

It's all nose tweaks and eye pokes at Miami City Hall

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limey! What could possibly go awry at Miami City Hall? Oh, just about everything. Where do I start? The personalities are loony, so expect encore insanity to continue long after you read this.

A couple of weeks ago, City of Miami Commissioner Joe Carollo picked a fight with Keon Hardemon, chairman of the commission. Keon was tardy to the commission meeting, so in the interim, Commissioners Carollo, Reyes, and Diaz de la Portilla, a.k.a. The Three Stooges, changed the agenda set by Hardemon, who was livid when he found out. A fierce argument ensued, and then Diaz de la Portilla moved to adjourn the meeting, which passed with the support of Carollo and Reyes. No city business was conducted.

At the next meeting, punishing Commissioner Ken Russell was the order of the day. In December, Russell had not voted with the Stooges in their failed attempt to fire the city manager, so the three stripped Russell of stuff he was heading -- I believe two Community Redevelopment Agencies in his own district. CRAs are stupid, so I won't tell you what they are, but commissioners like heading them.

Meanwhile, City Manager Emilio Gonzalez, a rigid delegator, resigned, but he didn't leave. Carollo decided he wasn't worth much and floated a resolution to pay him \$15 an hour until he was gone for good. Joe could not get a second on that one, so it died.

I didn't like the city manager anyway. Maybe the \$15 an hour wasn't so far off, but Carollo was

Larry, Moe, and Curly

Written by Nancy Lee, BT Contributor
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doing it for the wrong reason. Why? Because he is a pr**k.

I frankly don't put all the blame on the annoying Joe Carollo. The apocalypse happening at city hall is festering because we now have a particularly bad seed on the commission: Alex Diaz de la Portilla, who is in lockstep with Joe. Let's hope the bromance of these two volatiles will break up.

How on earth did Alex get the votes to win a seat on the commission? I will tell you how. He is handsome on some level I don't quite understand, and that "look" and his height appeal to the abuelas in his district. They love the good-looking boys who peck their cheeks at senior centers. To them, Alex is the good son, and that is all they care about. Also, I am sure Alex must have brought them something to eat with a lot of sugar in it.

Then we have to place some of the blame on Commissioner Ken Russell for pandering to Mayor Suarez, making the other commissioners hate him. The city-owned Melreese Golf Club was not in Russell's district, and he should have voted with the district commissioner to oppose development of sprawling commercial center with David Beckham's soccer stadium at its center. Instead, Russell voted in favor of the massive project and earned the wrath of our Three Stooges.

Russell also got cocky and made a snide remark about some commissioners not attending an FIU presentation of an affordable housing master plan. His remark caused Alex Diaz de la Portilla to threaten to change his vote in support of the plan.

Warning note to Russell: You are out of your league with these guys. They own the word *bully* in Miami. Don't egg them on by being clever. They don't understand clever, and they already hate you for your yo-yo expertise.

It is really appalling to me that this bunch is making Keon Hardemon look like the statesman he isn't.

Back to Joe Carollo. He is pretty strange. I would side with the owners of Ball & Chain nightclub

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against him in a pinch. I don't need the details of the rift, Joe is right so little of the time; it's a sure bet that the ongoing fight is Joe's fault.

Should we recall the ever-annoying Joe? I think he should be removed for droning on in a monotone. It drives me insane. Unfortunately, talking on and on is not an offense that can trigger a recall. Nor can harassing the Ball & Chain owners. I have been getting e-mails from activists with a recall meeting scheduled. The Community Newspapers thinks that the Fraternal Order of Police "needs to step up and form a committee to recall Joe Carollo."

I believe Carollo has always been off his rocker. Last time in office, during a 1999 public hearing I attended, Carollo and the late Commissioner Arthur Teele were both yelling at each other. They stood up with fists clenched. The sergeant at arms had to break up the imminent fight.

So what are we left with? A government body with irreconcilable differences. That does sound familiar. It can't be fixed in Miami. I can't wait for the confirmation hearing of the new city manager, should be fireworks.

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