

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting

Agenda Item H-2

December 11, 2012

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Maria Anderson

Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Acting Police Chief, Scott Masington

Public Speaker(s)

H-2 [Start: 2:31:36 p.m.]

Briefing by Acting Police Chief Scott Masington

Mayor Cason: OK – Crime, you want to start.

Commissioner Cabrera: Well essentially, Mrs. Anderson brought it up if not last Commission meeting, the one before, and look, here's the bottom line, I have now been serving in this responsibility for 12 years, and in all these 12 years I have never received the number of inquiries and concerns that I have received regarding crime; and what I decided to do when I had made the request for the crime reports, and I passed them all to the rest of you and I stopped sending them to you because I didn't hear back, so I just assumed that you were also getting them, anyway it's up to your office if you want to see them anyway. I looked at statistics and what I was able to come up with was that from early October till, I don't have my notes unfortunately, I left them, but from early October to I believe the first week in December. What we have had are 100 car burglaries and 24 residential burglaries; and I realize its property crime, I'm well aware of what property crime is all about. The concern that I raise or the concern that I

have this afternoon is that same property crime could turn into a violent crime very quickly, and it could turn into a violent crime by someone arriving at their home and finding a burglar there or by someone walking out there to their car and finding someone trying to steal their vehicle or break into it. So the concern here is not a campaign related concern, and Jim I say that to you with all due respect, I don't mean that disrespectfully by the way, it's about what we do and that is to govern, and so I don't know if crime is up or crime is down when I get to see the statistics that the City, that the Chief is going to present us with in his PowerPoint. I'm sure that what we are going to see is crime spikes up, crime spikes down, but I'm very interested in knowing where we are going with all of this, and how are we dealing with it because I have to tell you we have another item coming up after that and that item really has me concerned. So I bring this up for that purpose and I realize, incidentally for all of those who may not know what's going on, I had put this on the agenda as a discussion item and low and behold it's a City Manager Item as well, so I now defer to the City Manager so he can tell us about what's going on in our fair City.

Mayor Cason: This is an opportunity I guess to move into the Chief's brief to help answer questions.

City Manager Salerno: Mayor let me first say, the reason the item is on was because Commissioner Anderson had asked for the item to be on to invite the Chief here, that's the reason why it was and she said at the last Commission meeting asked me specifically I'd like to see the Chief here that's why it was put on the agenda. It coincides with another effort which will be subsequent to the Chief's briefing, so Scott would you address the Commission as we said it's a briefing regarding what's happening in the community.

Police Chief Masington: Good afternoon. I too have received e-mails of late in a quantity different than we've experienced in the past and I can't really put my finger on why that is, but in an effort to provide you all with what I know, what I want to do first is to demonstrate through some charts that I put together what we experience in the City, and I wanted to do a five year comparison and Commissioner Anderson you had said something previously that I really took to heart, which is you wanted unfiltered information. I think that was the word you had used. The five year comparison didn't include 2012, because it's not over yet, so it's really six years if you may, its five years and eleven months, so bear in mind everything I show you is only eleven months of 2012. I wanted to include this year. The other thing I wanted to explain when we talk about the data is as an example, if somebody calls us and says I was burglarized in my home and we find that there is no forced entry, but the complainant says my watch is missing, we write that as a residential burglary, and then over time as part of the example the complainant calls us and says, you are not going to believe it, I was cleaning my house and behind my dresser I found the piece of jewelry that I said was missing, and it happens. That case becomes unfounded and it comes out of our incident statistics at a reporting time, but for 2012 we've not taken anything out

yet so I want you to know that the numbers are as unfiltered as I could make them because we haven't called through that data yet.

Commissioner Anderson: Let me ask you a quick question. Are they UCR numbers?

Police Chief Masington: Well, that's what's hard to explain. UCR is a reporting mechanism that we are obligated to do for the State of Florida and if there is a burglary that takes place to stay on that topic and something is taken during that burglary, you have a burglary and you have a theft, but as far as the State is concerned you only report the burglary, you do not report the theft. So if I run a report that says I want to see every theft I'm not necessarily getting the same number as UCR is getting, I'm probably getting more because there are a lot of thefts that aren't reported to UCR through the process. Does that answer your question?

Commissioner Cabrera: Little bit.

Police Chief Masington: Well, numbers are very hard, they are very challenging. If you were to call the Police Department or you were to go into our public information area of the website and extract data, your numbers may never really match what is reported as UCR. If you ask for one specific thing you are getting that one specific thing. It's usually going to be a higher number than what's reported to UCR to be honest, our raw data are higher numbers than what we are obligated to report to the State. So what is crime?- do we have a crime problem? Crime is really any activity that's prohibited by law it's a very broad definition. We talked briefly, it was just mentioned about property crime, but I'm going to encompass if you'll give me a little latitude, violent crimes and property crimes, because we spend a lot of time, energy, resources combating violent crimes to create a safe environment. So it's important to see the successes that we have in those arenas as well as the other areas that we are challenged. So if we start, if you can start the slide presentation for me please. I'm going to go to the next slide already. In violent crimes we have homicide and man slaughter and there are two different types of charts that you are going to see. The first are just bar charts and it was the only chart I could find, because if you look at the side numbers there are the number of incidents and our number of incidents in some of these categories are so low that when I did a trend chart, which is what I really wanted to show you. The trend charts were just laying on top of each other so you really couldn't see anything because there are so many zeros for so many months over so many years that it just looked like layers across each other.

Commissioner Quesada: It's a good problem for us to have.

Police Chief Masington: It's a great problem for us to have and maybe I should digress a little by saying that as an Acting Chief of Police I have a fortunate opportunity to speak to you today about what our issues are, there are a lot of Chiefs that would love to have the concerns that we are facing. So just for the brief moment you can look at our rates of homicides in the City and

they are really very low. In 2007 we had one, in 2008 we had zero, this year we've had 3, it's an unfortunate tragedy, but it should be pointed out that two of the deaths that took place were one incident, it was a known offender, it was a business partner who was involved...

Mayor Cason: Eighth Street – the one on Eighth Street?

Police Chief Masington: Yes sir. And we caught that person, they are currently still in jail; and then in July we had a very unfortunate event where an emotionally challenged gentleman got into a physical confrontation with his elderly father never intending that the outcome would be so horrific, but his father passed as a result of those injuries. But the reason I bring up these cases is because we don't have people running around the streets that are committing homicides, we have most of our cases are known to each other incidents. We can go to the next slide please. Of the bar charts, this is really the hardest one to decipher because it had the most to deal with, but rapes committed in 2007 was actually our highest year, we had 11 incidents and this year to date. Again reminding you that we are only through November as far as this chart is concerned, we've had 5 events; and I want to tread very lightly here, because I don't want to diminish the horrible nature of rape and what that could do to a victim, but I read all of the reports for this year and I want to reinforce similar to the homicide that there is a common thread in all of our cases, which is the parties are known to each other in some capacity. So I further emphasize that as far as enjoying our community, getting out there on the streets, we are not at a level of concern where we have people being taken against their will, totally arbitrary acts, it's not what we encounter here in the City. Go to the next slide please. Similar crime – it shows that in this 5 years and 11 months comparison that we only have one attempted rape, I wanted to include that. The next slide please. Then also sodomy is also a rape, it's penetration in a different capacity, it could be male or female, but it falls along the same lines in nature of crime, and I also wanted to show you that in the same time frame we've had very, very few. OK, so now we are at robbery and now we've changed our comparison type of image. So this is the trend analysis that I wanted to demonstrate to you all. 2012 is the orange line with the round circle, I hope that you can see it; I think everybody has a copy. We follow trends a lot and when we see things that rise and fall we direct our resources according, but if you look at this chart and I can tell you some of the numbers, because I have them written down. Over the last 7 years, 6 years excuse me, in 2007 we had 71 robberies; 2008 – 65; 2009 – 45; 2010 – 38; 2011 – 33; and year to date November 30 – 28, so we've been on a steady decline over the previous 5 years.

Commissioner Quesada: Just to clarify for those who are at home aren't as clear, we are talking about robbery, we are not talking about burglary, they are two separate crimes...

Police Chief Masington: Yes, I appreciate you bringing that up. I should have started with that, because we often get calls, I'm sure you all as Commissioners and myself, I was robbed, people tend to think generically if their home was entered by an unknown person, if they were robbed,

it's really the wrong word, thank you Commissioner. Robbery is a crime to your person, it can be you walking down the street as a female and you have a purse on your shoulders, somebody runs by and jerks that purse string off of your shoulder and takes off with it, and it can be as serious as somebody challenging you with a weapon of some kind and demanding something from your person, and can also include a physical confrontation. So those are the types of crimes that we are talking about. We have not had any significant injuries as a result of the robberies that have occurred in our City this year, and we've noticed that the way that we have challenged our officers to direct their efforts toward this area; we have been very successful over the last 5 years. We do things like participate in multi-agency task forces, an organization called the Robbery Clearinghouse, and we are participative in these other opportunities. We do intelligence gathering, and we direct our resources to find people and eliminate this type of crime in our City. The next slide please. So we have this slide show, assaults that have occurred. It's also a crime to person, it can be as generic as I make an allegation that I'm going to cause you harm, you believe that I have the ability to do that, you are assaulted, and it can be also some physical interaction between two parties. Most of our assaults in the City have been domestic related; its parties that either have a relationship or live together and they get into a physical confrontation, if it's domestic battery, we consider it as an assault and that's how you see this trend, but again for the majority of the year minus September when we had an increase that orange line is really as low as its been low in a number of years. Next slide please. I think this slide is our hottest topic, if you may and this is certainly something that people are concerned about, but I think what this shows us is that when occurrences happen, when our citizenry are concerned, when these things are evaluated by us and we direct our resources we can be very impacting, and there has been a lot of activity. We've put groups of men and women together to specifically go out and look for offenders when it comes to residential burglaries, we've been successful. We've made some very quality arrests, and really since June we've been on a steady decline and in the last couple of months you can see it really falls way down to a level that is below what we have experienced ever in our recent crime history trends. So I think it's important to point out again, not knowing why there has been this flurry of e-mail activity because what we show as far as just sheer numbers, the number of events that we are encountering have been on decline for month after month after month certainly since June.

Mayor Cason: Last reporting period was one, wasn't it?

Police Chief Masington: Yes sir it was, and that leads me to another thought. It's difficult to explain all the different types of situations that we have without it appearing that there is blame or that the Police Department is being defensive, but the one particular one that occurred last month was actually at the University of Miami out of a dorm room, which is a reality of ours at the Police Department. The University of Miami campus exists, there are situations that take place there, if a student says something was taken from my dorm room that's a residential

burglary, so that's – the numbers that we have include those types of events. Anything that's not in a public space that's in a private environment, and the students tell us frequently, I went to the restroom, I took a shower, I went down to the food facility, whatever it may be, I don't lock my door and things tend to disappear.

Commissioner Quesada: Would you say those are the most common items that make up the residential burglaries?

Police Chief Masington: No, no...

Commissioner Quesada: But it's part of it.

Police Chief Masington: Its part of it, yes. I would be very reluctant to say that's the majority.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mayor Cason: But the University of Miami statistics are in our statistics?

Police Chief Masington: Yes, they are all encompassing; it's the City of Coral Gables. We have 18,000 plus households, they certainly compose the majority of these numbers, but I did want to point out the reality is the University of Miami situations are all part of this data as well. Next slide please. This is the commercial burglary slide for you all. There were some years we were very, very challenged. In 2007 there were 124 commercial burglaries and in 2011 a complete year there were 68, as of November 30th we are at 58 this year. So our efforts in this environment seem to be proving satisfactory as well. Next slide. So here we have larceny, a fancy word for theft, anything that's taken that's in a public space. If your lap top computer at the University of Miami, harp on them for another minute, is in the library and it's taken from you, it's a public space it's a theft. It includes shoplifting, whether it's at our wonderful Village of Merrick Park or the Ross Shopping Center, somebody takes something from a retail store that's also considered a larceny. Next slide. Vehicle burglaries – also another challenge in our City. It's really a crime of opportunity and vehicle burglaries will have some relationship to auto theft, which will be our next slide, but vehicle burglaries are challenging, and what we are finding of late which is really a very interesting fact is that the majority of vehicle burglaries that occur all occur with unlocked doors; and if you look in the month of November you'll see that we had an increase of vehicle burglaries, and we experienced in one particular night 20 vehicle burglaries. We caught the two gentlemen that were doing it. They were spending some time in the Village of Pinecrest, our neighboring City, they migrated into Coral Gables and we ultimately caught them in Gables by the Sea, and they admitted to us 20 different locations that they had been to. We think there is probably more, but we got them on 20 cases.

Mayor Cason: Can I ask you on that, are these things in sight?- they see a GPS, they see a phone or are they just rummaging around looking for something?

Police Chief Masington: I think that, that's one aspect of it; I think that's probably a smaller aspect than it used to be years ago. What we are finding today, it's been a very common trend throughout Metropolitan Dade County is that people will walk down a City block in the dark and they will just try car doors and the ones that are open usually have loose change, they may or may not get lucky with some other device that you are referring to Mayor, but we really encourage people to lock the door, if you locked the door you are not a victim that night. So you don't want to leave things in your car because there are opportunistic people as well, but we really are finding that these people are looking for opportunity, a quiet street, they can walk down the street and in a moment's time they are inside of 6, 8, 10 different vehicles.

Mayor Cason: Can you talk about the geographic prevalence of this; is this along major routes?-how much of it is sort of interior into the Spanish language streets where people get lost?

Police Chief Masington: Well, I think this is really kind of spread throughout. I don't know if there has been a specific environment that's has a greater propensity than not. Residential burglaries we do find that because usually those folks are looking for avenues of escape. The people that are doing these types of crimes really they want to be embedded in a dark environment. They are on foot usually, they can go yard to yard, they are not looking for an escape route, and this is a late night activity. When we've caught these people it's 2, 3, 4 o'clock in the morning is when we find them experiencing these things, so it's very challenging. So that leads us to our next crime which is vehicle theft, auto theft; and what we have experienced lately is we've had quite a number of vehicles taken that actually the victims were telling us the keys were inside. So our speculation is that at times it may have just been a vehicle burglary attempt to go into that car to take something that may have value and low and behold they find the key and they get in the car and they take the car, so that's a challenge for us as well. We've also found that the sophistication of our residential burglars is that they are stealing cars that mimic the environment in which they intend to commit residential burglaries. This is not specific to Coral Gables, but this is certainly information that's yielded itself, so we are fairly certain we've had some vehicles stolen from Coral Gables to be used in burglaries in other cities that have similar makeup as ours where they want cars that fit in. I drive to your house, I park in your driveway in a late model car and the Police drive by, doesn't look out of place to me, and you may be somebody who's making an effort to get into that home, so these types of crimes are related, but we still encourage people to lock the doors; and our last slide if I may is vandalism, and this year we are seeing the lowest incidence of vandalism that we've had for many, many years; and vandalism is really any type of damage, it can be graffiti, it could be I knocked over your mailbox, throw an egg at your home, these are the types of crimes we are talking about. We find that mostly with our younger people, they happen merely in an instance, but we are happy to be able to demonstrate that, that situation is as low as we've seen in a long time. So all these things marry themselves and we work very hard to direct the resources that we have to try to

combat these things and to ensure that the community is protected. The one thing that I want to reinforce as I close please is, we cannot take the emotional aspect away or the discomfort from those residents of ours who have been the victims of crime. If I can eliminate it in its entirety I would certainly do that, but I want to reinforce that Coral Gables is a safe place, we want people to come and enjoy their experiences here, where they live, they shop, they dine, you can come to Coral Gables, you can park your car, you can walk down the street, you can enjoy yourself knowing that your risks are extraordinarily low, especially when compared to other environments certainly nearby in Miami-Dade County.

Commissioner Anderson: Let me ask you a question Scott, and I know – I respect you very much, but you know what I’m hearing?– I’m hearing – I spent 20 minutes on a phone call with a lady who lives on Monserrate, she and another lady via e-mail a lot and one of my Board members who is in law enforcement also had a street burglarized, but the lady was very compelling. She has an adopted daughter and she gave me permission to share the story, she adopted from the Ukraine who is traumatized and ill from birth and they brought her over and done a lot of work, and their house was burglarized, they tore apart the young girl’s room. They took her photo, they took pictures of the family. There’s been a lot of, I don’t know how many, I’m not going to say a number, I don’t know, but the people on that street are getting armed and it’s not about the safety. I’ve lived here all my life, it’s not about walking on the street, it’s about those burglaries when they invade your home and they are violated and they never feel safe again and your children. People feel they are being watched and they are arming themselves and I think it goes to the fact that people are scared. One of my Board members in law enforcement asked me thanks for the update, but has anyone compared 2012 year-to-date UCR index to 2011 UCR assault, rape, murder, robbery, arson, burglary, theft and motor vehicle theft? This is a resident; there seems to be many concerned citizens worried about crime almost as many officials telling the citizens everything is OK, but I’ve yet to see any statistics, and I know there are lies, damn lies in statistics, but a simple comparison of 2012 year-to-date to 2011, “apples to apples” “oranges to oranges” seems like the next logical step in this discussion. I had an e-mail from somebody sharing some other vehicle thefts that they’ve had. People are worried and I don’t know what the numbers are because we don’t have the numbers, we can’t get the numbers, we stopped getting the numbers, and we can’t get anymore numbers.

Mayor Cason: I get the numbers every week; I’ve been getting it for the last two years.

Commissioner Anderson: You lucky dog you.

Mayor Cason: You can get them from the Police Department.

Commissioner Anderson: Well some of us can and some of us can’t.

Mayor Cason: Are there any restrictions on the numbers?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes, of course there are.

Police Chief Masington: There is not.

Commissioner Anderson: Jim, I'm having...

Mayor Cason: But you made an allegation that's not true.

Commissioner Anderson: It is true, but that's fine Jim, I respect that.

Police Chief Masington: The numbers are always available. We do have residents that ask for them, we provide them. What I've just provided to you all, the left side of each and every one of these charts has a number, I can give it to you in a litany of different formats, so that you can have totals if you want. I have the totals with me I can provide; and what I try to do was exactly what you are saying, which is provide a comparison; all these charts are an overlay year after year after year, and we are able to demonstrate that 2012 has not been in any shape or form different or higher from what we've experienced in years past, in fact, in most categories its below.

Commissioner Anderson: I hope not, I really don't, but there are people scared out there.

Police Chief Masington: I get that and we have a lot of community outreach programs that dispel people's concerns. We have a victim advocate who has been recognized countless times, she is wonderful working with our victims, helping them rebuild both emotionally and physically when needed. I too have been the victim of a residential burglary, I understand that feeling...

Commissioner Anderson: Then you understand.

Police Chief Masington:...and it's a challenge, there is a process to work through. I cannot stand here and say we are going to eliminate crime.

Commissioner Anderson: Of course not. I'm just telling you what's out there, people's emotional perspective are really important.

Police Chief Masington: And I've talked to many folks too, I really do.

Commissioner Cabrera: And Jim, I know you and I had the opportunity to attend a Crime Watch meeting together, it was in the Riviera section, it was actually on Alfonso, the 900 block, and I got to tell you that was probably the 50th meeting, 40th meeting, maybe 35th meeting I attended in 12 years, I've never seen so many people in a meeting, I mean I think I counted 31 heads at that meeting, Chief Masington wasn't there, Major Hudak was there. The point here is I don't mean to say this disrespectfully, but I wasn't elected by statistics, people elected me and the same

people that elected me are fearful and they are hurting out there. Gentlemen, I'm not making this up and if you think I'm making it up then you've got a problem, then you've got a problem.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Who is thinking that? I'm not saying that at all.

Commissioner Cabrera: Hey, hey, that's a rhetorical, OK...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK. I respect what you say.

Commissioner Cabrera:...it's a rhetorical, OK, it wasn't meant to get – if you want to have a debate we can have one, but it's not a debate, it's the fact that this is happening. You know why?- maybe I get juiced up about it and emotional about it and passionate about it, because I got to tell you the only people that talk about this time and time again are Anderson and I. I'm sorry, but the fact is the fact.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That is so incorrect.

Commissioner Cabrera: That is so incorrect? I'm talking about now, I'm talking about right now Mr. Kerdyk, I'm not talking about years ago, I'm talking about now.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Calm down...calm down, we are all trying....

Commissioner Cabrera: Don't mistake my passion for anger, I'm not angry, but for you to say – I know what you've done, we've known each other since we were kids, the point here is that you know there are lots and lots of people, by the way don't tell me to calm down, you know I'll get as excited as I want to get, I'll get as excited as I want to get. The bottom line is there are people in this City that are very concerned about crime and they are very fearful about crime and that's all we are trying to do here; we are not trying to make the Chief look bad, I don't care about making the Manager look bad on this item. I care about making sure that the people that live here that work here, that go to school here feel like this is a safe place and they don't feel that way.

Commissioner Anderson: Its true and when I get told to be quiet I feel really not good about being a colleague here with you all.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: How about being told that you two are the only ones interested in crime, I mean come on, are you kidding me?

Commissioner Anderson: I didn't say that, and you know what....

Commissioner Cabrera: I said that, I said that.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'm very concerned.

Commissioner Anderson: But you know the fact is that we are not all getting along here.

Commissioner Cabrera: But I said that and I don't take it back, it's exactly how I feel. God forbid I should disagree with one of you.

Mayor Cason: Look, I think it's very important that you came today to give us some facts because obviously there are people – if you are robbed it's a crime wave, people are very, very emotional and they should be and they should feel hurt and they should feel violated, but I think the point is this is an opportunity for us to put some figures that come from you, we didn't make these up. Did anybody tell you to make these figures up?

Police Chief Masington: No sir.

Mayor Cason: OK. So my point is you are giving us your best professional advice, information about trends, which I think are important for the citizens to know, doesn't mean people are not going to be fearful, but – you are saying crime is down.

Police Chief Masington: We certainly don't want people to be fearful. My goal today was to show you that there is no cause for alarm because we don't have something that is showing us that there is any risk that is out of the ordinary, that people should be concerned about. I care about the people of our City and their emotions. Most of the men and women in my department are passionate about their jobs, that's why we do what we do. Nobody wants to see the crime end more than we do. So we are making every effort that we can to make people live in a world that they can feel that they are comfortable. In fact, the item that I think is coming up may yield even more comfort because it's yet another way we are looking to direct resources to combat things that we are challenged with and use data, we use intelligence gathering and we are ever changing to be better at protecting the people in our community.

Mayor Cason: Citizens that would like to get the statistics where should they go to get the statistics?

Police Chief Masington: They should call our general number (305) 442-1600, ask for the records section and then make a public records request we provide.

City Manager Salerno: Mayor can I add something?

Mayor Cason: Yes please.

City Manager Salerno: I think what you are hearing today from the Chief is that this is a safe community, this is a very safe community, but that doesn't change the fact that if you are a victim of crime that is personal to you, it is a 100 percent increase in crime to you. The data indicates that the trend – there is no long term trend occurring that indicates crime is on the rise or that we are having a crime wave or anything of the sort, correct Chief?

Police Chief Masington: That's correct.

City Manager Salerno: We are fairly fortunate in this community, very fortunate because to say that it's not about walking on the street; most communities that is the measure of whether it is safe to live in their community, that is the measure in most communities is the ability for your personal safety to walk on streets. We are very fortunate here because we use a different standard in Coral Gables, our goal we would like to be able to eliminate all crime, but that's not realistic. As long as there are criminals, OK, there is going to be crime, and no Police Department, no agency is possible or capable of eliminating all crime. So I want to change the scale of the dialogue, we are already so fortunate that you can walk on any street in Coral Gables any day, any time of day or night and you can feel safe, that doesn't mean there is no crime in the City. As you've seen going back to 2007 there are burglaries in the range of 300, 350 to 500, you know that might only be the change in one burglary in a week to make that difference. Crime occurs, so should you be more concerned now based upon anything that is happening in this community? I think what you have seen here tonight is the indication is no. This is a safe community and frankly to fuel scare tactics this does not diminish any single resident, they've got the right to be concerned if their home was burglarized, to them its 100 percent increase in crime, that's not doing that, but to use scare tactics for any sort of gain is not in my opinion being a good public servant.

Mayor Cason: I think we...

City Manager Salerno: I'll repeat that if it's hard for somebody to get that.

Mayor Cason: People get very emotional about this.

City Manager Salerno: I'm not doing a concern of Vice Mayor Kerdyk's.

Commissioner Cabrera: If a staff person making a comment about something being a scare tactic, there comes a point in time that you've got to stop this. I can disagree with Kerdyk and Kerdyk can disagree with me, but we are peers, he is not our peer, and for us to say this is scare tactics is totally inappropriate.

City Manager Salerno: Commissioner, we fight crime, Commissioner excuse me...

Commissioner Cabrera: I'm not interested in what you have to say so don't even speak to me.

Mayor Cason: Pat let me finish this. There are people that are scared when you are robbed, I can understand that, I'm not sure what we can do about it, how to make them less scared when the facts that you presented there is less crime the trend is down. What can we do about their fear? What do you propose we do?

Commissioner Anderson: I understand that there is a task force, is that correct?

Police Chief Masington: Yes. I think what you are referring to is a Burglary Task Force.

Commissioner Anderson: Right, right – OK, let me follow up...how many arrest have been made on that task force?- how many arrests?

Police Chief Masington: I don't know if I have that number in my head.

Commissioner Anderson: OK. How much money in overtime are we spending?- how much of people time are we spending on that task force as compared to the results of the burglary, of the task force? I want numbers to that, I'd like that please. You can get that to me later that's fine.

Police Chief Masington: But again, if you look at the slide that you have on residential burglaries you'll see in the last two and-a-half or three months we've actually really plummeted, so that tells me that the efforts of the men and women that are assigned...

Commissioner Anderson: But Scott, Chief that's not my question though. I'm asking of the task force that's formed how many arrests have been made?- and you can get it to me later, and how much money has been budgeted or have we gone overtime on that particular task force?- because I want to know is it working?- are we getting the arrests that we want?- because we all want people who do wrong to get arrested.

Police Chief Masington: You are really asking a lot of questions in one and what I mean by that is it's not all on overtime because we modify people's work schedules, we direct our resources as we feel is necessary. We also make some quality arrests; we made an arrest recently the task force made it, but it was really about a case that was put together by a detective that took about 7 months, so it's very hard to really answer specific – you can't say a task force itself did anything...?

Commissioner Anderson: I got these questions from a person in law enforcement, so I'm just asking.

Commissioner Quesada: Is it because there are a number of different officers that may work on one incident?

Police Chief Masington: Of course. A detective gathers, puts a case together so as to develop intelligence and provides that information to men and women in the field, so it could be a random officer not somebody assigned to the task force that makes a Presidential burglary arrest.

Commissioner Quesada: Got it, but the work may have come from the task force or the work may have come from the detective.

Police Chief Masington: Of course. And task forces you know it's a terminology that's used frequently in law enforcement, but I want to let you all know that we have task forces of all different types, all different sizes for all different things. Every year this time of year when shopping is on the rise we put men and women out in different environments than we would in July, because we know that more people are shopping. We do things – we call them task forces an easy phrase to use, we direct our resources where they are mostly needed and we try to address all types of crimes all the time.

Commissioner Quesada: Chief if I can just comment quickly. I just want to say I've never received the numbers before, this is the first time I'm looking at it today, and I feel better after looking at the numbers because we were all copied on a few different e-mails that we got from residents related to certain issues that were going on and you and I had had a conversation specifically related to one or two e-mails that one resident was saying. You told me that they had actually caught the person who was involved in that incident. Thank you for following up with that; but this does make me feel better, I mean I understand what Commissioner Anderson and Cabrera are saying as far as maybe the perception isn't there. Now I have a different perspective; my wife is a prosecutor, she is with the State Attorney's office and she deals with murders, rapes and attempted murders, so she doesn't deal much with Coral Gables, but she has in the past, and she tells me that the big aspect is the victim witness coordinator that every City has and you mentioned her earlier, and I've got to know her, my wife has worked with her and she says that she is spectacular, she is great. I don't know if you guys have dealt with her.

Commissioner Anderson: A wonderful resource...

Commissioner Quesada: Yes, it's a wonderful resource, but...

Commissioner Anderson:...and she is a wonderful person as well.

Commissioner Quesada: And I don't know if maybe perception or that feeling we all know, look if I got something stolen from my car or my house I'd be extremely upset and I'd be extremely worried, I think everyone agrees with that, and I think we all agree that crime is one of the most important issues in the City for us. So are there any ideas that you have had or that you think may be going forward to help with the perception issue, because from what you said the main concern that we've got is the residential burglaries. You just mentioned the last three months there has been a drop, we saw it on the slide, but maybe the perception for some people still isn't there, is there anything you recommend that we should be doing to help with that perception?

Police Chief Masington: I will certainly – this type of information could be provided to you at any time, so it may be beneficial to make sure that you are provided the tools that you need so you can speak to your constituents in an effective manner. We are going to talk a little bit going forward today about what some of our efforts are intended to be, but there is a boundary too with

how much we tell because some of our efforts include not revealing what we are doing and where we are and why we are there because we are trying to put cases together and to combat different types of crime, but we are available. A lot of what I'm hearing merely may be a breakdown of communication; we are certainly be available to discuss cases with our residents, I'm available, there are staff members that are available. Some of what I'm hearing is people are personally affected that's a reality, people are personally affected, but again my goal today is to demonstrate that this is a safe community, it's a safe community and if we reinforce that dialogue I think it will be very successful.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you very much.

[End: 3:15:52 p.m.]