



**Builders Association  
of South Florida**  
BUILDING GREAT CITIES  
SINCE 1944

**NEWSLETTER  
WINTER 2020 EDITION**

## 2020 Economic Outlook and Developer Showcase Held at Opustone's Showroom



*Luis Vivas introducing featured guest speaker Brad Hunter of RCLCO*

Well-known South Florida economist Brad Hunter presented the BASF's 2020 Economic Outlook meeting – the first Developer Showcase of the year. Brad's presentation included a positive forecast for the year, with a watchful eye on the impacts of the November 2020 Presidential elections. BASF's next Developer Showcase is scheduled at Urbana at Downtown Doral, by Lennar for April 2020! Join us for a preview of this new project with some special guests likely to drop in and meet with us!



## BASF goes to Tallahassee for FHBA Spring Legislative Conference: "Builder Days in Tallahassee."

BASF members traveled to Tallahassee for FHBA's Spring Legislative Conference, held each year in Tallahassee. Held on February 3-5, 2020, BASF President Jose Gonzalez and BASF EVP Truly Burton met with key Miami-Dade Legislators to discuss housing and environmental legislation and policies affecting the construction and cost of new homes and apartments.



BASF participated along with members of other local builders' associations from other parts of the state in this important showing of strength for our industry – if you couldn't join us this year, make plans for coming to Builder Days in Tallahassee next year!

*Top: With Senator Anitere Flores -Truly Burton, Sen. Flores and Jose Gonzalez  
Bottom: BASF members with Lt. Gov. Jeanette Nunez, from l to r: Tony Macaluso, Truly Burton, Lt. Gov. Nunez and Jose Gonzalez*

# WELCOMING OUR NEWEST TRUSTEES!



**ALEX  
BALLINA**

Chief Financial Officer of  
AHS Residential, LLC



**CARLOS E.  
GONZALEZ, JR.**

Director of Asset  
Management of AHS  
Residential, LLC



**MELISSA TAPANES  
LLAHUES**

Bercow, Radell, Fernandez  
Larkin & Tapanes

BASF is honored to have two new firms join as Trustees in the past 30 days: AHS Residential, represented by Alex Ballina and Carlos M. Gonzalez, Jr. and Melissa Tapanes Llahues, the newest partner at the law firm of Bercow, Radell, Fernandez Larkin & Tapanes. Alex has built thousands of both subsidized and workforce/market rate units for AHS and previously for Miami-Dade County Public Housing. Melissa is a proud FIU Panther, who has been with her firm for the past 18 years. She practices land use and environmental law primarily in the City of Miami. We are proud to welcome them to the Board of Directors as our rising leadership within the BASF!

## MASTER PLANNING OUR FUTURE

BASF led a very successful first step in this effort to help promote the retention of enough acreage inside the Urban Expansion Areas (specifically UEA 2) for future development. BASF members and staff worked hard in advance of the County Commission's January 23rd, 2020 Master Plan hearing, to convince the County Commission to adopt a resolution that would work toward this end.

BASF's major concern was the removal of previously designated developable lands, that are now being designated "environmentally sensitive." No land to replace thousands of lost developable acreage was planned by County staff. BASF met with County Commissioners and raised the importance of replacing the thousands of acres lost by administrative determination – which had been previously shown for future growth in Urban Expansion Areas and were now simply changed to the designation of "environmentally sensitive."

At the January 23rd hearing, BASF President Jose Gonzalez and BASF EVP Truly Burton testified about the need for an adequate future land supply, for future homes and job centers. Commissioner Martinez

sponsored a resolution, which passed unanimously, that directs County Planning Department staff to conduct a study, about mitigating the environmentally sensitive acreage being removed from urban expansion areas and replace it with other acreage that is developable.

The package of land use amendments will return, for final adoption, at a public hearing to be scheduled in May or June 2020. BASF will be meeting with County staff to discuss progress of the mitigation study and details, if any are known at this time.

This effort began in late August 2019. At that time, BASF's Urban Expansion Area (UEA) working group submitted a report to the County Commission, which recommended the County needed to retain enough land within the Urban Expansion Areas (UEAs), for future housing and job centers. BASF had previously agreed that environmentally sensitive lands should be permanently protected. But no land commensurate with the environmentally sensitive lands were set aside for housing our residents. This effort is part of BASF's long-range effort to ensure an adequate land supply, to produce affordably priced homes and apartments, and future employment centers for the foreseeable future.

## MIAMI-DADE COUNTY ISSUES: HOUSING AVAILABILITY CONTINUED...

Over the past year and most recently, the Miami-Dade County commission continued to approve improvements to existing housing ordinances and new zoning districts to help build more housing. Legislation was recently approved to increase residential and commercial densities along transit lines and in urban center districts. Highlights of the latest in housing ordinances follow:



**New zoning district proposes residential and commercial mixed-use development over transit lines –** authored by Commissioner Esteban (Steve) Bovo, this new zoning district provides for a mix of residential and commercial uses within one building, along any of the six transit lines throughout the County. BASF will be scheduling a workshop, exclusively for our members, with Zoning Director Nathan Kogon, who will show us all how to best utilize the many ordinance benefits and help generate more and better housing in the right places. Final adoption for this proposal was held in early March 2020.

**Workforce Housing Program Improvements adopted –** County's voluntary program, adopted four years ago, has attracted very few new projects. Commissioner Barbara Jordan sponsored a series of positive improvements to the existing voluntary program and include positive changes. December 2019 DLC speaker Nathan Kogon made a brief presentation about these improvements. A specific, hands-on workshop on how to use these newest incentives will be scheduled for early 2020....

*(Continued...)*

**Quarterly DERM – Industry meetings now underway** – BASF and DERM, the County’s Environmental Resources Management Department, (DERM) are now holding standing quarterly meetings to resolve issues before they become larger, industry-wide obstacles. On the scheduled meeting day, one session will be devoted exclusively to engineering and land development regulatory concerns. The other session will focus on environmental regulatory, policy or legal issues. BASF and County leadership are working together to continually improve Departmental and industry communications, to avoid regulatory “surprises” when a new, or revised, policy or regulation arises. Watch for e-mails on meeting dates with accompanying agendas.

## CITY OF MIAMI ISSUES

**New faces at the City of Miami** - since our last issue, former State Senator Alex Diaz de la Portilla has now won a seat on the City of Miami commission. Senator – now Commissioner – Diaz de la Portilla has stepped into a leadership role, as chair of the Omni Community Redevelopment Agency. BASF looks forward to working with him and his staff on important community issues. Also, in late February 2020, Mayor Francis Suarez appointed Art Noriega, as Miami’s new City Manager, upon Emilio Gonzalez’s expected resignation. BASF Leadership looks forward to working with Manager Noriega on city policy issues in the coming months.

**City Workforce housing program being reviewed** – the City Commission is reviewing how to produce more affordably-priced housing, for City residents. Their income levels are lower than the County’s Average Median income of about \$52,500 and average at about \$42,000. Building apartments for these families will be a challenge to builders, who have been quite successful in building hundreds of units using the County’s AMI as the basis for building workforce housing units. Stay tuned for updates on this issue.

**Miami 21 Review Task Force** – at a recent meeting, the City Commission established a review task force to review the City’s zoning code, known as Miami 21. Commissioners indicated they have had neighborhood groups raise increasing concerns about key provisions of the zoning code that need review. Also, a multi-acre designation, known as a Special Area Plan (SAPs), was eliminated from the code. While quite flexible for future development, neighborhood reaction to gentrification concerns, and the lack of affordable housing at lower income levels was an increasing issue. Several knowledgeable BASF members have been appointed to this important Task Force. Look for updates in e-mail or in our Newsletter, as the Task Force’s work moves forward.

**Traffic and Environmental Studies to become mandatory** – another working group is preparing guidelines on the now-mandatory preparation of either traffic or environmental studies, based on the zoning application being submitted. City Commissioners became increasingly concerned that the traffic studies prepared by applicants’ consultants were not adequately addressing neighborhood traffic concerns. Hence the need for a city-paid consultant, to review applications and prepare recommendations. Study guidelines are being developed by City Planning and Zoning staff. BASF’s City of Miami Practice Group will be reviewing the proposed guidelines for study requirements.

**INTERESTED IN  
ANY OF THIS ISSUES?  
OR ALL OF THEM?**

Check our website for latest meeting and workshop dates: [www.basfonline.org/Our meetings](http://www.basfonline.org/Our meetings) are open to all BASF members who want to participate. Simply contact BASF Deputy Director Susan Burns, who will gladly add your name to any working group or issues list of your preference. Like other BASF staff, she is at your service at [susanburns@basfonline.org](mailto:susanburns@basfonline.org). All interested members are urged to participate!

## BASF TRUSTEE MEMBER AHS RESIDENTIAL WORKS WITH WHEELCHAIRS FOR KIDS – MAKING PEOPLE’S LIVES BETTER.



*Alex Ballina with homeowner Milaidys Diaz, two AHS Construction Crew members and Veronica Ergueta, Project Manager*

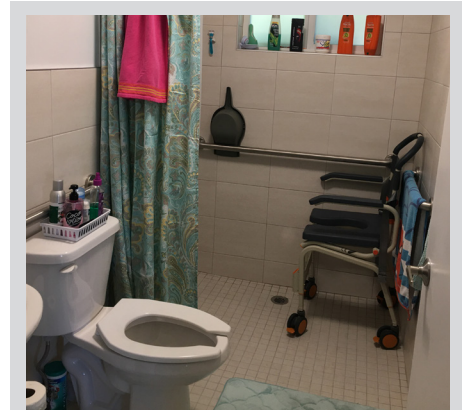
In early 2019, BASF was contacted by the non-profit Wheelchairs 4 Kids. Their director explained to BASF EVP Truly Burton, that a family with a young teenage son, Adan, needed in making a bathroom wheel-chair accessible. Adan was increasing able to care for himself but needed a wider bathroom entry for access and a roll-in shower.

Truly reached out to AHS Residential’s Chief Financial Officer, Carlos E. Gonzalez, Jr, and its Director of Asset Management, Alex Ballina, to ask AHS if they would consider making this big, but important, renovation.

They said, “Yes!” AHS assembled a great construction team for the job, got plans prepared and a by the City of Homestead, and started demolition of the old bathroom. After the six- eight-week construction was done, we saw great results for Adan and the AHS Construction Team: a beautifully renovated bathroom, with wide doorway access and a roll-in shower!

Adan and his mom, Milaidys Valdes, were very happy about the generosity, expertise - and great care - that the AHS team showed in doing this work – they were appreciative and we are VERY proud of our Board members, Alex and Carlos, and the entire AHS Team who worked on making Adan’s life better...

BASF is very proud of our members’ industry involvement. Alex is BASF’s representative to Miami-Dade’s County’s Affordable Housing Advisory Board, is also a Builder Director on the Florida Home Builders Board of Directors. Carlos is a BASF Past Second Vice President, a Life Director and was awarded the Association’s coveted Associate of the Year. Alex and Carlos are making a difference in the lives of so many by their industry involvement...can’t beat that!



*Interior shot of AHS’ newly renovated and fully accessible bathroom: a roll-in shower, new commode and sink*



To obtain copies of any of the above legislative items, please contact Ms. Truly Burton,  
Executive Vice President at the BASF via e-mail at: [trulyburton@basfonline.org](mailto:trulyburton@basfonline.org).

## DISTINGUISHED BASF INDUSTRY LEADERS



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Thank you to all our members for so strongly supporting the BASF's Legislative Mission, That's our mission – Thank you for supporting us throughout the year. We look forward to an active 2020...with your support!



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