

*Councilwoman Lynda Bell  
City of Homestead*

The City of Homestead respectfully submits the nomination of Mayor Lynda Bell for the 2007 Councilwoman of the Year Award. This nomination comes with a unanimous 7-0 vote from the City Council on August 4, 2008.

Lynda Bell has been a resident of Homestead since 1979, graduated with honors from Miami Dade College in 1997 with an AA Degree in Communications. She has been married to her husband for twenty-four years, has three children and seven grandchildren.

Lynda Bell was first elected to office in November 2003 to a four-year term by an overwhelming majority of the voters. In November of 2007 she made history by being elected the first woman Mayor since the cities incorporation in 1913 (Exhibit 10).

Lynda's passion for her family and the City of Homestead extend beyond her role as a Councilwoman. She is an active member of New Beginnings Christian Fellowship Church. She serves as a Sunday-School teacher, Mothers Of Pre-Schoolers mentor, Angel's Room co-founder; a ministry that helps low-income mothers with spiritual guidance and sustenance support.

She demonstrates her moral and ethical strength by traveling throughout the State of Florida and the Nation's Capitol as President of Florida's Chapter of National Right To Life. As a member of the Military Affairs Committee ("MAC") Lynda greets the soldiers as they return from Afghanistan (Exhibit 1), she attended all of the change of command ceremonies at the Homestead Air Reserve Base ("HARB").

As an individual member of the local chamber of commerce, Lynda has demonstrated her support by participating and supporting all commercial development. She attends the majority of

ribbon cuttings for local business regardless of whether they employ of 1 or 100, (Exhibits 2 and 3). In 2007 she was also a board member of the Greater Federation of Women's Club ("GFWC"), which supports the success and achievement of local women.

As Chair of the Education Committee, Lynda's drive to improve education helped her identify the importance of volunteers and mentors to school aged children. This compelled her to develop several programs. One of which is the Classroom Learning Assistance Program ("CLAP"), where elderly citizens were encouraged to volunteer in mentoring programs that assisted low achieving students. Another program that she initiated was the Education Facilities Benefit District ("EFBD"). In response to the demanding growth this District was developed for the purpose of funding the construction of a new school. The City had not had new school in over 30 years (Exhibit 5).

Lynda has participated as Principal of the Day and keynote speaker in many area schools: Homestead Senior, Laura C. Saunders, Redondo Elementary, Beatrice and Irving Pescoe, and Campbell Drive Middle School (Exhibit 8). Through her involvement with the area schools she became apprised of truancy issues. This led her to create a program to address the attendance challenge that several schools faced. The Truancy Intervention Program is funded entirely through grants. Through 2007 the program has received over \$1.9 million. This intervention program creates alternatives to outdoor suspension and for a drop-off point for truants.

Aside from the Education Committee, Lynda also spearheaded several projects as the Chair of the Finance Committee. She lobbied in Tallahassee for a statewide solution to red-light running. Unfortunately, the red-light legislation failed. In the spring of 2007, she introduced city legislation that would address the safety problem with red-light running in our growing city. As a result, an ordinance was passed and the City is now in the process of procuring a vendor.

This not only shows initiative, but also shows the type of integrity by which Lynda performed her Councilwoman duties.

In 2003 the voters of Homestead mandated that the City Charter provide for an internal auditor that would act as an in-house checks and balances mechanism. In August 2006, the internal auditor was hired and just three months later some Councilmembers sought to fire him. Lynda kept the public informed by submitting articles to the local newspaper. She was one of two Councilmembers that disputed the grounds for firing (Exhibit 4). Current Council reinstated the auditor position and the city is now in the process of filling it.

Lynda has always done the right thing even when her voice was in the minority on Council. In 2007 the City suffered a tragedy when one of its contracted vendors behaved in an unethical and deceitful manner. This contractor was hired to dig a lake and DERM found that he over-dug the lake by 30 feet and exposed it to environmental hazards. The discovery was a result of Lynda Bell's investigation in her quest to uncover the truth for the citizens of Homestead. This is evident from the City's cancellation of the vendor's contract and the vendor suing the City as well as the Councilwoman. Fortunately, the Courts have ruled in favor of the City and will also yield a positive result for the Councilwoman's civil suit (Exhibit 9).

Other legislation that Lynda Bell introduced was in response to growing pains that the city was experiencing. In the fall of 2007 Councilwoman Bell introduced to the Council legislation that would impose a moratorium on high-density residential applications to allow the infrastructure of the city to catch up to the explosion in residential growth, mostly townhouses. The ordinance was not supported by any councilmember, but was voted into effect in December 2007 under a new council.

In the older parts of Homestead, the residents were complaining of too many people living in a house which caused nuisances such as too many vehicles being parked on the property, and a decrease in the aesthetics of the neighborhoods. Councilwoman Bell introduced legislation that restricted the number of people living in same single family home to no more than five non-related persons. Ordinance #2007-08-25 was passed.

Under Lynda's leadership and determination, she met with potential buyers for the sale of the City's remaining 100 acres in the Industrial Park of Commerce. She established good business relationships with potential buyers to ensure that the City would receive the best use for the remaining acres. This resulted in the sale of the POC after being on the market for several years. In addition, this property went back on the tax roll and the City began to receive property taxes towards the general fund.

Lynda has always seen the value of people in and outside of City Hall. She created City Workdays which familiarizes Councilmembers with the inner workings of City Departments. Every month she visited different departments and followed up with a newspaper article on her experience and things she learned. This boosted employee morale as they felt that the Councilmember appreciated their work (Exhibit 6).

It is clear that the people of Homestead approve of Councilwoman Bell's leadership and work by entrusting her with the Mayoral position in the November 2007 election. Her dedication and passion for the City has given her an unrelenting drive to pursue any issue or idea that would lead to the improvement of the quality of life in Homestead. To quote a citizen that spoke in favor of Lynda Bell's award nomination, "Lynda ushered in a new era of local governance by raising the standard of an elected official to a new level."