



Office of the Mayor and Town Council

Tim Meerbott
Mayor

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Members of the Town Council

From: Honorable Mayor Tim Meerbott

Date: July 29, 2020

Re: Supporting the South Dade Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee's Efforts to Establish a Military Housing Rental Program within South Dade

REQUEST

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF CUTLER BAY, FLORIDA, SUPPORTING THE SOUTH DADE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE'S ESTABLISHMENT OF A MILITARY HOUSING RENTAL PROGRAM WITHIN SOUTH DADE TO ASSIST ACTIVE MILITARY MEMBERS, RESERVISTS, VETERANS, AND THEIR FAMILIES TO OBTAIN AFFORDABLE HOUSING; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The Town of Cutler Bay (the "Town") is a vibrant community and offers quality homes, excellent schools, and other family-friendly amenities that enrich the lives of military families. From the moment I began serving as Mayor, the Town has engaged with the Homestead Air Reserve Base in an effort to better understand the challenges military personnel face and help find ways to support our local military personnel.

The lack of available housing and associated moving costs (known as the "affordability crisis") has forced military personnel to obtain housing outside of South Dade, to areas north of the City of Doral and as far north as Broward County. As rising rents and home prices push low- and middle-income households further away from major urban centers — where the greatest number of jobs and the most robust public transit systems tend to be — lower housing costs in suburbs and exurbs are offset by increased spending on transportation.





The Town has a reputation as a military-friendly community; however, high upfront rental deposits (usually three-months rent), utility deposits, and other moving expenses exceed most military personnel budgets and deter military families from choosing to live in the Town. There is a great need to assist military personnel in finding affordable housing alternatives, and as a community we need to ensure active military members, reservists, and veterans, and their families feel welcome and are supported during their time in South Dade. Renting to military personnel is a patriotic and gratifying activity and the Town's homeowners and rental communities can take action to be "military-friendly" and "military-ready" landlords.

Currently, military personnel and their families can access on-base and off-base housing through the Automated Housing Referral Network (AHRN.com) which provides trusted and up-to-date housing listings in military communities. The South Dade Chamber of Commerce and its Military Affairs Committee ("MAC") are working with the Family Readiness Directors at our local military institutions to establish a Military Rental Property Program ("MRPP") in South Dade.

The MRPP is designed to provide military personnel and enlisted officers with off-base, affordable, high quality, and secure rental property (apartments, townhouses, and/or houses). MRPP is intended to ease the transition for military personnel to move into our community and help defray some of the costs incurred while moving. Security deposits and advance rent requirements are relaxed for eligible service members. Expedited processing of rental agreements is offered and, though credit checks may still be required for potential renters, credit checks can be expedited as well. The MRPP is open to all property owners who wish to participate and agree to their terms and conditions.

There are many benefits to renting to active military members, reservists and veterans and their families, such as:

- Renting to military personnel drastically reduces your vacancy rate;
- Typical assignments for military member are two and a half (2 ½) to four (4) years;
- Service men and women usually hold high security clearance, having previously undergone and passed background checks;
- They have a reliable source of income, the Basic Housing Allowance;
- They are able to initiate a direct deposit to disperserent on a monthly basis, ensuring timely payments to their landlord;
- They have a built-in support system if they fall on hard times;
- They make great tenants — demonstrated by their hard-working and diligent work ethic and the required military code of conduct for military personnel and their families;
- They support the local economy; and,
- They can recommend your properties to other military families.





The Town provides military heroes and their families a location that is convenient and offers a much desired hometown feel due to our quaint neighborhoods, great schools, close proximity to the Homestead Air Force Reserve Base, parks, playgrounds, walkable streets, and bike paths. The Town also provides a host of year-round community activities for our hard-working military service members on their days off and weekends. Additionally, the Town offers nearby community amenities, such as a public library, shopping, boating and fishing, and Zoo Miami. This makes the Town the ideal place for military members and their families to live, work, and play.

Our Nation exists because of the courage, perseverance, and resolve of our active, reserve, and veteran Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard service men and women, who stepped up to protect the values and freedoms our country was founded on. Just as we relied on their service to protect our freedom, we need to support our military personnel and let them know they can depend on us to give back to them and their family when they need a place to call home.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Town Council adopt the attached Resolution, which supports the South Dade Chamber of Commerce MAC's efforts to establish a Military Rental Partnership Program within the South Dade area for active military service members, reservists and veterans and their families to obtain affordable housing.

