

COLIN BAENZIGER  ASSOCIATES

EXECUTIVE RECRUITING

Thaddeus Cohen

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Resume

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Tallahassee, Florida 32309
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Thaddeus L. Cohen, AIA

thaddeus.cohen@earthlink.net

Senior executive with an accomplished record in the public and private sectors. Developed innovative policy and program solutions to complex, multidisciplinary statewide and local challenges. Expertise in architecture and urban design with the ability to interpret a client's vision and construct a team of professionals who are capable of realizing the concept.

Demonstrated organizational focus on strategic planning with the ability to implement conceptual plans. Management approach considers the needs of stakeholders while confronting complex issues and fashioning highly effective teams.

OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 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 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 five percent with a twelve percent increase in the labor force over two-and-a-half years.

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

General Administration • Legislative Affairs • Policy Formulation and Implementation • Organizational Transformation • Strategic Planning • Citizen Involvement Initiatives • Capital Budget Development • Economic Community Development Strategies • Program and Construction Management • Contract Monitoring • Negotiation Strategies • Government Relations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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.

Provided strategic direction for the Parks and Recreation Department, Housing Department, Saenger Theater, and Port of Pensacola. Provided day to day management for the Planning, Building Inspections, Neighborhood Enhancement Team, and the Community Redevelopment Agency.

- 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 between 2008 and 2011.
- 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 the development of a downtown technology park. Created the conceptual plan establishing the design guidelines and infrastructure parameters and coordinated activities associated with the construction of the site development.
- 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*™, gaining regional and national media coverage. The event was attended by over 50,000 participants, and is acknowledged as the premier event in Northwest Florida and the Gulf Coast, leading to 100 percent occupancy in downtown hotels and increased retail sales.

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

The State of Florida's 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.

- The Division of Emergency Management delivered \$3B in State match for FEMA hurricane disaster dollars in 2004-2005.
- 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.
- Passed SB 360 (2005) "pay as you grow" legislation 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 promote sheltering in place in order to reduce evacuation requirements.
- Led the State's first ever development and implementation of fiscal impact analysis modeling and visual planning tools to assist regions in forecasting their visions and budgets.
- 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 indicatives positioned these communities to successfully obtain \$11M in Federal funding from the Sustainable Communities program in 2010.

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

An award-winning architectural and planning firm focused on urban design, community planning, transportation, education, health care, criminal justice, and recreational facilities.

Principal of a 10-person organization, providing leadership and vision for the firm's projects. Served as the lead for business development, project delivery oversight, proposal preparation, and staff development.

- Responsible for highly-visible K-6 educational projects in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach County School Districts.
- Developed the architectural design criteria and guidelines for the double tracking and station expansion of the South Florida Tri-County Commuter Rail system.
- Developed the award-winning Anne Kolb Nature Center as a part of the last remaining 1,500 acre environmentally-sensitive land in Broward County, Florida along the inter-coastal waterway.
- Authored redevelopment studies for Florida communities as varied as Bahama Village, Key West, Sistrunk Neighborhood Fort Lauderdale, and Northwest Neighborhood West Palm Beach.
- 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 North Broward County Courthouse, 750-bed Male Correctional Facility in Moore Haven, Florida, and the 1350-bed Male Correctional Facility in South Bay, Florida.

STATE ACTIVITIES

Florida Communities Trust – *Chair, 2004-2006*
Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations – *Member, 2004-2006*
Sustainable Emerald Coast – *Member, 2006*

Sustainable Treasure Coast – *Co Chair*, 2004
Florida Housing Finance Corporation – *Board Member*, 2004-2006
Coastal High Hazard Study Commission – *Co-Chair*, 2005
Acquisition and Restoration Council – *Member*, 2004-2006
Hurricane Housing Work Group – *Member*, 2004-2005

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Urban Land Institute – *Florida Committee for Regional Cooperation*, 2003-2004
American Institute of Architects Florida – *Board of Directors*, 2003
Fiscal Impact Analysis Model Study Group – *Governor's Appointee*, 2002-2003
Growth Management Study Commission – *Governor's Appointee*, 2000-2001
1000 Friends of Florida – *Board of Directors*, 1999-2004
Saint Andrews School, Boca Raton, Florida – *Board of Directors*, 1999-2003
American Institute of Architects Florida, Palm Beach Chapter – *President*, 1997-1999
Chamber of Commerce, Delray Beach, Florida
Delray Beach Housing Authority – *Vice Chairman*, 1995-1998
Commission on Affordable Housing, Palm Beach County – *Chairman*, 1990-1996
Council for Black Economic Development, Broward County – *Chairman*, 1987-1995
Broward Economic Development Council/Broward Alliance – *Board of Directors*, 1986-1995
Partners in Excellence, Broward County – *Board of Directors*, 1984-1986

AWARDS

Palm Beach Chapter AIA: Design of Loxahatchee Preserve Nature Center, West Palm Beach, Florida – *1999 Design Award of Honor*
Palm Beach Chapter AIA: Design of Anne Kolb Nature Center, Hollywood, Florida – *1998 Design of Merit*
Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs – *1997 Florida Design Arts Award of Merit*
Design of Loxahatchee Preserve Nature Center, West Palm Beach, Florida
Palm Beach Chapter AIA: Design of Sabal Palm Youth Center, West Palm Beach, Florida – *1997 Design Award of Merit*
Achievement Citation Award, Social Policy – *Northwest Neighborhood Comprehensive Redevelopment Plan*, Miami/Fort Lauderdale, Florida
Minority Development Business Council – *1989 Minority Business Advocate of the Year*

REGISTRATION

Registered Architect Florida

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

Bachelor of Architecture, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

CB&A Interview

Thaddeus L. Cohen

Education

BA, Architecture, Kent State University, Kent, OH
Registered Architect in the State of Florida

Experience

Assistant City Manager/Community Redevelopment Agency Director, Pensacola, FL	2008 – 2011
Secretary, Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, FL	2004 – 2007
President, Thaddeus Cohen Architect, PA, Delray Beach, FL	1984 – 2004

Background

The City of Pensacola is the westernmost city in the Florida Panhandle and the county seat of Escambia County. The city has a population of 52,000 and employs 860 people, nine of whom reported to Mr. Cohen. The city's general fund budget is \$49.5 million and the total budget is \$217 million. The three most important issues facing Pensacola are:

- Revitalization of downtown. The downtown area was referred to by the local newspaper as “full of tumbleweeds” and lacking a draw for 21 – 42 year olds. Mr. Cohen's main focus as CRA Director was to turn that around. He changed traffic patterns, gave grant money to businesses to make improvements to their facades, and created an entertainment district. The downtown has been rejuvenated, but the challenge will be to keep it fresh and modern so it continues to prosper.
- Budget. With a decline in revenues, it is increasingly difficult to maintain the same level of service. Mr. Cohen helped introduce a 30 month budget. The idea was to forecast well into the future so the organization could cushion necessary changes by making them over a longer period of time. While this new process has helped, it does not change the fact that the city has less money and more to do. In addition, the employees have not received a pay raise in five years and that is taking its toll on their morale.
- Charter change. In January 2011 the new form of government was put in place. As the largest city in the Florida Panhandle, Pensacola must avoid becoming the “donut hole” of the region. The city cannot remain static while growth is occurring all around it.

Interview Comments

Mr. Cohen is interested in how cities grow and develop. He has managed both small and large staffs and dealt with minor and major issues. As the Florida Secretary of Community Affairs, he worked with the Governor's Office, the federal government and state legislature. He also worked closely with individual cities throughout the state – in particular helping them find ways to rebuild after a devastating hurricane season in 2004. Over a three year period, he administered

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over \$3 billion in aid with only a minor auditor's note. In Pensacola, he turned a shrinking downtown into a thriving destination, wrote the CRA comprehensive plan, and launched the city's "Pelican Drop" New Year's event that draws 70,000 people. When hired as the Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs one of the first things he did was learn about Key West. The city is of great concern to the state. He interacted with the local government and the residents on the issues of growth. He worked with Key West officials to overcome many ecological and economic issues. He moved them from an area of critical concern. He helped them attain a \$4 million dollar bond to upgrade their sewer. He is very interested in the opportunity to manage Key West. His experience in Pensacola, with its similarities to Key West, gives him an overall background that is a good fit for Key West.

Collaborative leadership is Mr. Cohen's management style. He gives his direct reports the space they need to do their jobs and does what it takes to make them successful. He listens to what his employees say and works with them as a team to develop strategies and solutions.

If Mr. Cohen's staff were asked what they thought about him as a manager, they would first say that he is supportive. He allows them to be creative and to initiate their own ideas. He has an expanded vision for a city, and that makes it possible for staff to use ideas they have always wanted to implement. For instance, Pensacola had been negotiating to either sell the city's golf course to the county or trade it for the county's civic center, both of which were losing money. The Parks Director came to Mr. Cohen with the idea to put in a new driving range, reconfigure the course, and put together a Mayor's cup tournament, something the Director had been pushing for some time. Mr. Cohen saw the opportunity and convinced the City Council of its merit. Rather than sell the golf course, the city put \$750,000 into renovations, and it is well on its way to becoming a big money maker for the city – all because he listened to and trusted his staff.

The elected officials in Pensacola would say that Mr. Cohen helped them recreate the city in the way they envisioned it. He helped grow and develop the city into something grand, which elevated the city to the status the elected officials sought. They would also say that he energized the staff and showed them their place in and importance to the community. Finally, they would state that he is thoughtful, easy to talk to and responsive.

Mr. Cohen believes that his ability to execute the vision of the City Council is one of his greatest strengths. He rewrote the growth management plan which had been debated (with no results) for far too long. Then he stepped in and helped the Council come to a consensus on establishing a system to ensure their goals are met. He is also able to articulate the direction the city wants to go, get people to coalesce around that vision, and then make things happen. Additionally, he is visionary. He can see what the future will look like for a community if certain decisions are made. Due to this ability, he knows how to preserve the aspects of a city that are most cherished by the residents.

When asked about his weaknesses, Mr. Cohen mentioned three. When a person first meets him, he appears standoffish and that holds people back from approaching him. He tries to smile more and is learning to not be so reserved. Second, he can be impatient with the slow progress of

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government. It is very different from the private sector where he spent much of his career. He tries to help his employees see that they can move more quickly. Finally, in office settings it is typical to have personality clashes. Mr. Cohen is not comfortable managing petty differences and tries to surround himself with people that can deal with office politics in a more compassionate way than he would.

Mr. Cohen does not have a great deal of experience working with defined performance measures. He is goal oriented and pushes himself and his staff to reach their objectives. He feels the best way to discern if the organization is meeting the needs of the residents is to listen to what the people are saying. He has several groups that he cultivates, such as the elected officials, the public and the internal staff. By hearing what each of these groups has to say, he can determine how well the city as a whole is performing. As for annual employee evaluations, he feels that they can be ineffective due to the inability to offer raises. When evaluations are completed without merit raises, the morale of the employees is affected; consequently, they should only be performed in the case of underachieving staff members.

Throughout his career Mr. Cohen has helped bring positive change to communities. If he had to choose just one project that he would consider his greatest achievement it would be his work with hurricane relief as the Florida Secretary of Community Affairs. The 2004 hurricane season was devastating to much of the State of Florida. He was tasked with working with the FEMA Director to administer over \$3 billion of financial aid to various communities. His department was audited two times during this period, and the only comment made was that a procedure to detect fraud should be put in place. The auditor did not find any fraud, but thought he should recommend something. Due to his success, he was asked to travel to other states and participate in training them on how to use supplemental emergency assistance money. Not only did he help his state recover from the storms, he also delivered a large amount of money with integrity.

Mr. Cohen has made mistakes in his career as well. The biggest was while operating his private architectural business. His company had been hired to construct a school, and he gave the project manager leeway to accomplish it in his own way. When Mr. Cohen first noticed the project was not proceeding in the way it should, he continued to give the project manager the benefit of the doubt. Eventually, he had to step in and micromanage the remainder of the development process because otherwise it would not have been completed on time. As a result, he almost lost his entire company. He had tried to balance the need to give an employee room to do the job versus micromanaging, and failed. He should have stepped in sooner. Mr. Cohen learned to listen to his instincts, even if it is contrary to his general management style. Now he is not afraid to come in and take over if a task is headed in the wrong direction.

Mr. Cohen has had to fire employees in each of the areas he has worked. When he was president of his architecture firm, he hired a person to manage a project, but her philosophy and work ethic were completely opposite from what Mr. Cohen expected, so he was forced to remove her from the company. At the state level, he came into the Community Affairs Department with a different approach than previous secretaries who had done a great deal of outsourcing. He wanted all of the work to be done in-house without discussing the issues with other departments.

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An employee continually disobeyed this tenet because she was doing it the way she always had and was not willing to make the changes to be successful in the new environment. Thus, he had to fire her. At the city level, he had an employee who sent an inappropriate email to other staff members. Mr. Cohen consulted with Human Resources for advice on how to move forward and eventually it was decided that the person had to be fired. Mr. Cohen understands how getting fired impacts a family and it is a tough decision to make. Consequently, he gives as much latitude as possible before resorting to a firing.

Mr. Cohen feels the person who becomes the next City Manager for Key West will face a number of challenges. These include:

- Continuing to diversify the economy;
- The city cannot expand and major construction is a challenge;
- Housing concerns due to foreclosures;
- Beautifying the community and managing the construction of the boulevard and one of the arteries. Keeping residents informed during projects; and
- High citizen engagement. The city has four or five newspapers. Other cities with similar populations only have 1-2 newspapers. The constituents pay attention to the government. The manager needs to communicate well with the community.

If Mr. Cohen were chosen for the City Manager position, in the first six months he would:

- Ask the department directors to first write down what they have planned for the next 30-90 days. Gain an understanding of their work. Then ask them to make another list of their personal thoughts on what should be accomplished in that same time frame. Many times directors are doing what they are told and not allowed to use their creativity to do what they think would be best. By comparing the two lists, Mr. Cohen can make a determination of what the culture is like and also how well goals are being met. The organization becomes more effective when Directors are successful in accomplishing what they should accomplish while still managing what comes across their desk;
- Build relationships with all stakeholders, whether they are in the community, elected officials or employees;
- Assess the financial condition of the city and complete the budget;
- Create efficiencies to overcome the lost revenue from property values and the limitations on sales tax;
- Look for ways to increase revenues. The city needs to be competitive in a way that is not detrimental to businesses; and
- See the core functions of the issues and make recommendations on items that are important but not core. Many times these items are ones that can be handled more successfully to keep costs under control.

Mr. Cohen has historically had good relationships with the media. He has experience talking to editorial boards, newspapers throughout the state, and television. On occasion, he also spoke on

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national television when the Governor and FEMA Director were out of town. During turbulent hurricane seasons, he would issue two press releases a day. One was completed at ten in the morning when he would identify what his department was going to accomplish that day. The second was completed at four in the afternoon when he could identify what was actually accomplished during the day. The media can be a tool to be used to benefit the city, and Mr. Cohen plans to work cooperatively with reporters to ensure the right message is getting out.

Since his departure from Pensacola, he has infinitely more leisure time than he would like. In one way his lack of a position is a blessing, because soon after his job was eliminated, his daughter needed of help with her two children. Mr. Cohen stepped in and has assisted for the past year. Beyond taking care of his grandchildren, he enjoys jogging and an occasional round of golf.

Reason for leaving most recent position:

Pensacola changed its' form of governance from a Mayor/Council-City Manager form to a Strong Mayor-Council form. As part of the reorganization, Mr. Cohen's position was eliminated. He left on good terms with the city.

Six adjectives or phrases Mr. Cohen used to describe himself:

- Strategic,
- Assertive,
- Visionary,
- Consensus builder,
- Serious, and
- Nice guy.

Most recent salary:

\$105,000

Interviewer's impressions:

Very serious and someone who will not take his job lightly. Very articulate, competent and capable. Experienced and knowledgeable and has not only public sector but also private sector experience. Is passionate about public service.

Interview completed by: Emilee Anderson & Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Candidate Response to Requested Questions

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Key West Florida, Questions for the Candidates Responses

Thaddeus L. Cohen AIA 3436 Gardenview Way Tallahassee, Florida 32309
ph 850.559.1348 email thaddeus.cohen@earthlink.net

1. Describe your experience in finance, budgeting, cost control, infrastructure and maintaining an efficient organization.

Finance Highlights: I am familiar with government wide financial statements which are designed to provide citizens with a broad overview of a city's finances in a manner similar to the private sector. Pensacola also used fund financial statements to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or uses. The city maintains three fund categories 1. General Fund, 2. Proprietary Fund (Enterprise organizations and internal service funds) and 3. Fiduciary Fund (pensions). The use of the fund balance sheet and fund statement of revenues and expenditures and changes in fund balance provided a picture between governmental funds and governmental activities. Continuous monitoring of fund balances provided directors information on cost control as measured against on going operations.

Budget / Cost Control Processes: I have worked with budgetary controls that are established at the line item within each department. Budget transfers were initiated by staff and recommended by department directors working with the finance department to the city manager or designee for approval. Changes to capital expenditures or transfers could only be made within capital accounts and needed council approval.

I was asked to assist in developing a 30 month budget in 2008, covering the period from April 2008 to September 2010 in light of revenue short falls and passage of Amendment One. The approach I brought from my DCA experience was to create a three tier system for each department which categorizes a range of activities which are defined as

(1) Core activities: which are those that if not performed there would be no purpose for the department (2) Level 2 activities those that are instrumental in carrying out a departments responsibilities but are not core activities and (3) Level 3 activities: those tasks that enhance the departments missions. By reviewing the cost center profiles around each activity / program we are able to make the choices necessary to determine the scope of services and requisite staffing to provide the level of services that is supported by revenues. This department by department review resulted in reductions in budgeted positions, efficiencies gained through consolidations within departments as well as interdepartmental functional consolidation. I would use this approach to see where staff capacity and processes could be enhanced.

Infrastructure Highlights: As the Exec. Director of the CRA I was part of the working group to develop the financing for the 52 Million Community Maritime Park using BAB bonds, NMTC, and TIF. The City Manager and I were the chief negotiators for the development agreement for the project; I created design guidelines for the city's 19 acre Technology Park; As President of Thaddeus Cohen Architect PA I have experience designing parks, pools and community centers, schools, health clinics, and office structures.

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2. Describe your experience with sustainable communities and a tourism based economy.

I have been involved in sustainable policies and activities at both the state and local level.

At the state level the Department of Community Affairs authored the Spring Protection manual to assist communities in protection this important natural resource. DCA also ran the 66 million dollar Florida Community Trust program which match local government's efforts to protect their natural environment through land acquisition in conjunction with property owners and community groups. I worked with local governments to implement transportation strategies to increase mobility options and reduce carbon emissions.

I co-chaired and funded regional efforts such as Sustainable Emerald Coast and Sustainable Treasure Coast. These were comprehensive studies and action plans to create more prosperous communities using principals to conserve their natural resources while promoting economic development.

I worked with the Secretary of State to highlight the relationship of the arts and culture as an integral part of the tourism experience and its economic impacts and benefits.

Pensacola Beach is very much tourism dependent. I developed a strategy for the city of Pensacola to become a more integral part of the tourism economy by enhancing the downtown core. Over a thirty month period the city completed drainage projects in the historic district; enhanced sidewalks and treescaping, developed an enlivening public spaces program, worked with the DIB to revise way finding signage, worked with the tourism organization to revise marketing material to acknowledge the an art and entertainment district; created the first city specialty entertainment district. These efforts increased retail occupancy in the downtown core by eight percent and the work force by twelve percent.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill demonstrated the catastrophic impact such a disaster can have on a fragile environment and the resultant a drop in tourism for the entire gulf coast region. I worked with the Visit Florida representatives to position the city to recover from this disaster by promoting the city's assets as part of a regional campaign.

The city's sustainability efforts includes continued connection of the neighborhoods to the waterfront as expressed in its comprehensive plan, expansion of the recycling program; implementation of storm water retention improvements for Bayou Chico, Pensacola Bay and Bayou Texar; energy audits of existing city facilities to reduce cost; LEED certification of the new library; expanded electrical capacity dock side at the port to reduce ships use of diesel fuel; change out of city vehicles from gasoline to natural gas.

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3. Significant weather events occur from time to time in Key West. Describe your experience preparing for and dealing with the aftermath of storm events and / or natural disasters.

As the Secretary of the Florida Department of Community Affairs I oversaw the Division of Emergency Management. I participated in the annual Governor's state wide hurricane preparedness exercise. Part of my responsibility was to ensure the various participating state agencies and local governments updated their emergency plans in conformance with the lessons learned from the exercise. I worked with the officials of Monroe County to move toward finalization of the methodology for the Hurricane Evacuation plan which had been a long standing point of contention. We developed a consensus working with government officials, health care providers, the hotel associations and business leaders, to establish under what circumstances evacuations would be authorized and how the staged evacuation would be implemented to make said evacuations most effective while mitigating as best possible the economic impacts.

120 days from the start of tenure as Secretary began the 2004 – 2005 Hurricane seasons which were unprecedented in its scope and severity. Our office provided administrative and financial support for all of the Division of Emergency Management activities during each of the storm events. In the aftermath of Charley, we developed a program to track each PW from each reporting governmental agency. This allowed us to know where each PW stood in the approval process. I expedited the relocation of state's EOC backup equipment from Tallahassee to a more secure location. This later led to a permanent relocation to Camp Blanding. Coordinated with local government officials on gaps that appeared in our response i.e. pod locations; dispositions of the elderly in high rise structures, expansion of shelter facilities due to multiple hurricane events, coordination of failed municipal utility systems, coordinated with the department of health temporary hospital facilities in the Charley hit area; assisted with standing up a new EOCs in various counties due to catastrophic building failure; coordinated movement of state officials using state and military aircraft; coordinated the development of one stop centers for assistance; co-chaired the hurricane housing working group with the Lieutenant Governor. Our Agency was responsible for the distribution of three (3) billion dollars in state matched FEMA aid and 1.2 billion in HUD supplemental funding during that period. DCA worked with FEMA to develop long term recovery strategies for three affected regions of the state.

As the Assistant City Manager, Pensacola Florida I was the City's liaison to the County during the response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil spill. I developed the long term recovery strategies for the city; coordinated with the Presidential task force to have our recommendations included in the final report as well as hosting the first Presidential Commission meeting in Pensacola.

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4. Describe your experience building effective teams, facilitating consensus, and bargaining with unions.

In 2004 as the Secretary of DCA I was asked to re-think the way Florida's growth management regime had been orchestrated during the past twenty years. In order to deconstruct the scheme and develop a new approach it was important for the DCA to change the way we were going to interact with several constituency groups; the Governor's office; legislators; local government; stakeholders and the general public.

In establishing a new vision for the state's growth management process it was imperative that the senior planning staff of the Department felt empowered to consider new approaches to the complex problem of growth and development in the state of Florida.

I find it is best when you have outstanding colleagues to encourage them to use their expertise to the fullest extent possible. We internally established a framework of what we felt would work, by developing a relationship with FDOT; DEP, the Water Management Districts; and the Commissioner of Education. As Secretaries and Commissioner we gave a joint presentation to the legislature on our concept and process. This was the first time a joint presentation by Secretaries had ever happened. We created outside working groups with key stakeholders and interested citizens around the state to work through the various sticking points that had held back meaningful change for years. In public forums our team members had the flexibility to discard institutional processes that were shown to be ineffective and propose concepts that were discussed openly. My role was to ensure that the best ideas were captured and promoted knowing that change is disruptive to vested interests. This process with the work of incredible staff produced the first fully integrated growth management strategy in 20 years SB 360 (2005) dubbed "Pay as you Grow." The implementation built upon those relationships as we able to create model ordinances and policies working with team members from state agencies, local governments and stake holders.

I used the same approach, at the local level to develop consensus on a tree ordinance that had been stalled in the City of Pensacola for more than 18 months. Bringing folks together for reasoned conversation, staff was able to work through and pass a sweeping urban forestry ordinance in six months resolving the issues of builders and environmentalist.

As part of the Pensacola management team we would set the parameters for what the City felt were important outlines of an agreement with various bargaining units. The Assistant City Attorney and Director of Human Resources carried through with the detailed conversations to reach an agreement. I have found it is important to have respect for the work that is done by our colleagues at all levels. Being transparent with the financial conditions of the organizations is also helpful, so all can appreciate the constraints that exist when trying to resolve issues to the benefit all.

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5. Describe your experience in encouraging diversity within your organization and working with diverse community groups. What role do you intend to play in the Key West community?

In my experience diversity comes from staff at all levels who feel that they are contributors to the success of the organization. That in turns creates a climate which attracts talented individuals who want to be part of an exciting, creative, innovative organization. Our role, as leaders, is to inform the community about the opportunities for individuals and businesses to become part of our organization and be successful. This often takes place in formal settings such as meetings with the chamber, business groups, neighborhood association, civic organizations, city sponsored seminars; etc.

Diversity, also, manifest itself in the procurement policies. I have done match makers, business expos, business development, and out reach to ensure that the widest net has been cast to provide opportunities to all segments of the community. I am honored to have been awarded Minority Business Advocate of the Year during my business career.

It is my experience when all employees are held in high regard and respected, various segments of the community will be appreciative. This in turn makes the organization more attractive to a broader range of individuals. Diversity takes place when success is recognized, rewarded and promoted no matter individual.

For me the conversation about diversity also happens informally at the barber shop, gym, grocery store, restaurant, festivals, parades, when citizens stop me to express concerns about practices and policies they feel inhibit or foster their ability to be part of what they see happening in city. This feed back is channeled to staff so that we continuously improve our relationships with our stake holder.

Diversity happens when most all employees, vendors and those who interact with us tell their friends, business associates and neighbors that our organization is a great place to work and do business.....Being diverse can and should be just the way we are.

Thaddeus L. Cohen

6. What do you believe are the four biggest challenges facing the community in the next four years? Have you faced similar challenges in your prior employment experience, and how might they assist you in developing strategies to successfully respond to those challenges?

The changing nature of tourism continues to be a perplexing challenge for the community. As options in the southern hemisphere become more attractive to travelers how the community positions itself in the future will be important. Pensacola faces similar challenges. During my tenure I got the tourism efforts to include the City and downtown in addition to the traditional beach experience. I was an advocate to expand to international markets to take advantage of the training relationships that NAS had established. In doing so I created an enlivening public spaces program which signature event is the New Year's Pelican Drop which has become the largest New Years Eve event on the gulf coast. How to add value to the City experience for residents and therefore for its visitors is something that I have given some thought.

Finding ways to show value and monetize the activities of a community is a difficult proposition. With stagnant family incomes and flat revenues but rising cost for services it is important to demonstrate that government is a plus and a good steward of the citizens dollars. The city of Pensacola had proposed the selling of an iconic historic asset the municipal golf course. Working with the course staff and the golf pro; service was improved, rounds increased, cost lowered; we replaced the restaurant tenant and convinced the city commissioner to invest 750K to reconfigure the course and add a driving range. These changes have created a new revenue stream; the course can re- pay the 750K through a surcharge for the improvements that residents can see. Demonstrating value as part of a cost recovery strategy is something the cultural and recreation component can contemplate in conjunction with the communications group to see where value can be explored for additional monetization.

On going replacement of vulnerable infrastructure is important for a community's competitiveness and livability. The ability to secure grants and other funds at the State and Federal level to supplement community revenues will be increasingly important. In 2010 government leaders in Pensacola understood the importance of having representation in Washington and visiting the capital to articulate the needs of the City. This work put the city in a position to recover one million dollars from FEMA in debris reimbursement that had been previously denied. Additionally, we began a relationship with EPA staff who administer the sustainable communities program with an eye toward obtaining assistance for implementation the masterplan for waterfront redevelopment. Developing relationships with staffs at the State and Federal levels for the long haul will become increasingly critical as local resources continue to be increasingly scarce.

When the economy recovers there will be increasing demands for services but continued limitations of resources. Each unit of government will need to consider how to develop a shared resource strategy as a delivery system multiplier. I had entered into conversations with the Escambia County School District to consider land swaps for school expansions and co-park development. There was the possibility of using a tree funds to improve rights of way and school grounds as part of neighborhood improvements. We also looked to see how the city's after school and recreational programs could fortify school activities due to recent cut backs. I believe

Thaddeus L. Cohen

every community will be looking for ways to leverage their assets and partner with other governmental units and the business community.

7. Assume for a moment that you are the City Manager of Key West and you are doing next year's budget. Your preliminary numbers project a significant budget deficit. What departments would you look at in terms of cutting expenses? Would you consider layoffs and benefit reductions?

I believe the budgetary process is a total city review of revenues and expenses on a department by department basis. By establishing each department's core / level 2 and level 3 activities with associated personnel and attributable cost it is often possible to gain efficiencies through consolidations within departments as well as saving from interdepartmental functional consolidation. With this data, recommendations can be made for the choices that are necessary to provide the community with a level of service and programs within the context of budget constraints.

Additionally, it would be important to determine whether the budget deficit is a short term condition or structural due to a trend of unsustainable cost. There are different considerations which go into what options are available to management to respond to various declines in revenue sources. With payroll being the largest expense, employee pay increases can be frozen; a hiring freeze can be implemented as well as reduction in work hours.

City controlled revenues sources can be reviewed to determine their appropriateness within the context of budget deficit.

Structural deficits due to unsustainable cost could lead to a benefits change analysis to determine how to bring cost and contributions in line. Caps, reductions, increased contributions, program conversions would be considered to create a sustainable program for employees and the city going forward. Depending on the severity of the budget deficit, vacant and filled positions on a city wide basis both funded and unfunded would be considered for elimination with the corollary adjustment in services.

Background Checks

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

Criminal Records Checks:

Nationwide Criminal Records Search	No Records Found
County	
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Palm Beach County, FL	No Records Found
State	
Florida	No Records Found

Civil Records Checks:

County	
Leon County, FL	No Records Found
Escambia County, FL	No Records Found
Palm Beach County, FL	*Records Found February 1996 – Civil suit filed against the City of Delray of Delray Beach Housing Authority including Mr. Cohen in his capacity as Board Member <i>Disposition</i> = December 1996 – Dismissed without prejudice January 2005 – Small Claims suit filed against Mr. Cohen’s Architect Firm <i>Disposition</i> = August 2005 – Dismissed before hearing
Federal	
Florida	No Records Found

Motor Vehicle

Florida	August 2009 – Unlawful Speed Citation <i>Disposition</i> = October 2009 – Guilty, 3 Points off License
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Credit

Good

Bankruptcy

No Records Found

Education

Confirmed

Employment

Confirmed

*See Candidate explanation for records found on page 2 of this report.

From: thaddeus [mailto:thaddeus.cohen@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, April 12, 2012 3:52 PM
To: 'Kathyrn Knutson'
Subject: RE: Panama City Beach Background Check Records Found that Require an Explanation

Ms. Knutson

The following is my response to the issues raised by the background check per the message you left:

Lawsuits
Page 2

Deborah W Castellow v Housing Authority of Delray Beach Florida
Ms. Castellow was the Exec. Director of the Authority and was fired. She sued the Delray Beach Housing Authority Board of which I was a member. The case was dismissed

Page 7
Freecor Investments Inc v Thaddeus Cohen Architect...Freecor Investments filed a small claims case against Thaddeus Cohen Architect for non-payment of the final month's rent of a lease... The case was dismissed before a hearing when the plaintiff discovered that the rent had been taken out of the deposit that had been paid at the time of the original signing of the lease.

Credit Reports
Page 11 medical bills from 2006 have always been disputed as paid in full (three bills totaling approx \$314.00) as you can tell from the record all other past / current obligations have been paid in full or are being paid on time.

Personal Information Questionnaire

Name of Applicant: THOMAS L. COHEN

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 even been involved in a domestic abuse incident that resulted in you being arrested or that was covered by the media?
Yes No
3. Have you ever declared bankruptcy?
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 convicted of driving while intoxicated?
Yes No
7. Have you ever sued a current or former employer?
Yes No
8. Do you have a personal My Space, Face Book or other type of Web Page?
Yes No
9. Do you have a personal Twitter Account?
Yes No
10. Is there anything else in your background that might cause a reasonable person concern if he/she became aware of it through the press or any other mechanism?
Yes No

Attested to: THOMAS L. COHEN
Signature of Applicant

Please email this form via WORD or PDF DOCUMENT to kknutson@cb-asso.com or via fax to (888) 539-6531 **no later than 9:00 AM 04/25/2012.**
(Note: Please be sure to sign the form with your actual signature if you are sending Fax or PDF Document)

Reference Notes

Thaddeus Cohen

Reference Notes

Alvin Coby – Former City Manager, Pensacola, FL 850-572-8409

Mr. Coby worked with Mr. Cohen from 2006-2011. Mr. Cohen was initially hired as the CRA Director and then, due to the city's hiring freeze, he was given the added duties of an Assistant City Manager. He did a wonderful job in all aspects of his performance.

The City Council respected his abilities. Mr. Cohen kept people in the loop. He made excellent presentations to the Council and residents. Pensacola is an old community and many people hold to the idea that if a person was not born or went to school there, then they do not belong. With that said, it was difficult for Mr. Cohen to convince people to listen to him because in their minds he was an outsider and did not understand their city.

Mr. Cohen's staff enjoyed working for him. He worked cooperatively with others by communicating openly and coordinating efforts. He completed the tasks given to him in a timely manner and did not do anything to embarrass the city.

Mr. Cohen is very much a leader. He has unique ideas and is not afraid to pursue them. His most notable example of leading a team would be during the gulf oil spill. He worked very effectively with sister governments, the county government, adjacent counties and the chamber of commerce. He led the team and helped the area become better prepared for future disasters.

Shortly after he arrived, the city voted to change its form of government to a Strong Mayor form. Due to this eminent change, Mr. Cohen was unable to institute many of his ideas. After the BP oil spill, he coordinated concepts and ideas on how to rejuvenate the economy with the city, county and state. The Council was thrilled with his creative ideas, but was unable to implement them because of the upcoming change in the Office of the Mayor.

Mr. Cohen will be a fantastic city or county manager. He does not have the habits of long careered city managers to hold him back. Although he has not experienced every aspect of local government, he knows how to manage people and projects and he will be successful.

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. Cohen:

- Reserved initially,
- Once get to know easy to associate with,
- Detail oriented,
- Visionary, and
- Intelligent.

Strengths: Insights that many in government do not have, attention to detail, big picture thinker, and communicator.

Weaknesses: His directness sometimes does not come across well in a bureaucratic system.

Thaddeus Cohen

Reference Notes

Maren DeWeese – Councilmember, Pensacola, FL 850-316-7671

Ms. DeWeese worked with Mr. Cohen from 2009-2011. Mr. Cohen is a brilliant man. He could visualize how all aspects of the city worked together and how they affected each other. Mr. 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 he was hired by the city he was already familiar with many of the issues and jumped right in. He is a fantastic public speaker. Capturing an audience's attention comes easy to him.

Pensacola is a historic city, so zoning and land use issues are complex and difficult to grasp. Mr. Cohen understood this and set up an open house every Wednesday night for developers or home owners who wanted to start a project. They could sit down with all of the appropriate department heads and lay out their plans to receive input on what they would need in order to proceed. They left with the knowledge of whether or not 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 with it. 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. He was also helpful in completing the largest CRA project in the city's history. He worked closely with the City Manager and Council to construct the Maritime Park which consists of minor league baseball stadium, private mixed-use development, and an amphitheater. The total price tag 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 is an accomplishment, not just for Pensacola but for all the residents in the region.

Mr. Cohen shares his vision for the future and rallies employees to achieve the vision. He explains his vision in a way that it becomes real to those listening. Because of his architectural background one can 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 the 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 would make an incredibly good city or county manager.

Thaddeus Cohen Reference Notes

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. 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.

Rusty Wells – Former City Attorney, Pensacola, FL 850-512-4657

Mr. Wells worked with Mr. Cohen from 2008-2011. Mr. Cohen did a phenomenal job with the city's finances and redevelopment.

The City Council really enjoyed working with him. He is not a yes-man, which irked some of them at times, but at the same time they respected him because he called it like he saw it. He is a great public speaker and became the go-to person on staff when a city employee was requested to speak before a group of citizens. In addition, he kept Mr. Wells informed and built a customer friendly office. Mr. Cohen is the type of manager that sinks his teeth into a project and urges the team to accomplish the objective. He is not a loner, and he does not delegate and disappear.

Mr. Cohen is full of ideas. Of all the senior management, he was the one you could count on to come up with the most out-of-the-box and functional idea. He put together a plan for a ferry boat service to transport people around the city to different locations. The Council loved the idea and approved it, but the private boat owner was unable to acquire the necessary funding to put it in place.

The Maritime Park was the most complicated and expensive project ever completed in the city. Mr. Cohen had experience in large developments from his architect days so everyone looked to him to take the lead. The team consisted of six employees on the management level and two consultants. He worked with the attorneys and the staff to negotiate a 120 page highly detailed development agreement with different contingencies. He produced a solid legal document that will be in place for the next 60 years. It was the most complicated project Mr. Wells has ever been part of. Mr. Cohen kept everyone informed through hundreds of conference calls. He spearheaded the entire project, which was completed on time. When some were skeptical and wanted to pull out, he convinced them to push forward. The park just recently had its opening day and everyone is excited. He did a magnificent job.

Some influential businessmen created a great deal of trouble for Mr. Cohen. He was attempting to downzone an area to a lighter industrial section to bring in more commercial developments, but these businessmen wanted to expand their companies. One of them funded the newly elected

Thaddeus Cohen Reference Notes

Mayor's campaign, and it is assumed that that had something to do with the elimination of Mr. Cohen's position.

Mr. Cohen worked extensively on a superfund site on the edge of the city that extended just beyond city limits. The federal government had designated it a Brownfield and Mr. Cohen worked with the county to annex the rest of the Brownfield into Pensacola. The city wants to acquire the rights to the Brownfield and turn it into an industrial park. It was a complicated process because of the environmental issues. Six months after his departure, the deal was completed, and the success can be attributed to Mr. Cohen.

Pensacola's old urban core was outdated with wig shops, pool halls and failing restaurants. Mr. Cohen changed ordinances and developed façade programs to encourage the owners to make improvements. The downtown is now a vibrant arena where every night people come to eat, shop, and be entertained. Very little money was used to accomplish this feat.

Mr. Cohen would be an asset to any city or county with a diverse economy, diverse ethnicities, tourism, and water activities, all of which he would be able to address.

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. Cohen:

- Brilliant,
- Articulate,
- Not a yes-man,
- Sense of humor,
- Innovative, and
- Professional.

Strengths: Knows how to broker competing opinions/ideas into compatible solutions, sees the big picture and excellent communicator.

Weaknesses: He has the habit of leaning back in his chair and raising one of his eyebrows which makes him appear as though he is looking down on you. He does not feel this way, but the mannerism can make a person feel that way.

Valerie Hubbard – Former Division Director, Community Planning, Florida Department of Community Affairs, FL 850-224-9634

Ms. Hubbard worked with Mr. Cohen from 2004-2007. When Mr. Cohen came to the state, he was not used to managing a large staff and it took him two or three months to learn the differences and find a style that worked for him. However, he is so smart and aware of politics that he learned quickly and was very successful.

The experiences Mr. Cohen had with elected officials were positive. He worked with the state legislature, county boards and city councils all of over the state. Policy making is a passion of his, so collaborating and building consensus was important to making the policy changes he was

Thaddeus Cohen Reference Notes

seeking. As mentioned, the first few months were bumpy due to learning how the public sector worked and managing a large workforce. One of the things he learned, and he learned it well, was to trust his directors and let them do their jobs. He also learned to open himself to suggestions on how to make his department better.

Not long after he started as Secretary, Ms. Hubbard and Mr. Cohen were to go to Southeast Florida and make a presentation. The night before she tried to prep him and give him information on the subject since he had not been involved with it as yet. The next day he stood up and spoke on the topic. He did not mention any of the information she had given him because he had come up with his own thoughts and ideas. Everyone in attendance was thoroughly impressed, especially Ms. Hubbard, because although he was not educated on the subject, he had insight and instincts that proved to be right on the mark.

Mr. Cohen was creative in his use of technology, always wanting to change how staff used computer systems to be more efficient. For instance, he brought up the idea to implement a computer program that measured the elevations of the state so if a hurricane hit, it would identify the best places to perform searches along the coast line. He also bought GIS products with grant funds that helped communities analyze land use patterns.

After the horrific 2004 hurricane season, Mr. Cohen put himself in the public eye by visiting communities and traveling all over the state. His idea was to get these cities not just back to where they had been before the storm, but to make them better than ever.

Although Mr. Cohen has not been a city manager as yet, he has all the skills needed to do the job. He is not lacking in any area and should be considered a top candidate for city or county manager positions.

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. Cohen:

- Energetic,
- Subtle sense of humor,
- Sensitive,
- Caring,
- Warm, and
- Reserved.

Strengths: Best public speaker she has ever heard, visionary, hardworking, enthusiastic, policy making and one of the smartest people she has ever worked with.

Weaknesses: None identified.

**Kim Kimbrough – Executive Director, Downtown Development Authority, Pensacola, FL
850-434-5371**

Thaddeus Cohen

Reference Notes

Mr. Kimbrough first met Mr. Cohen when he was helping the city recover from the 2004 hurricane season. They did not work very together closely, but he represented the state well during at that time. When Mr. Kimbrough heard that Mr. Cohen was coming to work for the city, he was ecstatic because he knew of Mr. Cohen's reputation for being an advocate of revitalization. They worked together from 2008-2011 in the City of Pensacola. Mr. Cohen did an outstanding job for the city.

Mr. Cohen is a wealth of information. He was exceptional at helping the elected officials grasp complex concepts by responding respectfully to their questions. He never made them feel dumb, but explained in layman terms the technical issues in context, along with the historical background. Mr. Cohen is a leader and a manager, and does both at the same time. He is a manager when a manager is needed. He is definitely a leader that guides an organization.

Pensacola has an old theater downtown that operates in the evening and on the weekends. It also offers daytime Broadway shows, theatrical workshops and other educational events for two neighboring school districts. The theater is in the heart of downtown which has become very robust due to Mr. Cohen's revitalization efforts. The theater will often have two showings per day with 500-600 children attending each performance. These performances bring a substantial number of children and buses to the downtown area. During these events the traffic was completely stagnant with complete gridlock for 3-4 blocks in both directions. The problem became even more acute when the theater was renovated with additional seating. The retailers and restaurateurs were very angry. They contacted Mr. Cohen and asked him to assess the traffic. He did and said it was absolutely unacceptable. In the next 3-4 days he assembled a team consisting of the city traffic engineer, the theater manager (who was a city employee), a representative from FMG (the promoter who coordinates the performances), the downtown retail counsel, and representatives from the police department and the school transportation division. The parties involved were very emotional with very strong feelings. He helped everyone realize that the performances were extremely beneficial for the community. Not only do they provide exposure to the arts, which is important considering how much the school budgets have been cut and their limited funding for these types of programs, they are also creating future consumers and helping them feel comfortable visiting the downtown area. Mr. Cohen methodically and logically, without any emotion, said "Let's look at alternatives." He asked many questions until he had a firm understanding of the situation and the options. He suggested having the buses pick up children on the back street. This alone cut the traffic in half. The school districts were very happy as the back street was a safer route because the bus could pull right up to the theater. He also had the buses line up to wait on a parallel street and use their radio to coordinate. The bus would not pull forward onto the busy main street until the children were outside and ready to board the bus. So, the buses were only on the street long enough to actually pick the children up. He helped everyone understand that it did not have to be an either/or situation and found a win/win situation. Pensacola is still using this system today. Even though the number of performances and workshops have increased the city no longer receives complaints about gridlock. This is a very good example of his leadership, his demeanor in leading a team, and his problem solving abilities. His handling was masterful.

Thaddeus Cohen Reference Notes

After having worked with the city for years before Mr. Cohen arrived, Mr. Kimbrough saw a marked difference in customer service when Mr. Cohen took over some of the departments. The change in how his departments responded to customers was dramatic and refreshing. Staff went from just doing their job to feeling a sense of their contribution to the community. Mr. Cohen encouraged them to engage in relevant associations and attend applicable conferences. From this, the staff became better trained and more aware of how to treat residents' concerns. In fact, his departments made the others that did not report to him appear lacking. One last thing he accomplished in terms of the staff was cross training. He used cross training so that if the person who would normally address a customer's concern was out of the office, another person could help answer the question and no one had to wait.

Pensacola is an old community known for slow growth and slow to make changes. Mr. Cohen was able to help people think outside of what they had always known and dream bigger. He rewrote the downtown plan to meet the needs of the city. He also made changes to the outdated 1960's land development code. He made great strides in shaping the city and the way people looked at tourism.

Rarely a week goes by without someone saying that Mr. Cohen made it possible to do this or that. He has all of the attributes of a fabulous city or county manager and he would have no difficulty due to his experience with large organizations.

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. Cohen:

- Articulate,
- Passionate,
- Supportive,
- Straight arrow, and
- No ego.

Strengths: Visionary, but detail oriented as well, always thoroughly prepared, and engages all parties in the decision making process.

Weaknesses: He puts 100% into his plans and he gets disappointed when someone outside his organization does not treat the project with the same urgency and passion that he does.

Sherri Morris – Planning Director, Pensacola, FL 850-436-5655

Ms. Morris worked with Mr. Cohen from 2008-2011. He did an excellent job in Pensacola, bringing bold initiatives and spearheading the downtown revitalization.

Mr. Cohen believes in following the rules. He is open about everything he does, so he cannot be dragged into any controversy. He is 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 could address, no matter what their title was, he would invite

Thaddeus Cohen

Reference Notes

them to be a part of the discussion. Previously, the departments were closed off from one another, but he opened things up and got people talking and involved with each other's projects.

Public speaking is a definite strength of Mr. Cohen's. He can take an audience with differing opinions, put together a good argument for his side, and in the end find a compromise that fits everyone's needs. He kept Ms. Morris and others well informed because he was in constant contact with them, although he did not micromanage. 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 can still do things that big cities do. For instance, he created the city's signature New Year's Eve Pelican Drop event that continues to grow in popularity every year.

When he started, the city was in the midst of a land development code amendment process that had become a very heated topic. Mr. Cohen was instrumental in interjecting rational conversation and mediating between the city and developers. Without his help, the debate could possibly still be raging today. He was also helped the city overcome the 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. The merchants were afraid for how deliveries were going to be made, among other concerns. Mr. Cohen explained all the benefits and convinced the Council to take a chance. The streets are now two-way with improved pedestrian crossings, and businesses have seen a difference in their visibility to passersby. He did an incredible job of bringing people together and making something work that he knew would improve the city.

Mr. Cohen is on par with any top level administrator. He is skilled in letting the elected officials see his point of view and expressing his opinion. Even if they ended up not agreeing with him, they respected him for his courage to stand up for what he thought was the best strategy. Ms. Morris thinks that Mr. Cohen will be an outstanding city or county manager.

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. 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: He moves quickly and does not always size up the political barriers.

Thaddeus Cohen

Reference Notes

Megan Pratt – Councilmember, Pensacola, FL 850-434-6138

Ms. Pratt worked with Mr. Cohen from 2009-2011. He was a joy to work with because he had good ideas and provoked the Council to really think about matters.

The majority of the elected officials liked and respected Mr. Cohen. Some of his ideas jarred them because they had not been faced with a great deal of creativity prior to his arrival. He was willing to take the time to explain his ideas, and most of the time they ended up agreeing with him. In public meetings he was also able to convey his passion and get people on board with his plans. He is a leader.

Mr. Cohen had an open door policy. This meant that he was meeting with people from the Council, staff and public often. A large portion of his customer service was with developers. Some developers did not like him because he was not a pushover and they did not get their way as they had in the past. Of course, this benefitted the city and should not be seen as a negative.

Mr. Cohen was vital to the renewal of energy to the downtown. He pushed to open a farmers market in the core of the downtown which drew people from all over every weekend. The New Year's Eve Pelican Drop celebration was his brilliant concept. He taught people to look further than the sleepy old town that Pensacola had become and realize that they could make it into something great.

A downtown tech company came to the city and asked to be given a city owned vacant parking lot so that they could expand into a 5,000 square foot building on the lot. Generally, the city would have jumped at the chance to help a company that said they were expanding, but Mr. Cohen saw things differently. He asked if the city gave the business the lot, what it would it get in return. He negotiated with the company and was able to get them to agree to build not a 5,000 square foot building, but a 30,000 square foot building and bring in 100 new jobs. He thinks bigger and makes others think bigger as well.

Mr. Cohen will make an amazing city or county manager, as long as the elected officials are willing to listen to him and take calculated risks. Some people are not going to like him because of his determination, but he will charge forward to meet the goals of the jurisdiction.

Adjectives or phrases used to describe Mr. Cohen:

- Nice,
- Forthcoming,
- Visionary,
- Passionate,
- Risk taker,
- Leader, and
- Not a pushover.

Thaddeus Cohen Reference Notes

Strengths: Gets people to think beyond what they have always done, respected by staff and knowledgeable.

Weaknesses: He is aggressive with his ideas and he is not a politician, so he does not always present his ideas in the most bureaucratic way possible.

Completed by: Emilee Anderson and Lynelle Klein
Colin Baenziger & Associates

Internet Research

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, 60, 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.
Jun 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.

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

"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."

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**.

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

"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 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.
Apr 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)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
December 20, 2006

County sends bad tier maps to state to meet deadline

Author: *ANN HENSON Citizen Staff*

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)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
December 13, 2006

Gov. Bush reviews debated meeting
BY 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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
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"You can ask them to leave early, but you 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' suggestion, officials formally approved a phased evacuation plan that informally had been executed for years.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Tampabay.com
A Times Editorial by Thaddeus Cohen

Growth law will protect way of life

Published October 17, 2006

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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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.

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)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
April 14, 2006

DCA head mum on lawsuit backing
BY 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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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)

Sun Sentinel
January 27, 2006

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

By Megan O'Matz and Sally Kestin Staff writers

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.

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

"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 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)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
December 9, 2005

DCA- County doing OK on growth
BY 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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

- 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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
December 9, 2005

Miami-Dade's UDB move a worry for Keys storm evacuation

Author: *DAVID GOODHUE, Staff Writer*

Officials in the city of Layton in Long Key fear proposed development in south Miami-Dade County could endanger the lives of Keys residents trying to evacuate during hurricanes.

These developments, if approved, could put more than 30,000 residents where the two routes used to evacuate the Keys converge, Layton city commissioners told state Department of Community Affairs Secretary **Thaddeus Cohen** on Dec. 1.

"If we're going to have hurricanes like we've been having them, this is going to be a serious issue," said Norman Anderson, vice mayor of Layton.

Residents fleeing the Keys must use either U.S. 1 or Card Sound Road.

Of particular concern is the proposed movement of the Urban Development Boundary in the south and west ends of Miami-Dade County, designated in the mid-1970s to limit development on agricultural lands and the Everglades.

Miami-Dade commissioners recently passed applications from the nine developers to the state government for review - all of which are outside the current UDB.

State review means Miami-Dade may not make a decision on moving the line until well into 2006.

Layton City Commissioner Scott Shamlin said none of the nine applications he saw adequately take into account the evacuation concerns of Monroe County.

But the movement of the UDB isn't all that concerns Shamlin and his colleagues.

They are also worried about the 6,000 homes and approximately 20,000 new residents a proposed Florida City Commons development near the intersection of Card Sound Road and the 18-mile stretch could bring.

A DCA approval of a change to the Homestead Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which would include 2,600 new homes and about 8,000 residents, also has the commission concerned.

"If this trend continues, we will soon have to remove 'evacuation' as a viable option for Keys hurricane planning," Shamlin said. "With no shelters in Monroe County capable of withstanding a Category 3 hurricane, this issue could turn deadly soon."

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Cohen told Layton officials when the state reviews the applications, not only will Monroe County's evacuation concerns be addressed, so will considerations like affordable housing and the developments' impact on the region as a whole.

"The 2,600 units are for Homestead, but we're still going to try and talk in terms of what the region should be," **Cohen** told the Layton officials.

And he said evacuation plans for Monroe County residents will "be more than just routes. Building codes and shelters will be part of the mix."

City commissioners said they were pleased **Cohen** took the time to meet with them, but since the decision about any of the nine applications has been delayed indefinitely, so have their concerns over evacuation plans.

Though hardly any Keys residents evacuated for Katrina, Rita and Wilma, the latter storm's devastation probably put an end to that trend, Anderson said.

"If they say that tourists have to evacuate, I'm going. And anything that impedes us from getting out is a bad thing," he said.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Key West Citizen, The (FL)
December 7, 2005

State DCA secretary hears concerns about sprawl
By 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.

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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 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."

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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'

By 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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Reporter, The (Tavernier, FL)
August 4, 2005

DCA Secretary plays broker

Author: *ANN HENSON, Staff Writer*

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."

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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.

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.

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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.

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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 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."

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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.

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"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.

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.

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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.

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

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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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
January 22, 2005

PUSH FOR GROWTH CHANGES ENVISIONS POWER LOCALLY

Author: *HECTOR FLORIN, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

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."

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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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
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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.

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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (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
By Alyson Matley amatley@keynoter.com

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

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

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?"

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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Palm Beach Post, The (FL)
March 22, 2004

GOVERNOR'S CHOICE FOR GROWTH CHIEF SEEN AS CURIOUS

Author: *JANE MUSGRAVE, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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 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.

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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."

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

Age: 53.

Education: Kent State University, B.A., architecture, 1973.

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)

Charlotte Sun (Port Charlotte, FL)
March 11, 2004

Governor passes over DeBoer
Bush selects Broward County architect as DCA secretary
Author: *ALLYSON GONZALEZ*

Gov. Jeb Bush appointed Palm Beach architect **Thaddeus Cohen** on Wednesday as the new secretary for the Department of Community Affairs.

Bush passed over a half-dozen other candidates for the selection, including Commission Chairman Matt DeBoer, said Jacob DiPietre, spokesman for the Governor's Office. DeBoer had met with the governor on Feb. 26 during a trip to Tallahassee.

Cohen, president of **Thaddeus Cohen** Architect, P.A., has worked more than 30 years as an architect and has served on the Governor's Growth Management Study Commission. **Cohen** is past chairman of the Commission on Affordable Housing for Palm Beach County and is a former chairman of the Council for Black Economic Development of Broward County.

As secretary, **Cohen** replaces Colleen Castille, who left the DCA in January after four years to work as secretary for the Department of Environmental Protection. The DCA is the umbrella agency for disaster preparation, state growth and planning monitoring, and oversees programs such as the Florida Communities Trust, affordable housing and building codes and environmental land purchases.

DeBoer said he received a call Wednesday morning from the state notifying him that another candidate had been chosen. Not being selected was still an honor, DeBoer said.

"Just the fact that I was in the process was a great honor," DeBoer said. "It raises my profile to the state level and it raises the profile of our community. That means we as leaders are recognized at the state level and that gives our community more of a voice."

DeBoer still plans to examine possible selling prices for the 92,000-acre Babcock Ranch in south Charlotte County. That means having a better understanding of the property owner's selling needs, DeBoer said. During his short meeting with the governor, DeBoer had discussed the possibility of the ranch's full acquisition, he said.

The announcement means little change for DeBoer, who said his consideration as secretary most affected his course work at Florida Gulf Coast University, where he is working toward a master's degree. In the two weeks since the meeting with Bush, DeBoer said it was difficult to concentrate during night-time study while considering the possibility of a Tallahassee move.

DeBoer said his seeking of the DCA position was unique and that he has no future plans to seek a state-level position. "This one happened to be a very good fit for me," he said.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 14, 1992

A CLOSER LOOK AT FOUR ARCHITECTS AND THEIR IMPRINT ON S. FLORIDA

Author: *BETH DUNLOP Herald Architecture Writer*

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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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 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!"

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

The Palm Beach Post
October 6, 1991

DELRAY ARCHITECT COACHES COMMUNITY REBIRTH

Author: *SONJA ISGER, Palm Beach Post Staff Writer*

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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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 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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

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 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.

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Thaddeus Cohen
(Articles are in reverse chronological order)

"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**, 40, 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)

Miami Herald, The (FL)
October 16, 1990

POITIER ADMITS SHE WAS WRONG COMMISSIONER TRIED TO STEER JOB TO FRIEND

Author: *STEVE BOUSQUET Herald Staff Writer*

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."

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"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.

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."

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Thaddeus Cohen
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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

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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 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.

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Miami Herald, The (FL)
June 6, 1987

MINORITY BUSINESSES GET A BOOST

Author: *STEVE BOUSQUET Herald Staff Writer*

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.

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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.

"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.

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