

City Manager *Dania Beach, Florida*

The City

Dania Beach is a diamond in the rough. Incorporated in 1904, it is actually older than Broward County where it is located. While its current population is approximately 29,000, it maintains a small town feel. The City is located in southeast Florida between Fort Lauderdale (to the north) and Hollywood (to the south). Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport is five minutes away and bounded on three sides by the City. In fact, the airport was called Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport at Dania Beach until the County (which operates the airport) and the City became embroiled in a dispute over the placement of a new runway. Overall, the City covers approximately eight (8) square miles and while primarily in-land, it does have an ocean marina and a pristine beach. In 2001, Dania Beach annexed several unincorporated areas to its west and increased its population from 20,000 to 28,000.

Given its location, recreational and cultural activities abound. In addition to the marina, much of the City has ocean access via canals and it has become a hub for the marine industry. It is also home to the International Game Fish Association's Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum. If you are a naturalist, the Everglades are only about 30 minutes west. With Fort Lauderdale 10 minutes to the north, West Palm Beach another 40 minutes further north and Miami 30 minutes to the south, a number of cultural and sporting venues are nearby. Several of its restaurants, such as Tropical Acres Steakhouse, the Islamorada Fish Company and Jaxson's Ice Cream Parlor, are nationally known.

But there is more to Dania Beach than that. It is the home of the Design Center for the Americas (DCOTA) and is the corporate headquarters for Diver's Direct. It also has a significant commercial and light industrial base. Finally, it is one of the few places where building activity has not ceased. Half a dozen hotels are either under construction or will be shortly.

The Government

The City is governed by a five member City Commission whose members serve staggered four year terms. The elected officials run at large and the top vote getter becomes the Mayor with the second highest vote getter serving as Mayor the following year. Three seats will be on the ballot in March of 2009. One incumbent is running for re-election, one has reached her limit of two terms and the third is retiring. In the past eight years the elected officials have worked hard to overcome the City's reputation for contentious politics and being a difficult place for business and development. Its infrastructure has been upgraded (not too long ago, four stories was the maximum height for a building because the water pressure was not sufficient to feed anything taller) and the City is primed for redevelopment.

Dania Beach is a full service city with 166 full time employees and another 16 FTE in part timers. Its General Fund budget is \$36.5 million and the total budget is \$55 million. The City is financially sound with reserves of nearly \$14 million. Services include police (through a contract with the Broward Sheriff's Office), fire protection, parks and recreation, public works, water and wastewater utilities, and community development. Building inspection is done through the County.

The staff is generally very good, bright, hardworking and capable. The incumbent manager is retiring after eight (8) years as City Manager.

The Challenges

The elephant in the room is the proposed south runway at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International airport. However, the City and County do enjoy a good relationship on other issues of common interest such constructing a new library next to city hall. It will directly impact 25% of Dania Beach and Broward County has approved it over the strong objections of the City. A law suit is likely. Otherwise, the key to the City's success is redevelopment and the establishment of a downtown near the city hall. Another challenge, as with virtually every other local government, is that revenues are limited. The property tax revenues are declining as property values decline and have been further limited by a property tax amendment to the state constitution and by the legislature. The City Commission does not want to raise taxes nor cut services. As a result, redevelopment is critical. The good news is that Dania Beach is well positioned for redevelopment. I-595 is virtually the City's northern boundary. The airport is on its doorstep and Port Everglades (the second busiest cruise port in the world and the 12th most container port in the United States in terms of volume) is partially in Dania Beach. Finally, as previously noted, the city's infrastructure has been upgraded.

Other issues involve completing the negotiations with the fire and general employees' unions (the later is already at impasse). Relationships with the County beyond the airport are not the most positive. Finally, the contract with the Sheriff's Office to provide police services will also need to be renewed shortly and it is anticipated that the Sheriff will want an increase.

The Ideal Candidate

The Commission is seeking a strong, professional and experienced manager. The individual will need to be street smart, well organized and disciplined. Leadership skills are very important as are interpersonal and intergovernmental relations skills. The elected officials are seeking someone who can negotiate without alienating. They also are not looking for a "yes man" but someone who has the courage of his/her convictions. Being politically astute with sound judgment and excellent diplomatic skills is important. The ideal candidate will be someone who is fair and who will focus on creating a team, on building camaraderie and morale and on collaboration with the CRA. The City has a vision and everyone needs to work together towards its success. Experience with redevelopment is essential. Creativity, particularly in these trying financial times, will be extremely important.

The ideal candidate will have a demonstrated track record of achievement and at least five years of public sector experience serving as a City Manager or Assistant. Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a degree in Public Administration, Political Science, Business Management, or a closely related field is required. A Masters Degree is preferred. Florida and coastal community experience is also preferred.

Compensation

The starting salary will be between \$120,000 and \$160,000. Benefits are very good. The City participates in the Florida Retirement System.

Residency

Residency is preferred but not required.

How to Apply

E-mail resumes to **RecruitSix@cb-asso.com** by December 10, 2008. Faxed or mailed resumes will not be accepted. Questions should be directed to Colin Baenziger at the following number: 561-707-3537.

The Process

Candidates will be screened between December 11th and January 5th. Interviews are anticipated to be on January 16th and 17th with a selection made on January 19th.

Other Important Information

The manager's position is relatively strong in that, by the City Charter, it requires four votes to fire the manager.

Under the Florida Public Records Act, all applications are subject to public disclosure. Dania Beach is an Equal Opportunity Employer and minorities are encouraged to apply. Veterans' Preference will be awarded if applicable and per Florida Statute.