



BROWARD OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2022

Fort Lauderdale Building Official Sanctioned Unpermitted and Improperly Permitted Condo Construction

Broward Inspector General John W. Scott announced today that the Broward Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a [final report](#) concluding that City of Fort Lauderdale Building Official John Travers engaged in misconduct by knowingly and affirmatively sanctioning unpermitted construction of a 12-story condominium building project known as the 2900 Riomar Street project.

The OIG found that Mr. Travers's actions in June 2016 caused those involved to believe that the project had a proper permit or that its construction was otherwise authorized when it was not. In August 2016, enforcement staff within the city's Building Services Division (BSD), the department over which Mr. Travers maintains authority, issued a stop-work order upon their discovery that the ongoing construction was unpermitted. In September 2016, Mr. Travers directed BSD administrative staff to issue the project a physical permit so that construction on the project could continue. He had this sham permit issued despite his actual knowledge that the project's permit application and necessary plans reviews were still pending—including a plans review for fire safety. The contractor used this sham permit until BSD issued the project a proper permit approximately six months later. However, by that time, the construction of the building's shell was nearing completion.

The OIG also detailed two other instances where Mr. Travers, or BSD under Mr. Travers, evaded the Florida Building Code's dictates. In the 1919 S.E. 10th Avenue building project, the OIG observed that, after BSD inspection staff issued a stop-work order, BSD unlawfully issued a permit revision to legitimize unpermitted construction and authorize further construction without the fire safety plans review and approval required by law. In the 1415 S.W. 62nd Street construction renovation project, after yet another stop-work order, the OIG found that Mr. Travers unlawfully allowed the contractor to complete the renovation even though the only permit issued for that project at the time covered a different scope of work.

Mr. Travers's conduct amounted to violations of the Florida Building Code, the Florida Fire Prevention Code, and the Broward County Building Code.

The OIG's observations recounted violations of procedural aspects of the Florida Building Code—aspects designed as controls to avoid substantive violations. Accordingly, it recommends that the city engage an independent third party to conduct an audit of the city's permitting process. It further recommends that the city take whatever steps it deems necessary to ensure the public that the violations identified here and those identified by any future audit did not impact the integrity of any construction.

In accordance with its charter mandate, the OIG is referring this matter to BORA and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation for whatever action those agencies deem appropriate.

John W. Scott, *Inspector General*

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