of his desire to revamp the Labor Department, and he's making no secret now of wanting to revamp the Department of Community Affairs by merging it with the Secretary of State's Office. Mindful of that history, some wonder whether **Cohen's** appointment is merely a way to seal those goals. "The agency's under a lot of pressure," said Lance deHaven-Smith, a public policy professor at Florida State University. "There's an obvious need for someone with a strong hand to lead it, that is, unless you don't want it to go anywhere."

Speaking both of **Cohen** and his Department of Community Affairs predecessor, Colleen Castille, a former Cabinet aide whom Bush shifted to head the Department of Environmental Protection, deHaven-Smith said: "Not to put world-class talent in these positions, at the base of it shows a lack of dedication to growth management and environmental protection." The only others interviewed for the post, according to Bush's staff, were Charlotte County Commissioner

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Matt DeBoer and Ginny Myrick, a former Jacksonville city councilwoman who is a land-use and business consultant.

Not regarded as yes man. Those who have watched **Cohen** say that if Bush thinks he appointed a yes man, he tapped the wrong guy. Hank Fishkind, an Orlando economist, said he was impressed with **Cohen** as a member of the Governor's Growth Management Study Commission, created in 2000. Surrounded by such political heavyweights as then-Orange County Commission Chairman Mel Martinez, who went on to head the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, former Florida Agriculture Secretary Bob Crawford and J. Allison DeFoor, the governor's Everglades policy director, **Cohen** did more than hold his own, Fishkind said. "He was really a powerful figure," Fishkind said. "He has good problem-solving skills. He's articulate. He's a strong guy. That's what we want in a secretary." Most, including **Cohen**, say his role on the commission caught Bush's attention and led to the appointment.

As he has done in his architectural work throughout South Florida, **Cohen's** focus on the commission was the need to keep cities vibrant, to meld buildings into their surroundings so they become part of the larger community. As a member of the study panel, **Cohen** said, he saw his philosophy reflected in residents' frustration. "The citizens in the state, in many cases, are not happy with what they see, what they drive through, what they experience," he said. "A lot of that is to do with how we design physical spaces." By focusing on the impact of development, growth-management laws often fail to address what buildings will look like and what effect they will have on a community. The laws often inhibit urban redevelopment at the expense of rural areas. "If we have cities that are more functional, then rural areas can be more successful because there will be less pressure on them," he said.

Scripps project on his watch

Ironically, two of the biggest projects **Cohen** will face when he takes over the agency on April 12 at a salary in the \$107,000 range are the antithesis of his passion for urban development. He will oversee the plans for the development of an expansion branch of The Scripps Research Institute on thousands of acres in rural northwestern Palm Beach County and of the St. Joe Paper Company's plans for its 1-million-acre holdings in the Panhandle.

While some suggest **Cohen** was tapped because Bush wanted a Palm Beach County resident to shepherd the Scripps project through the regulatory process, **Cohen** said Bush never mentioned the biotechnology research park. Charles Pattison, executive director of 1000 Friends of Florida, said the job of Department of Community Affairs secretary is too far-reaching to appoint someone solely on the basis of one, albeit massive, project. Like others, Pattison said he wishes there was more on which to judge **Cohen**. But, he said, that might have been one of things that made **Cohen** attractive. "Others might have had more baggage," Pattison said. Still, he said, it's difficult to predict what a person will do once they are in power. "Look at Tom Pelham," he said, "when he became secretary of DCA everyone said he was just a developer's attorney. He turned out to be one of the strictest directors we've ever had."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Rosalind Murray, a program director for the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency, said one thing she has learned about **Cohen** over the years is that he is unflinching in his beliefs. "He doesn't march to your drummer or my drummer," she said, "he marches to his own drummer."

Thaddeus Cohen

Education: Kent State University, B.A., architecture.

Professional: **Thaddeus Cohen** Architects, president, Delray Beach.

Civic involvement: Governor's Growth Management Study Commission 2000-2001; board member, 1000 Friends of Florida; past member, Delray Beach Housing Authority; past chairman, Palm Beach County Affordable Housing Commission; former board member, Broward Alliance; past chairman, Black Economic Development, Broward County.

Selected projects: Spady Elementary School, Delray Beach; Anne Kolb Nature Center, Hollywood; Spanish Courts, Riviera Beach; High Ridge Family Center, West Palm Beach; Loxahatchee Preserve Nature Center, Palm Beach County; Bahama Village/Southwest Neighborhood Preservation Plan, Key West; Northwest Neighborhood Study, West Palm Beach.

Personal: Married to Sylvia, a researcher at the Center for Urban and Environmental Solutions at Florida Atlantic University; 19-year-old daughter.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
August 7, 1998

Delray Housing Board earns B+ - Federal agency raises grade after visiting the site

Author: Brad Bennett

The Delray Beach Housing Authority has risen above its "troubled" status, HUD officials announced on Thursday. The local agency, which supervises the 200-unit Carver Estates public-housing project, is now classified as a "standard performer" and has raised its management score above failing, officials with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said. The score will not be final until next month. "We are happy with the tentative scoring that we've received," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, the Housing Authority's vice chairman. "I wasn't concerned. I knew we would do well."

Thursday's announcement concluded a visit this week by HUD officials to the Delray Beach agency, where they spent three days poring over documents to determine whether the agency actually made the improvements it claimed. A 1996 HUD audit designated the management as "troubled" for keeping sloppy records, mismanaging finances and improperly maintaining public-housing buildings.

Last year, the agency improved its tentative score to 60.88 out of a possible 100, or a D, but that was based largely on a self-evaluation. Despite the apparent improvements, HUD officials continued to list the agency as "troubled" until they could confirm the score with an on-site review. Following this week's review, **Cohen** said the Housing Authority has a new score of 89.72, or a B-plus, a marked improvement over the 54.40 score in 1996.

HUD officials would not confirm the new score until it is final. "We can hardly wait until it becomes official," said Dorothy Ellington, the local agency's executive director, in a news release. "This is excellent news. The staff has worked hard over the past 18 months to reach this point, and they are to be congratulated." HUD sent in consultants last year after learning that Ellington was receiving applications for the director's job _ a position for which she was applying.

The Housing Authority gave the permanent job to Ellington last month, crediting her with overseeing the improvements as interim director. Previously, two directors were fired for illegal check-writing schemes. Former interim Director Ronald Range was accused of writing agency checks for personal business and was fired in 1996. He was arrested earlier this year and sentenced to three years' probation. To avoid jail time, he agreed to pay back the \$2,296 he stole from the agency and do community service. Range was under house arrest for the first year of probation. On Tuesday he pleaded guilty in Palm Beach County Court to charges of violating his house arrest by visiting a Broward County pawnshop in April, court records show. He was given 36 months of house arrest for that charge.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post

July 31, 1998

**Delray agency balks at architect's high fee
CRA won't sign contract for redoing historic home**

Author: Mary Lou Pickel

The city's Community Redevelopment Agency says it won't sign a contract with an architect to design and manage the renovation of the Solomon D. Spady house because the price is too high. "It's a lot of money for a little project," CRA Executive Assistant Diane Hervey said of the architect's \$31,500 price tag. CRA Executive Director Chris Brown was unavailable for comment. The CRA board unanimously chose architect **Thaddeus Cohen** earlier this year over two others based on his qualifications. **Cohen** later asked for \$31,500 to design plans to renovate the home of former educator S.D. Spady. He also would supervise an estimated \$275,000 in renovations.

The house is slated to be a multicultural history museum. The entire project is expected to cost about \$560,000. Vera Farrington, president of EPOCH, the non-profit group that began the preservation effort, said her board had some questions about **Cohen's** contract. "Naturally, we're trying to keep the cost down," she said. But Farrington said the group wants **Cohen** as the architect because it likes his work. The group needs an architect on board before it can take advantage of a \$150,000 state historic preservation grant it will get this year. The CRA board is expected to approve paperwork at its next meeting to get the money.

Cohen and the two architects who bid for the job but didn't get it said renovating a house is more time-consuming and expensive than building a new one. But **Cohen** said he's flexible on his price, which equals 11.45 percent of the estimated construction cost.

Architect Jeff Silberstein said he would probably charge 8 percent to 15 percent for designing a house although he wouldn't say how much he'd charge to do the Spady job. Architect Gary Eliopolous, said he would ask 8 percent for the Spady House job, or \$22,000. The local Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity hopes to raise \$25,000 this month toward efforts to renovate the 1926 Mission Revival house. And pastors began asking for donations during sermons on Sunday.

EPOCH has received \$25,000 from the Delray Beach Historical Society, and \$5,000 from the Forrest C. Lattner Foundation. About \$20,000 has come from memberships and community donations, Farrington said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post

March 18, 1998

BRIEFLY

DELRAY BEACH - Police honored **Thaddeus Cohen** and Zane Emerson Tuesday for the parts they played in solving separate crimes - a homicide and an armed robbery - during the past two months. **Cohen**, a Delray Beach Housing Authority board member, heard shots outside his home Feb. 15, saw 21-year-old Eric Schunk on the ground and spotted someone riding away on a bicycle. **Cohen** stopped Brian Glatzmayer, 19, of Delray Beach and held him for police, officer Jeff Messer said.

Glatzmayer and three other teens were charged with murder. Emerson, a retired Boca Raton fire lieutenant, witnessed an armed robbery, chased a suspect and took him back to the police station, Messer said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen*(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
February 20, 1998

I'm no hero, hero says, after nabbing Delray slay suspect

Author: Steve Nichol

When **Thaddeus Cohen** collared a bulky teen-ager attempting to flee on a bicycle, he hastened four arrests in the murder of a popular construction worker, police said on Thursday. "His willingness to get involved, to have enough presence of mind to keep him there, was tremendous in helping us," Delray Beach Police Detective Ed Flynn said. "He definitely saved us a lot of footwork."

Cohen, awakened by gunshots, snagged Brian Glatzmayer, 18, at 2 a.m. on Sunday as he pedaled away from the Rainberry Woods park where Eric Schunk, 21, was shot to death. Glatzmayer later confessed to calling Schunk to meet him for a drug deal that was meant as a robbery but ended in murder, police said. A white substance was found on Schunk that could be cocaine but police have not tested it.

Statements by Glatzmayer, of Delray Beach, led to arrests and confessions on Tuesday of three teen-agers from Boynton Beach, including Ramon Franco, 15, identified as the shooter, police said. Glatzmayer, Franco, Carlos Umana, 16, and Charles Israel, 17, face attempted armed robbery and murder charges. All were in jail before Schunk's funeral on Wednesday. Flynn said he plans to nominate **Cohen** for an award. "If we didn't have [department awards] I'd get him something," Flynn said. "I was glad to help," **Cohen** said.

An architect in Delray Beach for 20 years, **Cohen** serves on the city's Housing Authority board. He has been married for 26 years and has a daughter, 13. "He's basically a good guy. He's not perfect," said his wife Sylvia.

The **Cohens** were asleep when they heard a "pop, pop" sound of gunshots outside of their Rainberry Woods home. **Thaddeus Cohen**, looking from his bedroom window, saw a car speeding away. He went outside and saw a young man standing near a body in the swale. **Cohen** told his wife to call 911 and went back to the house to get a flashlight. That's when he saw Glatzmayer leaving on a bicycle.

Cohen, who is 6-foot-1 and 230 pounds, said he reached out and stopped the inch-taller, 220-pound Glatzmayer. "I grabbed him around his neck and shoulder. His bike fell. He fell. I had a hold of him. I told him to get up. I started dragging him back," said **Cohen**, 47. "That's when I asked him what happened," **Cohen** said. Glatzmayer told **Cohen** that Schunk was a victim of a drive-by shooting. **Cohen** said he ordered the boy to "get down on one knee and don't move" until police arrived. "It happened so fast," **Cohen** said. Glatzmayer told police the same story he gave **Cohen**, Flynn said. Physical evidence did not match the story, police said. Schunk's wounds indicated a close-range shooting. Eventually, Glatzmayer changed his story and the arrests resulted, Flynn said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Cohen and his wife said that four days after the shooting incident, they were not thinking of **Thaddeus Cohen's** personal danger or heroism but the lives of Schunk and the four teen-agers charged in his death. Friends of Schunk have erected an elaborate memorial to him across from the **Cohen's** home. "He's dead, and the four kids, their lives are practically ruined," Sylvia Cohen said.

It's not the first time **Cohen** has been around violence. As a teen-ager in 1967, **Cohen** said he was working a summer job as a janitor in Newark, N.J., when the New Jersey National Guard, in armored personnel carriers, was called to quell racial rioting. "Just tried to stay out of the way," **Cohen** said. As a second-year architecture student at Kent State University in 1970, **Cohen** witnessed an anti-Vietnam War rally outside the architecture building that ended when Ohio National Guard members opened fire and killed four students. **Cohen** said he helped keep space around the victims in the tumult that followed.

Schunk's final moments alive brought back memories of Kent State, **Cohen** said. This time **Cohen** was down on the ground, applying cardio-pulmonary resuscitation to a young man with a bullet hole in his chest. Schunk died by the time paramedics arrived. Because the murder case was wrapped up so fast, Flynn said he did not get around to conducting a full interview of **Cohen** until Thursday. He was effusive afterward. "I'm impressed by the man. He's a very honest, straightforward person. I am going to enjoy having him as a witness."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
January 12, 1997

Architect has built a solid reputation, career

Author: Marcia H. Pounds

When architect **Thaddeus Cohen** came to South Florida in 1978 to visit a former professor, he couldn't help but notice all the cranes. He decided that this market, with its growing population in need of schools, hospitals and government centers, would be the place of opportunity for him and his young family. Now, 18 years later, **Cohen**, 46, runs his own architectural firm in Delray Beach and he finally feels he has the lay of the land.

"It takes time, particularly for a black architect, to have credibility," **Cohen** said. "Often times people don't listen to us. Then they come back and say, 'You know what you're doing. You were right.'" His firm has built a solid reputation in government work with projects including Spady Elementary in Delray Beach, the first public Montessori school in Palm Beach County; the Anne Kolb Nature Center in Hollywood; and the 79th Street Tri-Rail Station (where Tri-Rail ends in Dade County).

Cohen "is very insightful, he's innovative, and certainly energetic," said James Garver, president of the Broward Economic Development Council. "He's one of those ultimate salesmen who is always out selling his wares and trying to do a little bit better." As a certified minority contractor, **Cohen** said he sometimes gets frustrated when his firm fails to make the short list for a project. But he doesn't believe in public grouching. Instead, "I get a better understanding of what people are expecting from us," he said.

Garver said it is **Cohen's** willingness to listen and to get involved in the community that has been the design for a successful architectural career in South Florida. To help establish his architectural firm, **Cohen** paid for \$1 million in professional liability insurance. That's what was necessary to team up with a larger firm for a project. "We eliminate the excuses. We carry it. ... I've always tried to position ourselves so there was no question of our ability to do the work," he said.

Cohen also immersed himself in the community, which often takes time away from business and family. But **Cohen** said he understood early on that "if you don't do it, you're not a player." He has been chairman of the Palm Beach County's Affordable Housing Commission and now is a Delray Beach Housing Authority board member, which has proven to be a formidable task. Soon after he joined the board, the Housing Authority became mired in trouble. The last two executive directors have been fired in connection with investigations of financial misconduct.

But **Cohen** faces such problems matter-of-factly. "You discover problems and then you go about the business of fixing them," he said. **Cohen** said one of his most satisfying architectural projects was renovation of the historic Tabernacle Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, the oldest African-American church in Palm Beach County. Robert Dillingham, trustee of the church's

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

board during the renovation, said **Cohen**'s design work was instrumental to financing the renovation project of the 104-year-old church. "I know how difficult it is being a black professional. I'm a black professional myself. A lot of times people are very leery of your services. I average two to three phone calls a week from people about **Cohen** and the work he's done. ... He would get a personal recommendation from our church anytime."

Cohen has helped other minority businesses get a running start by forming a monthly Business Forum to introduce minority business owners to mainstream business people, Garver said.

Cohen still finds himself traveling from Brevard County to Monroe County to find government projects of interest that also pay the bills. Now settled in South Florida with his wife, Sylvia, and their 12-year-old daughter, **Cohen** said the challenge before him is to expand his firm so he can take on several projects in a closer geographic area. "In the next 10 years, hopefully we'll break the mold and pursue private work," **Cohen** said

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
September 21, 1996

DELRAY BEACH

Six Delray Beach Housing Authority board members were dropped as defendants in a lawsuit filed by former executive director Deborah Castellow after she was fired in January.

Palm Beach County Circuit Judge John J. Hoy dropped defendants **Thaddeus Cohen**, Howard Ellingsworth, Robin Preston, Judith Colvard, Kevin McCarty and Tom Carney on Thursday, saying the six were not served with court papers within four months as required.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post

June 8, 1996

Third person arrested in agency's check scam

Author: Barbara Feder

A maintenance worker for the Delray Beach Housing Authority was charged Friday with using bogus checks to steal from the agency, a day after its former executive director and former board chairwoman turned themselves in on identical charges. David McNeil, 57, turned himself in Friday. He was charged with one count of grand theft and was released on \$3,000 bond.

Former Executive Director Deborah Castellow, 43, who was fired by the agency's board in January, and former board Chairwoman Rosetta Rolle, 73, turned themselves in Thursday. Each was released on \$3,000 bond.

McNeil and Castellow could not be reached for comment Friday, and Rolle declined comment. The arrests resulted from an investigation into 36 checks worth \$5,800 that were written for cleaning services that were never performed.

The checks were made out to two of Rolle's relatives and to a woman believed to be McNeil's relative. Interim Executive Director Ron Range gave the checks to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement after he could find no invoices for the work.

"Clearly, there have been problems and this does not help," said board member **Thaddeus Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect. "But I don't think it takes away from what we're doing to improve our management and fix up our units."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
February 7, 1993

Familiar faces: Black businesses must find support in own community
Author: C. Ron Allen

When Donnie Dobson serves breakfast, all the faces he sees are black. When he takes phone orders for dinner, the voices he hears are those of black people. Blacks are the backbone of Dobson's business, Parker's Kitchen on West Atlantic Avenue. "If they don't support my business, I'm out," said Dobson, 42. "Ninety- nine percent of my business is black. I have a few whites who work for the city, but that's only a few."

Dobson's concerns mirror those of several other established and progressive Palm Beach County blacks who rely on black people to keep them in business. While many black professionals and business owners -- lawyers, funeral directors and restaurateurs -- said they have both black and white clients and customers, blacks account for most of their business. And even with their mixed clientele, some said they fail to gain a greater share of white business.

Architect **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, in private practice since 1986, said hard work and membership in community groups and national trade organizations are ways for blacks to develop a larger white clientele. "The more people that you know, the more your name gets around," he said. "You've got to tell people that you exist." Some blacks must be prepared to make a financial sacrifice to provide a product that is competitive and presentable, he said. "It's going to hurt badly in the beginning to meet the expectations, but if you're trying to grab local people, you have to provide them a quality comparable to what they're receiving," he said.

This also may mean working twice as hard to gain an edge over the competition as well as to gain trust among other blacks. "It's hard to convince the black community that a black attorney or even a black doctor is competent," said Wilbur Chaney, a Delray Beach attorney. "We're still faced with that stigma. ..." Bill and Caroline Wilson, owners of Village Cleaners in Delray Beach and Lantana, hoped to expand their clientele when they moved their business from Hollywood to Boca Raton in 1982. Despite a prime Boca Raton location, business was so bad, they had to close their doors.

In June, the Wilsons opened a pickup location in a shopping center on Lake Ida Road. Although they have some white clients, most of their customers are either members of Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church -- a black church where they worship -- or Haitians. Businessman Alfred "Zack" Straghn stresses the need for blacks to support neighborhood businesses. If blacks fail to support their own, many neighborhood businesses will crumble, he said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches
Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Sun Sentinel
December 29, 1993

Consortium names leader

Author: Staff reports

Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** has been named the new Board of Directors chairman for the African-American Cultural Consortium of the Palm Beaches. The advocacy organization, founded in 1988, serves cultural interests in the county on behalf of African-Americans. It has organized such events as the Gospel Jubilee concerts in West Palm Beach and the African-diaspora fine arts festival.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Miami Herald (FL)

June 14, 1992

A closer look at four architects and their imprints on S. Florida

Author: Beth Dunlop

Here's a look at the lives and the work of the four architects pictured on Page 1G. When he was a boy growing up in East Orange, N.J., **Thaddeus Cohen** watched the construction of a freeway right through his neighborhood. The public housing projects were soon to follow. "I'd wanted to be a farmer till then," he said, "but then I began to wonder who were these people who designed public housing projects that looked like jails?" He decided to become an architect. He went to Kent State University in Ohio, then went to work, first as a ditch-digger, then as an estimator and finally as an architect. He became the chief architect for Cleveland's Metro Parks System.

One winter he came to Boca Raton to visit a friend and was drawn to Florida. He worked for two large firms -- Peabody & Childs and Darby & Way -- and then "quit on Friday the 13th and started working out of my own house on Monday." That was six years ago.

Now he has an office and is designing schools in Delray Beach and Pompano Beach, a community center in Cocoa, a hospital fitness center in Hollywood and, not ironically, public housing in Deerfield Beach. He also is designing a three-building complex for the Anne Kolb Nature Center as part of a new park in Hollywood.

Cohen also is the urban planner for several major neighborhood projects, including the Sistrunk neighborhood in Fort Lauderdale and the Bahama Village in Key West.

Neil Hall has traversed the tropics -- born in Jamaica, reared in the Bahamas and educated in Florida. He came to Miami on his way to McGill University and changed his mind when he discovered how cold it got in Montreal. Instead, drawn to architecture by his interest since early childhood in art and math, he started at Miami-Dade Community College and went on to the University of Florida, where he got bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. After graduation, he started at the Jacksonville firm of Reynolds Smith & Hills, then returned to Miami. He began at Greenleaf Telesca, Bouterse Perez & Fabregas and then went to Spillis Candela & Partners. Along the way he worked on such projects as Florida International University's Interama Campus, Barnett Bank Plaza in Fort Lauderdale and Sailfish Point in Palm Beach. "I was given a lot of latitude, a lot of responsibilities," he said.

Eventually, Hall went to work for Borelli & Associates, where he was the firm's project manager for the Miami Beach Convention Center (done in conjunction with three other firms) and the North Dade Vo-Tech Center, a new high school.

Then he got a little help from a friend. Actor Philip- Michael Thomas (of Miami Vice fame) hired him to design a house and, with that yet-to-be-built commission, he opened his own firm in 1990. Now, among other projects, he's at work on an important study of the McFarlane Historic

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

District in Coconut Grove, where he's looking at ways to preserve early shotgun houses and other vernacular architecture.

As a child in Jamaica, Hermine Ricketts knew what she wanted to be, "but I didn't have a name for it. I didn't know any architects. I didn't have any role models." In Jamaica, no school offered a full architectural degree, so she set off to Howard University in Washington, D.C. She moved to Miami "on my way back to Jamaica" and started along a nice safe path -- getting an MBA -- and then changed to the chanciest of all courses to follow. She went into business for herself, choosing to "be the person who handles everything." As the only black woman registered architect in South Florida, Ricketts finds she faces a double bill of discrimination -- racism and sexism. But she has surmounted both to renovate hospital labs and wards at Jackson Memorial Hospital and the Veterans Administration Hospital and schools.

Two -- Miami Shores and Comstock elementary schools -- were done in partnership with a white male Broward firm and two -- Jan Mann and Carol City Elementary schools -- were done on her own. She also designed African Square Park on Northwest 62nd Street.

When he got his master's degree from Harvard in 1974, Craig Stark set off on a series of apprenticeships in Boston-based architecture firms. He ended up at Boston's black-owned Stull & Lee, architects for Biscayne Tower in downtown Miami's Park West area and other buildings. He got a second education there. He learned about finances, an area "where white firms don't let you in the door." Soon, he was ready to go out on his own, so he made a big leap. He moved to Miami to open Cruz Stark, and luck struck: The firm was selected the local liaison for the Miami Arena.

Eventually, that partnership dissolved, and Stark is in a new joint firm, Heisenbottle Stark & Partners, with some high- profile jobs. Among them are the renovation of and additions to Edison Middle School and the design of 115 bathrooms at Miami International Airport, "a project that could be thankless, but we're going to do and do it well!"

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post
October 6, 1991

Delray architect coaches community rebirth

Author: Sonja Isger

The term for it was "urban renewal," but all he knew as a kid growing up in East Orange, N.J., was that his friends were moving because the freeway was coming through. The stark, imposing building going up down the street was rumored to be a jailhouse, but it was really a government housing project. And all that young **Thaddeus Cohen** could wonder is why a building for people had to look like it imprisoned them. Thirty years later and hundreds of miles away, **Cohen**, 40, is still challenging the old school of architecture and urban design. It's a luxury he can afford now that he owns a small firm in Delray Beach. It's also an attitude he must sell if he's to stay in business.

Cohen has spent the better part of six years networking with those who dole out contracts for schools, courthouses and other public buildings. He's out to convince them that those buildings should be the center of their communities. They should be identifiable. And they should convey their importance. "Those buildings should become visible in the community because you get more participation, they're more inviting," he said. "When you build a bank, it ought to be substantial. And when you drive by a school, it should say 'school' to you," **Cohen** said. "Around here you can't tell the difference between some schools and industrial parks. You could hang a sign in front that says 'IBM' and you'd believe it."

Cohen also has worked with residents in West Palm Beach and Delray Beach who want to improve their neighborhood or whose neighborhood has been targeted for redevelopment. One of the few black architects who heads a firm in Palm Beach County, **Cohen** also serves on many advisory boards including the county's Affordable Housing Commission. "When people talk redevelopment, the people in that community fear displacement," he said. "They think, 'Something's going to happen to us,' not 'for us.'"

The tenor saxophone player and former college running back said starting his own business was one of the easiest things he's ever done. **Cohen** graduated from Kent State in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in architecture and came to Florida in 1978 after visiting a former professor who lived in Boca Raton. He became one of the minions in a larger architectural firm. Then, while he was the director of architecture for an engineering firm, he had a change of heart. "I quit my job on Friday the 13th, and on Monday I woke up and was in business," **Cohen** said. "The hardest part is staying in business."

DESIGNS SPADY RENOVATION

But his efforts are slowly paying off. **Cohen's** firm did some of the preliminary designs for redeveloping Atlantic Avenue in Delray Beach, designed a multi-purpose county government building in Belle Glade and the north Broward County Courthouse. Most recently, **Cohen** cracked the Palm Beach County School Board contracting circle and earned a job near to his

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

heart and home: renovating Spady Elementary School in Delray Beach, where his daughter Amanda attends first-grade.

For almost four decades, Spady's front door opened just yards from Eighth Avenue. Though the school sat on 10 acres, the classrooms huddled on the parcel's east side with their backs to the predominantly black neighborhood. A chain-link fence secured the grounds. Under **Cohen's** pencil, the school's entrance has done a 180-degree turn back into the neighborhood. And the chain-link fences have disappeared from most of the school's perimeter.

SCHOOL NOW MORE OPEN

"By moving the school's orientation, we were able to take down the fence and the school now opens up to the community," **Cohen** said. The move has also turned a grandfatherly ficus tree on the school's backside into a landmark "signature" in the school's front yard. And **Cohen** has planned renovations to the inside as well, creating dance and art studios for the Montessori and magnet programs that will draw children from various ethnic backgrounds to Spady, said Susan Storm, a plan review specialist at the school district. "You can tell kids to stay in school because it will get you somewhere. In that neighborhood, we can just point to it and say, 'I know, because I did that,' " **Cohen** said.

Cohen's knowledge of the community helped him get the contract, Storm said. "He's very well-aware and perceptive of what the community wants," Storm said. "He was able to capture the flavor of the neighborhood and give the school a presence." But a school with presence is not enough to turn around an entire neighborhood in decline, so **Cohen** has gone to the residents and suggested how they might help themselves. Three years ago, West Palm Beach paid him \$67,000 for a study of the blighted northwest neighborhood, an area bounded by First Street, Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard and the Florida East Coast and CSX Corp. railroad tracks. "We don't think people look at communities as a whole," **Cohen** said. "They look at schools, but not at businesses. They look at businesses, but not at homes."

NORTHWEST AREA WORK

You can rebuild the downtown, he said. But businesses won't survive without resident customers. And residents won't move in if their kids will be bused to distant schools. And then the community falls apart, **Cohen** said. West Palm Beach was on the verge of beginning downtown redevelopment, calling for plans to build what would become the Raymond F. Kravis Center for the Performing Arts. **Cohen** went to residents of the northwest neighborhood and told them that it was time to end the residential exodus and neighborhood decline. "You need to develop a marketing strategy so that your community becomes known," **Cohen** said. "Right now all people read is that this neighborhood has one of the highest crime rates."

But the neighborhood packed natural appeal, **Cohen** argued. "You're a New Jersey or Canadian resident and you get something in the mail. It asks, 'How would you like to live in sunny Florida, less than 5 miles from the beach, minutes from a downtown district and within 20 minutes of some of the biggest malls in the area? How would you like to live in a historic area on the highest point in town-- where from the third floor, you can see from the Intracoastal to Clear

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Lake?" "I asked, 'How many of you would like that?' and they all nodded. And then I said, 'That's where you live.' You just have to sell it." They took his advice, beefing up their neighborhood associations and working with police to curb crime. While the neighborhood's problems are far from over, publicity soon focused on neighborhood housing projects and renovations as well as crime statistics.

TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS

And the city through its Community Redevelopment Agency has dedicated money to further change, said Sharon Jackson, a senior planner for West Palm Beach. "I don't know that his ideas were so different as that he spent a lot of time with the residents and other members of the community to get a consensus," said Jackson, who supervised the study for the city. "He brought various groups together so that when the plan came before the City Commission, it was what they all wanted and there was very little opposition."

Cohen has extolled similar advice from Delray Beach to Key West. Even when he isn't hired to make a difference, he finds a way to get his word in. As a member of the Affordable Housing Commission, he gets to influence the county's policies, such as how densely projects can and should be built. "He is quite reserved yet thorough in whatever he says," said fellow commission member and Wellington developer George DeGuardiola. "There is a certain amount of evidence that the ideals he expressed of traditional neighborhoods are principles that are getting ready to be accepted."

Says **Cohen**, "That's not glamorous, but it's the kind of thing that, when it's done, will help people build better affordable housing. And it's not just for them, it's for me. I get involved in development issues because if the restaurant doesn't exist, I don't have a client. And if they don't grow, I don't have a client again."

THADDEUS COHEN

HIS STORY: **Cohen**, who owns a small architectural firm, has worked with residents in West Palm Beach and Delray Beach who want to improve their neighborhood or whose neighborhood has been targeted for redevelopment. One of the few black architects who heads a firm in Palm Beach County, **Cohen** also serves on many advisory boards.

QUOTE: 'When you build a bank, it ought to be substantial. And when you drive by a school, it should say "school" to you. Around here you can't tell the difference between some schools and industrial parks. You could hang a sign in front that says "IBM" and you'd believe it.'

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
March 25, 1991

Minority firms feels betrayed

Author: Jane Musgrave

Lorry Hufford laughs when you ask whether she has ever gotten a county contract. "They say, 'Who are you? We've never heard of you.' And then it's, 'What would a woman know about that?'" said the owner of a West Palm Beach office systems firm. "They discriminate against you because you're small, that's a given. But if you're a women or a minority, then it's a double bias." Hufford's view of Palm Beach County's contracting practices is not unique. During the past two months, dozens of women and black and Hispanic business owners have spun similar tales to county committees charged with devising ways to give all business owners a fair shot at county work.

After watching and participating on the committees, many, like Hufford, thought that county officials were actually listening after years of ignoring them. Those hopes were crushed two weeks ago when county commissioners refused to accept a \$175,000 study that found that the county had been a passive participant in discrimination that has kept women- and minority-owned firms at the bottom rungs of the county's economic ladder. The commission's refusal to accept the report meant the committees' recommended ways of reversing the discrimination were put on hold.

An outraged Hufford said she thinks the commission is just looking for a way to ensure that the recommendations, opposed by the predominantly white, male Associated General Contractors group, never become reality. When the recommendations are reconsidered on April 9, "they're going to say, 'Now that we were magnanimous enough to accept the study, don't force us to do anything else,'" she said. However, others said, if that is the commission's grand scheme, they're in for a surprise.

The release of the report in December was a catalyst for formerly isolated women and black and Hispanic business owners to start talking to one another, said Tony McCray, head of the Minority Business Development Center. The commission's refusal to accept the report underscored the need to join forces, he said. "We've had more calls (this week) from people than ever before," McCray said. "It's galvanizing us."

While the commission has been worrying that white, male contractors will sue if the county implements the programs, the minority community now has good grounds to file suit if the commission refuses to take meaningful steps to reverse the discrimination, McCray said. Ironically, if forced to do so, the minority community can could use the county's own report as a basis for legal action, said Clarence Anthony, a management consultant who is also mayor of South Bay.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

That discrimination exists is irrefutable, said **Thaddeus Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect. The study, by the Tallahassee-based MGT of America, found that of the \$97 million in construction contracts the county awarded in 1989, \$73,000 went to minority or female-owned firms. "The numbers speak for themselves," he said. And, he and others said, the steps they want the commission to take to narrow the gap are small compared to what discrimination has cost women and minorities.

The most controversial recommendation would ensure a certain percentage of county construction projects are awarded to women- or minority-owned firms. The general contractors group has vowed to fight any so-called set-aside program, saying that would hurt small firms owned by white men and drive up the cost of projects. But, Assistant County Attorney Tammy Field said, the set-asides would be limited to projects that cost less than \$200,000 and only be offered when there are at least two minority- or women-owned firms capable of doing the work. Even then, bids would have to be close to county projections. "We're not going to spend extra county money to obtain participation," she said.

Anthony said, "If I was a public official, I'd jump on those recommendations because they're minimal." **Cohen** said the issue goes beyond merely who gets county contracts. It is an economic issue that has long-range effects for the county. By continuing to cut certain groups out of the economic pie, the county is ensuring that those groups never get ahead and fend for themselves. If you don't give people a reason to succeed, they won't, **Cohen** said.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post
January 16, 1991

Over opposition, builder added to minority panel

Author: Meg James

Despite objections, county commissioners Tuesday added a spot for the Associated General Contractors on an advisory committee of minority and women business owners. Earlier this month, committee members voted not to allow an AGC representative as a voting member on the 16-member committee. The contractors' representative would be divisive and stymie the group's work, they said. The committee is supposed to suggest by March 12 ways the county can award more contracts to minority- and women-owned firms. A \$175,000 report concluded last month that the county is a "passive participant" in discrimination. The committee includes women, Hispanics and blacks as well as County Commissioner Maude Ford Lee.

AGC spokesman Geoffrey Sluggett said his group should be included because it represents big builders who receive county contracts. Any changes in the system "will directly affect our industry," he said. But **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect and a member of the committee, argued the AGC shouldn't be on the panel because it is not a minority- or women-owned enterprise. Besides, he said, "they already have access to the County Commission."

Commissioner Carol Roberts said an AGC member should be the 17th member of the committee. She said it would "almost be a slap in the face" not to include them. Commissioners voted 5-2 to put the AGC on the board. Commissioners Karen Marcus and Lee voted no.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Miami Herald (FL)

October 16, 1990

Poitier admits she was wrong**Commissioner tried to steer job to friend**

Author: Steve Bousquet

Broward County Commissioner Sylvia Poitier, one of five people evaluating proposals for a half-million dollar contract, tried to steer the job to an architect friend -- an effort she acknowledged Monday was "wrong." Nevertheless, Poitier will try today to block award of the job to another top-rated firm after filing what is apparently the first protest by an elected official over the county's contract negotiations procedure. At stake is a \$520,000 contract to design a badly needed 110-bed drug and alcohol treatment center on Blount Road in Pompano Beach.

Before she even heard the competitors' presentations, Poitier made it known she wanted Delray Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** to get the project, the commissioner said Monday. She said she told two rival architects, Chuck McKirahan of N-Y Associates and Michael Shiff, she favored **Cohen**. "It's probably unfair, but I think it's best to tell the truth," Poitier said. "**Thaddeus** was my favorite. I know how good he is."

Poitier said she knew of the quality of **Cohen's** work on the Stanley Terrace apartment complex in Deerfield Beach, where she lives. The firm also has done work for the Broward County School Board and several cities. **Cohen**, 39, is chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development in Broward and is on the boards of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the American Lung Association. "We feel we've done a lot of things that merit consideration," **Cohen** said. "We were kind of surprised we didn't get it."

Poitier's protest, which will be discussed by the full commission this morning, comes at a time of growing discontent among blacks about their economic stake in the county. In addition, rising interest rates and a tougher growth law have created tougher competition for government contracts. Poitier filed her protest Oct. 3 but did not specify the basis for her complaint. In an interview Monday, she declined to elaborate. "I have a protest," she said. "I don't plan to discuss it in the newspaper."

"It's very unusual," Commission Chairman Scott Cowan said of the protest. "I think she'd like to see a minority architect get this particular project." He said he doubted Poitier's protest would be upheld by the other commissioners today. By state law, architect and engineering contracts are not awarded to the lowest bidder. Instead, under a process known as competitive negotiation, the county can consider other subjective factors. A five-member committee met Sept. 26, heard 20-minute presentations from all eight firms and ranked them. Each member of the panel listed the firms by preference, with 1 being the highest rank. It was a close vote.

Peacock-Corrales Architects of Pompano Beach was ranked first with a total score of 13.

Thaddeus Cohen Architects was ranked second with 14, and N-Y was third with 16 points.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen***

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Besides Poitier, others on the committee were Commissioner Gerald Thompson; Phil Woolaver, the county director of construction management; Russ Bachman, head of facilities; and Marie Reynolds, who runs the drug and alcohol division.

Poitier ranked **Cohen** first; Thompson and Reynolds rated Peacock-Corrales first. Peacock-Corrales' two partners in charge are a woman and a Hispanic. Both firms qualify as minority-owned businesses under county policy. "I was distressed to hear that Commissioner Poitier filed a protest," partner-in-charge Tamara Peacock said. "The main issue is (she) did not like the outcome of the selection process."

Poitier raised questions about the voting procedure used by the selection committee. Thompson was still calculating his rankings while other members' votes were being read aloud, according to a county audio recording of the session. Poitier asked County Attorney John Copelan if it were proper for the vote tally to be announced while one ranker was still voting. "At best, an argument could be made that a procedural error occurred," Copelan said Monday. Woolaver dismissed the effect of the voting procedure on the result. "The process was fair," he said.

During deliberations, Woolaver was recounting how much county work each firm received. He said that **Cohen's** firm worked as an assistant on a Hollywood courthouse parking garage, but has never had the control of a contract. "We talk about spreading the wealth around," Poitier interjected. Asked to recall the last time a commissioner protested the way the architects were ranked, Woolaver said: "It's never happened."

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

Sun Sentinel
September 29, 1990

Minority firms make pitch at trade fair- qualifications

Author: Joan Fleischer

Networking. A key word in the 1980s may be critical in an economic slowdown of the 1990s. A number of small minority business owners networked on Friday in Boca Raton with corporate purchasing agents from some of the region's biggest companies at a Minority Business Trade Fair. Booths were set up by 70 exhibitors -- including IBM, Florida Power & Light Co., Pratt & Whitney, NCNB and SunBank/South Florida. And minority business owners, many of whom run small graphics, printing, office supply and janitorial businesses, had a chance to pitch their goods and services.

Turnout was so good at Palm Beach County's first Minority Business Trade Fair that its sponsors now want to make it an annual event. "The word is out that we're here," said Carlene Lichtenstein, executive director of the Florida Regional Minority Purchasing Council, one of the sponsors of the fair held at Florida Atlantic University. The Florida Small and Minority Business Assistance Act of 1985 encourages state agencies and state universities to award 15 percent of funds for goods, services and construction to state-certified minority business.

Groups qualified to seek state certification for their businesses include blacks, females, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, Native Hawaiians and the physically disabled. Some have criticized potential abuses of the minority set-aside law. In some cases, it has been discovered that a wife or minority partner was being used to front a business. The state law requires at least 51 percent of the business be owned and managed by a minority.

There is no government law requiring private enterprise to buy supplies from minority owners, but many companies find positive returns to affirmative action in the marketplace. "From an equal opportunity standpoint, we feel it's in IBM's best interest to seek out business with minority owners," said Brent W. Campbell, minority supplier programs coordinator for International Business Machines Corp. **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect who also is president of the Council for Black Economic Development, said he was pleased with the trade fair at FAU. "We're a small firm looking to market itself," **Cohen** said.

What does it take to be a state-certified minority business?

--Independently owned business with fewer than 25 employees and a net worth of less than \$1 million.

--Be at least 51% owned and managed by a Florida resident who is one of the following: Black, Asian, Hispanic, female, Native American Indian or Native Hawaiian.

--Business should have started and be in Florida.

--Complete a 10-page application with the Department of General Services in Tallahassee.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post

April 22, 1990

Affordable-Housing Panel picks chairman, executive committee

Author: Meg James

Members of the county's Affordable Housing Commission met for the first time Friday, tried to define their mission and selected a chairman and executive committee. Nine of the commission's 21 members did not attend. County Commissioner Carol Roberts, who serves on the panel, said the meeting's short notice, not a lack of interest, contributed to the low turnout. John Corbett, a contractor and chairman of the Florida Housing Foundation Inc., was elected to head the county panel. **Thaddeus L. Cohen**, president of his own architectural firm, was named vice chairman.

The group selected five others to serve on an executive committee. Lake Worth Mayor Ron Exline, a member of the panel, objected to the balloting process and voted against the nominees. Commission members were told their goal was to "promote and encourage affordable housing." Affordable housing is defined by county officials as new homes costing less than \$90,000 or monthly rent or mortgage payments that do not exceed 30 percent of a person's or household's income. The Affordable Housing Commission's next meeting is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. May 2 at the Governmental Center.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Palm Beach Post

June 17, 1989

Old Northwest section on way back

Author: Bill McGoun

Thaddeus Cohen believes the old northwest section of West Palm Beach already is on the way back up, and he has a lot of ideas about sustaining the momentum. **Mr. Cohen**, a Delray Beach architect and planning consultant, is preparing for the Community Redevelopment Agency a plan to bring new life to the oldest existing black neighborhood in Palm Beach County. He would encourage new housing, cluster commercial uses and establish a historic district down the spine of the city's highest ridge.

Both population and home ownership have been declining in recent years in the area, defined for the purpose of the study as between the railroads from First Street north to Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard. Those who remain have feared their neighborhood would be gobbled up as downtown revitalization progresses. The demolition programs being carried out by Downtown/Uptown to the south and by the city within the area have done little to ease those fears.

The city says its demolition program is more than half completed. **Mr. Cohen** sees the task now as stabilizing those buildings that need work but still can be saved. In fact, the word stabilize recurs frequently as he speaks. This is the key to saving the neighborhood for residential use, he says. The forces of growth are inevitable as downtown bounces back, he says, and if there is not a stable residential base in the neighborhood it will be overwhelmed. Such a base also is necessary, he says, if new businesses are to be attracted, bringing job opportunities with them.

So how should the area be stabilized, and how should it be revitalized? **Mr. Cohen** believes the former already is pretty well accomplished and the latter can be realized through sound planning and some incentives. The 6-acre tract on the east side of Rosemary Avenue that almost was the site of a warehouse development would instead be developed in multifamily residential structures, thus acting as a buffer between downtown and the predominantly single-family areas to the west.

Replacement of razed homes in those areas would be in character with existing uses, though there may be some zero-lot-line townhouses to make a virtue out of narrow lots, much as envisioned for the old section of Lake Worth. One problem of the area as it stands, according to **Mr. Cohen**, is that there are too many small businesses competing directly with each other. In his plan, commercial areas would be clustered on Tamarind Avenue between Sixth and Eighth streets and on Rosemary between First and Fourth. Sapodilla Avenue already has a good mix of uses, he said.

The capstone of redevelopment would be on the city's highest land, where a historic district would extend along Division Street. At the north end would be Palmview Elementary, a campus

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

of great significance because it once housed Industrial High, from which many older residents graduated. To the south are the distinctive church buildings that used to dominate the skyline and the historic block between Fifth and Sixth streets, where one notable home is to be rehabilitated and another rebuilt.

A lot of details remain to be worked out, but **Mr. Cohen** says he thinks the very fact of revitalization will help draw the new residential and commercial uses that will complete the process. He envisions a mixed-income area, much as it was before new housing opportunities allowed the black middle class to move westward. What he does not want is a repository for low-income housing only.

The trend is back toward city centers, he said, and this puts the old neighborhood in an ideal location. It is convenient to the Tri-County Commuter Rail, to downtown jobs, to hospitals, to festivals and to the proposed civic center-performing arts complex. On Tuesday, **Mr. Cohen** will present his plan to the CRA. If the CRA goes along, the task then will be to make these dreams come true.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches***Thaddeus Cohen****(Articles are in reverse chronological order)*

The Miami Herald (FL)

June 6, 1987

Minority businesses get a boost

Author: Steve Bousquet

Florida Commerce Secretary Jeb Bush was in Fort Lauderdale on Friday to hail a new joint effort by Broward executives to identify black businesses and to help minority merchants survive and succeed. The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the Broward-based Council for Black Economic Development announced they will begin an effort to get Chamber members to purchase some goods from black-owned businesses. But first, they said, they need to find out how much business is being generated by black entrepreneurs.

The Black Business Procurement Program has two parts: a survey to determine the bottom line on the amount of business in black-owned shops, and an "Adopt-a-Business" venture, patterned after a Jacksonville program, to match minority merchants with executives of larger, established firms for technical advice. "One of the negatives of the past was the inability of these organizations to work together," said Richard Clark, chief executive officer of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber. "They're so busy running the shop, they haven't got time to go around knocking on doors."

"What we're looking to do is create an atmosphere," said **Thaddeus Cohen**, president of the Broward-based Black Council for Economic Development. "All things being equal, people will give business to somebody they know."

Leaders of both groups said they hoped the joint venture will serve as a way for people to make new contacts in Broward's rapidly expanding business community. By "networking," as he put it, **Cohen** met a purchasing agent from Broward Community College and was able to apply for a job he otherwise would not have known about. **Cohen** works and lives in Delray Beach, but his architectural firm does business in Broward. Bush came face-to-face with the sorry state of communications when he met with a dozen business owners at Fort Lauderdale's Northwest Boys' Club.

Newspaper publisher Levi Henry told Bush that even though his company is worth up to \$2 million, he can't get credit for a \$5,000 bank loan. "We're not getting to somebody," Henry said. Henry had no idea -- until Bush told him -- about plans to form an investment partnership between major banks and black-owned businesses in large Florida cities. The program is under way in Miami and should begin in Broward by year's end, Bush said. "I'm amazed that you hadn't been told about a hell of a good program," Bush told Henry. "I'm actually kind of shocked."

Their exchange was all the more significant because Henry's newspaper, the Westside Gazette, is a primary source of news and information for Broward's blacks.

Internet – Newspaper Archives Searches

Thaddeus Cohen

(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"Small business growth is really the backbone of this area," said Jerry Miller, vice chairman of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber's board of directors.

In a breakfast speech to about 400 Chamber members, Bush said, "The rules are changing a little bit in the economic development game." As northern states have become increasingly competitive in finding and keeping companies, Bush said, Florida must work even harder to attract business. He also leveled a broadside at the career civil service system in Tallahassee, with its low wages and generous benefits. "It's almost as if the whole system is geared toward not working, rather than working," Bush said.

Bush also toured Fort Lauderdale's Sistrunk Boulevard business district from the air-conditioned comfort of a Cadillac limousine. With Assistant City Manager Jim Hill acting as a tour guide, the blue sedan slowly cruised past grocery stores, game rooms, homes and apartments, a junkyard or two and the new City View townhouse development.

Research Compiled by: Tammie Browder and Cara Slade
 Colin Baenziger & Associates