

Purchase 1949 Allan Herschell Carousel Safe Neighborhood Parks (SNP) Historic Virginia Key Beach Park Miami, FL

Summary

Background: Historic Virginia Key Beach Park has been closed to daily public traffic for more than 25 years. As part of the Park's redevelopment the Virginia Key Beach Park Trust planned to locate, purchase and install an antique Allan Herschell Carousel in its previously restored historic carousel building. Many park improvements have taken place including a new parking lot, interior roads and walkways, trails, picnic areas, and snack bar; an opportunity to complete the installation of the carousel presented itself to the Trust following the February 23, 2008 grand opening of the historic beach park.

The carousel was a cherished feature on the historic beach park for many years, its return to public service is highly anticipated by the general public, young and old.

Currently: The Virginia Key Beach Park Trust has a restored 1949 Allan Herschell Carousel in its historic carousel building available for purchase at a competitive price and has been issued a \$100,000 challenge grant by City of Miami Commissioner Mark Sarnoff for the purchase of the carousel – the Trust wants to meet this challenge through SNP funds.

David Shorter, Executive director
Virginia Key Beach Park Trust
4020 Virginia Beach Drive
Miami, FL 33149
305-960-4600



March 5, 2008

Ms. Marcia Martin, Director
Office of Safe Neighborhood Parks
South Dade Government Center
10710 SW 211th Street, Room 109
Miami, FL 33189-5060

Dear Ms. Martin:

By means of this letter, we respectfully ask to change our previous scope of work for \$200,000 of the remaining \$314,424 from our 2005 SNP allocation. These funds were originally earmarked for the design and construction of an environmental education center, (Nature Center) at Historic Virginia Key Beach Park.

One year ago the Citizens' Oversight Committee approved a scope change that allowed the Trust to complete the first phase of ecosystem restoration (exotic vegetation removal) on the beach park.

Today, I am requesting a scope of work change to assist with the purchase and electrical infrastructure installation and improvements for an antique carousel at Historic Virginia Key Beach Park. During the Park's Grand opening events last month we were able to lease a restored 1949 Allan Herschell carousel. It's operation during the opening weekend events was an overwhelming success. Its presence and impact moved City of Miami Commissioner Mark Sarnoff to offer a \$100,000 Challenge Grant of City funds to purchase the carousel.

This allows the Trust the unique opportunity of securing a 1949 Allan Herschell carousel which is now in the restored carousel building. Commissioner Sarnoff restated his offer at the Virginia Key Beach Park Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, March 3rd, 2008.

Timing in securing the carousel is of the essence. The company that owns the carousel (Modern Midways) may at any day, remove it from our carousel building to return it back into their inventory for their own business needs. They have been very patient with us because of our serious interest to possibly purchase the ride. However, they are insisting that if we are committed concerning the purchase they require a minimum fifty percent deposit.

We are planning a fundraising campaign for the carousel but I know that a promotion of this magnitude will take at a minimum of 30 days to even begin to see the pledge(s) come to the Trust. We just don't have the time.

The funds requested in this scope change will more than meet Commissioner Sarnoff's challenge and expedite the immediate procurement of this significant antique piece.

With this realign of funds the Trust will be able to provide the public with one of the most fondly remembered attractions on Historic Virginia Key Beach Park in a safe and timely manner.

Sincerely,

David Shorter, Executive Director
Virginia Key Beach Park Trust

cc: Board of Trustees, VKBPT
Board SNP Citizens' Oversight Committee
Ernest Burkeen, Dir. COM Parks & Recreation
Maria Perez, COM Parks & Recreation
Maria de Cardenas, COM Parks & Recreation