



Fact vs. Fiction

The Inter Miami agreement for the Lockhart site and planned community improvements

- ❖ An unprecedented media campaign has been underway that has made misstatements about the city and its relationship with the Inter Miami soccer team and its ownership.
- ❖ This campaign has not only occurred locally, but beyond South Florida and has brought negative attention to the city and Inter Miami internationally — particularly in David Beckham's hometown press in London.
- ❖ Statements implied that they were made on behalf of city government and the City Commission even though they were not.

Negative articles ran in these London papers:

**The
Guardian**

Daily
Mail

THE  **TIMES**
of LONDON

DAILY  **EXPRESS**

Some of the quotes

- ❖ Inter Miami “stuffed the city on the community park.” Quote from the vice mayor to The Guardian on Aug. 26, 2021.
- ❖ “I understand everyone has a bottom line and they want to make money, but you can’t do it on the backs of the people.” Another quote in the same article.
- ❖ “My city feels let down.” Quote from the vice mayor in The Daily Express on Aug. 27, 2021.
- ❖ “Taxpayers spent millions and got nothing in return.” Another quote in the same article.

Stories even appeared in foreign-language media

- ❖ “Mais Heather Moraitis, la vice-maire de Fort Lauderdale, a déclaré que l’équipe de Beckham avait fait une faute en construisant son stade ultramoderne d’une capacité de 18 000 places, qui a ouvert ses portes il y a plus d’un an, puis a raidi la ville sur le parc communautaire.” The Press Free.
- ❖ “Parece una promesa vacua. Entiendo que todos tienen un resultado final y quieren ganar dinero, pero no puedes hacerlo a costa de la gente ”, dijo. Espanol News.
- ❖ Acusan a David Beckham de romper un acuerdo para construir un parque público alrededor del estadio de Miami. La Opinion.
- ❖ Miami Beckham United no cumple su promesa de construir un parque. MiamiDiario.com.
- ❖ David Beckham's Club Accused of Making Money 'On Backs of People' Over 'Failed' Pledge to Build Park. Sputnik.

It's time now to set
the Inter Miami
record straight



Misstatement #1

- ❖ This statement “Standing on Empty Promises” is problematic.
- ❖ **FACT**: Inter Miami and the city signed a comprehensive agreement on July 9, 2019, that committed the soccer team to building certain community site improvements within three years. Even then, if they default, the city can undertake the same work at Inter Miami’s expense. The timeframe doesn’t expire until next July.



Misstatements #2 and #3

Newsletter: Aug. 18

I support what our residents are demanding, based on numerous community meetings over the past two years: a destination park. This park was part of the agreement the commission unanimously supported and voted on from the beginning. This proposed park was funded 100% by Inter Miami as part of the Public Private Partnership (P3) regulated by state statute that says a P3 needs a public purpose.

The City Commission and Inter Miami never stated in their agreement that the community site improvements would constitute “a destination park.”

The July 9, 2019, comprehensive agreement defines the improvements as “construction of a running and walking trail, public park, playground, dog park, public fields, and a field maintenance building” on the southern portion of the Lockhart property.

However, the vice mayor in her March 2020 newsletter describes something more substantial. There, she refers to the community improvements as “a significant community park that is also being funded and constructed by the Beckham group.”

With the Aug. 18, 2021, newsletter, she attaches a rendering of community improvements that has never been approved by the City Commission. It is substantially different than the renderings that the city attorney attached to the comprehensive agreement draft before the vote in 2019. See the next slide...

Park plan exhibit circulated by city attorney with proposed comprehensive agreement before City Commission vote.



Recent park plan publicized by vice mayor, but without any City Commission vote approving it.

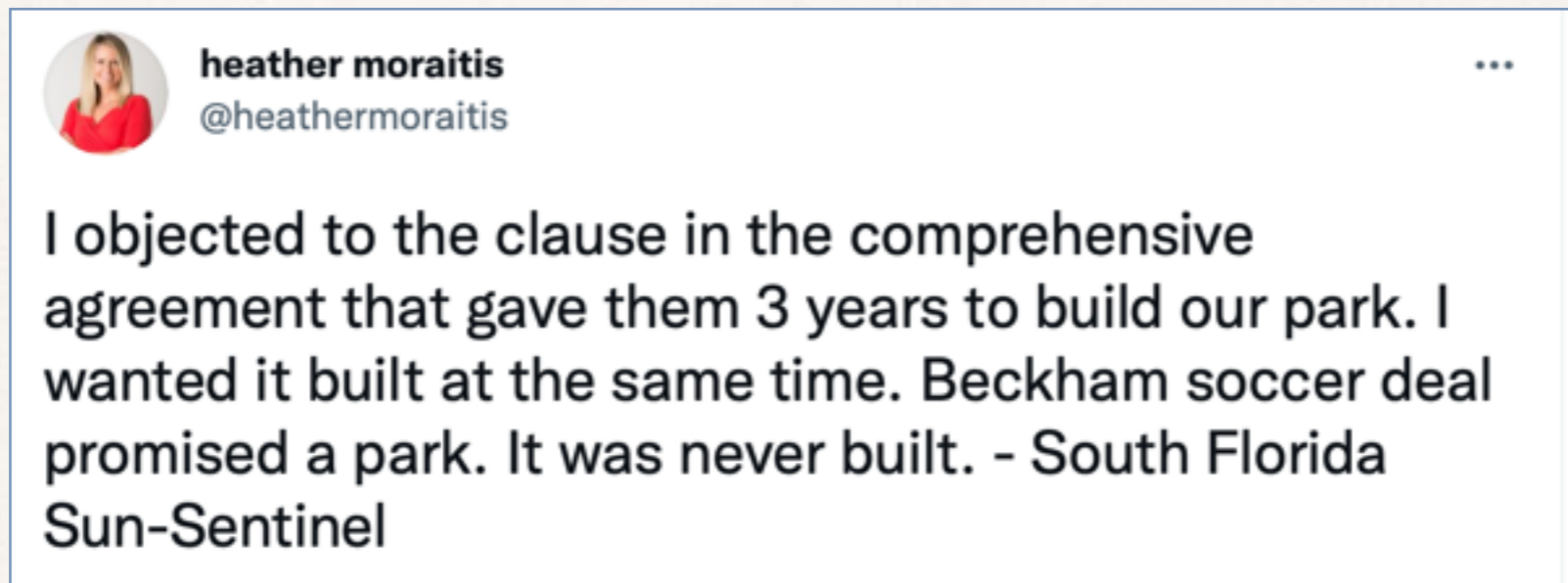


The comment that the proposed park will be funded “100%” by Inter Miami is wrong. Here is why...

- ❖ Inter Miami has stated from the beginning that it would build basic park improvements. Stephanie Toothaker’s cover letter to the unsolicited proposal on Jan. 28, 2019, states that Inter Miami will design and build all community facilities with the exception of a community center.
- ❖ Inter Miami supplemented its initial proposal on March 1, 2019, with a set of renderings and they do not include a community center or certain other amenities that the vice mayor now seeks.
- ❖ The July 9, 2019, comprehensive agreement approved unanimously by the City Commission has very specific wording that does not include items now sought by the vice mayor.
- ❖ The vice mayor herself acknowledges in her July 2019 newsletter that Inter Miami will not be responsible for a community center.
- ❖ On Feb. 2, 2021, AECOM, the firm hired by the city to consult on the voter-approved parks bond initiative notes in its material for public input that the city set aside \$25 million in parks bond funding for improvements at Lockhart beyond what Inter Miami agreed to build.
- ❖ The Sun Sentinel also stated the correct information in its Aug. 20 story. “In the middle of the park would sit a two-story community center and nearby splash pad to be built by the city with up to \$25 million from a voter-approved parks bond.”

Misstatement #4

Twitter: Aug. 20



FACT: When the City Commission approved an interim agreement with Inter Miami on April 2, 2019, and the final comprehensive agreement on July 9, 2019, Vice Mayor Moraitis never made this criticism publicly at a commission meeting. The three-year timeframe is spelled out on Page 8 of the final comprehensive agreement. The clock has not run out.

More inaccuracies

SunSentinel

Aug. 20, 2021: Broken promise? Beckham soccer deal called for a park. It's still waiting to be built.

The vice mayor states she thought the city-Inter Miami agreement was a “sweetheart deal.” She said she supported it in 2019 because she wanted a “destination park.” She also said she didn’t want “yet another land giveaway.”



Aug. 23, 2021, newsletter

“\$13,293,151 is what you are paying for Inter Miami to play soccer on your land. \$0 is what the city receives in revenue from the 40 acres we gave to Inter Miami. 4 times a year is how often we can use the stadium for city events. 0 is how many events we have scheduled, even though I have pushed for months to schedule something for our residents.

Some on the commission say that we negotiated a great deal for our city at no cost to residents. That is wrong. Not only did we pay 13 million dollars for a P3 on this land, we can’t use any of the property for recreation.”

Just the facts...

The city never paid \$13 million for Inter Miami to play soccer. The \$13 million was part of a 2015 arrangement made by the prior City Commission to clear the way for construction of a water park at FXE.

The FAA demanded the city reimburse the airport for the right to use the property for non-airport purposes. FXE is a city airport so the city basically paid itself to use its own property as it sees fit.

The water park fell through. More than three additional years would pass before Beckham's partners approached the city.



But that's not all...

- ❖ Sweetheart deal? No value to the city? Land giveaway? Wrong.
- ❖ South Florida is replete with examples of very generous sports deals. Just look south. Miami-Dade paid millions in annual operating subsidies to the Heat. Miami-Dade used tourism taxes to help finance renovations to the Dolphins stadium. Miami-Dade and the city of Miami paid the vast majority of the \$515 million cost of the Marlins stadium.
- ❖ Fort Lauderdale spent ZERO DOLLARS on the Inter Miami deal. Inter Miami built a stadium and other improvements at a cost of \$160 million. Taxpayers own the stadium and other improvements. The land is also ours and remains ours.
- ❖ Even if the MLS team eventually relocates to Miami as they plan, Fort Lauderdale remains Inter Miami's corporate headquarters, the site of its training activities, the home of its farm team and the location of its youth soccer academy. The value of these ongoing operations to the local economy is truly great when you consider standard economic multiplier effects. In addition, we gain new national and international attention that helps spur further business development and tourism trade.
- ❖ Most cities — like Miami — spend greatly to help boost sports teams because they view professional sports as part of what creates a cosmopolitan community. They see team as adding to the entertainment offerings for both residents and tourists. We spent nothing and get the same benefits.

- ❖ Needless to say, the vice mayor did not seek “a destination park” when the comprehensive agreement was approved on July 9, 2019. She voted yes with everyone else and made no comment.
- ❖ So , let’s talk local use of the Inter Miami facilities. The vice mayor says the city only gets four events a year. The truth is that the city may use the stadium for A MINIMUM of four events a year. But we actually get more. Shortly before the comprehensive agreement was signed, the city prompted Inter Miami to agree to a community-led request to create a space for local high school sports teams to use. Fort Lauderdale and Stranahan High Schools lack home fields, so Inter Miami agreed to build a turf field with stands. They guaranteed the school district could use this facility for A MINIMUM of 24 events a year!
- ❖ The vice mayor says there have been no events. Not true. City officials attended the inaugural high school sports game at the turf field. And, high school graduations have been held at the stadium. As far as city productions, COVID-19 intervened. For much of the time since the stadium was completed, we didn’t want to put on major events. Even the graduations had limited attendance. We are trying to put this pandemic behind us. When we succeed, we will have all sorts of events.

And more...

Aug. 27, 2021, newsletter. The vice mayor says she never “delayed (Inter Miami’s) plans to build the community park.”



Let's look at the record



- ❖ The city manager has told the vice mayor that her multiple revisions to the community park plan were problematic to maintaining a quick turnaround schedule.
- ❖ The vice mayor communicated with Inter Miami and their agents almost TWO DOZEN times since the City Commission unanimously approved the comprehensive agreement. Meetings, phone calls, texts, emails...
- ❖ The record shows that the vice mayor has pursued numerous changes to the Lockhart plans. For instance, she discussed building an aviation school on the site with Inter Miami's lobbyist. Staff informs me that other ideas floated over the months have been a restaurant, band shell and gym. The vice mayor recently began exploring the addition of e-gaming to the property.
- ❖ The vice mayor acknowledged the delays in a commission speech on Aug. 17, 2021. She stated that a proposal for the community center was being brought to the commission for the first time. This was her plan for adding an e-gaming element to the community center.
- ❖ How could Inter Miami proceed with any construction of community improvements since the full City Commission would need to see a plan from these negotiations, make any changes it wants and then approve it? The fact is that Inter Miami could not proceed because nothing had been decided. There would actually need to be an approved site plan — not just renderings — to begin the building permit approval process required before the start of construction.

Many months and many plans for Lockhart's park

INTRODUCTION | Existing Site Plan Diagram
 NOTE: SITE PLAN SHOWN DEVELOPED BY BSRP...



COMMUNITY CENTER LOCATION
 ALL INFORMATION ON THIS PLAN
 IS UNCLASSIFIED

MANICA



Community Park - Concept Plan

MANICA

MANICA PROGRAMMING | ADJACENCY DIAGRAM (OPT. 0P)

SOUTHEAST CORNER



MANICA

MANICA PROGRAMMING | ADJACENCY DIAGRAM (OPT. 04)

SOUTHWEST CORNER



MANICA

MANICA PROGRAMMING | ADJACENCY DIAGRAM (OPT. 0B)

SOUTHEAST CORNER



LOCKHART COMMUNITY CENTER
 WITH ADJACENCY AND MASSING PRESENTATION

MANICA



MANICA

MANICA PROGRAMMING | ADJACENCY DIAGRAM (OPT. 01)

SOUTHWEST CORNER



MANICA

MANICA PROGRAMMING | ADJACENCY DIAGRAM (OPT. 03)

SOUTHWEST CORNER



LOCKHART COMMUNITY CENTER
 WITH ADJACENCY AND MASSING PRESENTATION

MANICA

MANICA PROGRAMMING | ADJACENCY DIAGRAM (OPT. 0A)

SOUTHWEST CORNER



LOCKHART COMMUNITY CENTER
 WITH ADJACENCY AND MASSING PRESENTATION

MANICA



OPTION A SITE

MANICA

Then there is this statement:

- ❖ Aug. 19, 2021, Facebook post.
“We could lose the 20 acre city park.” The commission “suddenly changed their position” and “now they support giving our 20 acre park to Inter Miami to expand their sports operations.”



The truth: New opportunities arise

- ❖ For some two years, Inter Miami has tried to work with the vice mayor as the District 1 commissioner to develop community improvements that meet the clauses set out in the comprehensive agreement. Through no fault of Inter Miami, this has been a slow process. Now, new options have appeared. Inter Miami has indicated that a professional women's soccer team could be co-located in Fort Lauderdale.
- ❖ This is not a sudden change. The full commission has patiently waited for progress. And if professional women's soccer is added, a park is still possible. Myself and other commissioners are told other community needs can still fit on the site.
- ❖ This can be community athletic fields, dog parks, walking trails or other options. A park can even be defined as including an arena or stadium. Professional spectator sports are a legitimate community function,. But even if we pursue women's soccer, I'd hope we could fit some other options on the 20-acre site as well.

Let's discuss the past further

- ❖ First, Inter Miami has been a faithful partner. They helped us repeatedly during the COVID-19 pandemic. First, Lockhart was a testing site. Then, it was a vaccination site. THANK YOU!
- ❖ This pandemic tested everyone's mettle. By emergency order, I closed the city just days before Inter Miami was to play its first home game. They hemorrhaged money over the ensuing time with no fans in the stands until recently.
- ❖ Inter Miami intended to move from the construction of its stadium and team facilities to construction of the community amenities. The protracted discussions with the district commissioner were part of the problem. So was the pandemic. They demobilized their construction crews and now face difficult options.
- ❖ The vice mayor was actually a major fan initially of what has been built and Inter Miami's relationship with the city. When we were supposed to have our first game in March 2020, she wrote "Inter Miami's debut marks a major milestone in the public/private partnership between the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Beckham group." She added: "The City's partnership with the Beckham group breathes new life into this landmark property."



Now, what's the future?

- ❖ The City Commission as a whole needs to decide what to do with the remaining acreage.
- ❖ Twenty acres is actually A LOT OF LAND. A football field is a mere 1.3 acres. So basically, we have enough land left for some 15 football fields. We can do many different things within that acreage.
- ❖ There is no reason why we can't combine women's soccer with other options like esports, a skate park, a dog park, walking trails or playground.



Women's soccer

- ❖ Why wouldn't we be excited by the opportunity to co-locate a professional women's sports franchise with the men's MLS team at Lockhart?
- ❖ During the recent debate by the City Commission regarding transgender athletes in sports, the entire commission said it was committed to the importance of women's athletics.
- ❖ The following of women's professional soccer is off the charts. Television viewership rose 493% in 2020.
- ❖ The women's league is determined to expand and co-location is considered optimal. Los Angeles and San Diego are adding teams in 2022, increasing the league to a dozen. At least four professional women's team are currently co-owned by MLS teams: Houston, Orlando, Portland and Utah. The MLS clubs are able to leverage their youth academies to assist in the athlete development of both pro teams.
- ❖ Fort Lauderdale would benefit long into the future. Initial conversations are that the women's team would remain in Fort Lauderdale even if the MLS team decamps to Miami and the city is then home to its farm team.

