

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-3
September 13, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Sustainability Specialist, Matt Anderson

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item I-3 [11:37:22 a.m.]

Sea Level Rise Update

Mayor Cason: Let's do I-3 right now.

City Attorney Leen: Yes. So Mr. Mayor, I-3 is the update regarding the sea level rise report. Mayor Cason several months ago, maybe even more than that now, almost a year ago, raised the issue of wanting to assemble a comprehensive sea level rise report that would address sea level rise from a legal, policy and other perspective, basically every sort of perspective you could think of, going for right now, what are something we can start thinking of doing and going into decades into the future. We know that sea level rise is occurring and we want to make sure that the City is prepared. So what my office did was in conjunction with the City Manager's office, and particularly Peter Iglesias who reviewed the report, Matt Anderson, who works on sustainability matters for the City reviewed the report, and we had Abby Corbit who is an attorney who at this point is one of the leading people in this area based on the report that she has

created for you, and then we've had the Mayor look at it, of course, to make sure that it met his needs and goals of what he wanted to achieve through this report. So the reason why it's on this agenda today is, I'm just letting you know that each of you Commissioners are going to be receiving a copy, a draft copy of this report. What I would like you to do is give me any comments directly, give them directly to me, because of Sunshine I can't obviously assemble your comments or anything like that, it will come up at the next meeting, at the next City Commission meeting where the report is presented, but these comments, these suggestions will be helpful to me and to Ms. Corbit in finalizing the report, and making sure that we've met all of the goals that you have for this report. Now the report itself, I want to be very clear, is not a law, it's not changing anything at this moment, it's a plan, it's an idea, it's a concept that will be for Coral Gables and the Mayor has indicated for other cities throughout Florida and the United States; and then what's going to happen is at the next meeting the report is going to be presented to you, any comments can be accepted, and then the Commission would, we hope, accept the report. At that point, the report is going to be published and we are going to take it to a conference occurring, the four county conference in Palm Beach County and we are going to present, we are hoping a poster related to this report, so that other cities can benefit from it. If I can just provide a little bit of commentary, I think it's extremely forward looking plan for our City and I do think in the decades to come it will put people on notice, and give them an idea of what is to come and the different legal changes that could occur as sea level rise occurs. I think it's one of the best things that we could possibly do.

Mayor Cason: It's very unique. I think there are not many cities that have this. I know there were some other conferences that I attended, people wanted something like this, we will now have it and it will be available for other cities, they won't have to replicate what we've done and I think it's a model that can be used for a lot of cities, but it lays out things that we need to be thinking about over the coming decades. It will have to be, obviously, updated every number of years as case law changes, but it's a very well done roadmap that I think will continue to put us in the lead on looking at this issue around the country.

City Attorney Leen: Yes – and even though initially it is the Mayor's report, I just want to also state, I know the Mayor will want me to state this, the Commission has been incredibly supportive of this effort and I know Commissioner Keon had, we had a number of seminars and discussions on sea level rise that you sponsored. I know that individual Commissioners had been very supportive of legislation and items on the environment; I know Commissioner Lago has several that he's done, and each of you have been very supportive of that. So, it's really a Commission effort, but I do know that this is very close to the heart of the Mayor, and I just wanted to let him know that we are bringing it back in two weeks and that you will have the opportunity to vote on it.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Will we include or do you include some of the discussions that we had between the University of Miami and FIU?

Mayor Cason: Yes – not only that, but we’ve had people even from Alaska, lawyers in Alaska that have actually been involved in a retreat that have all kinds of legal issues, so a lot of input from Peter and from – and it will serve as a vehicle for discussion for a lot of organizations.

Commissioner Keon: I thought the one seminar that we had where the attorney from FIU spoke was particularly pertinent, very, very good. He was a very good speaker in the issues and the things that he brought up as an attorney.

Mayor Cason: I think you’ll find this as extremely detailed, very far reaching, very comprehensive and it will be a great product that we would like to be associated with this. Anyway, we’ll get it next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

City Attorney Leen: A copy of a draft will be provided to each of you either today or tomorrow. Take a look at it and we’ll make sure any of those conversations you’d like included let us know as soon as possible, we do have time to finalize it. Anyway, it will be coming in two weeks. Madam Manager.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Commissioner Keon, the FIU series, not only did CGTV televise it, we still have those, but Abby Corbit was in the audience taking notes during it, so I’m sure it has influenced the report.

Commissioner Keon: I thought that the attorney presentation was particularly interesting.

Mr. Anderson: And I can add that we have, as is mentioned in the report, the outreach that we’ve done so far and it’s all up on the website, our sea level rise web page as well, which we’ve been sharing with the community and keeping the community informed on all the great work that we are doing, including this legal paper as well.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Matt for the record, can you identify yourself. Also, I'm sure the Commission will also ask about the Board that you work with, and if they can also see the draft.

Mr. Anderson: Matt Anderson, Sustainability Specialist with the City of Coral Gables, and yes, we'll be sharing this, once the draft has been completed, we can share this with our Sustainability Advisory Board, as well for any input that they want to put in.

City Attorney Leen: That's a great idea. So, I'll be giving you a copy to give to each of them individually.

Mr. Anderson: Yes.

City Attorney Leen: And have them give any comments individually to you.

Mr. Anderson: OK.

[End: 11:44:08 a.m.]