

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-2
August 24, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Jackson "Rip" Holmes

Agenda Item I-2 [3:25 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation of the Chief Procurement Officer to award the Mobility HUB Preconstruction & Construction CRM Services contract RFQ 2021-010 to The Weitz Company, LLC., the highest ranked responsive-responsible proposer, pursuant to Section 2-763 of the Procurement Code entitled "Contract Award".

Mayor Lago: I want to move on to item I-2. It's a City Manager's item.

City Attorney Ramos: Item I-2 is a resolution of the City Commission accepting the recommendation of the Chief Procurement Officer to award the Mobility HUB Preconstruction & Construction CRM Services contract RFQ 2021-010 to The Weitz Company, LLC., the highest ranked responsive-responsible proposer, pursuant to Section 2-763 of the Procurement Code.

Assistant Finance Director Walker: Can you hear me?

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, we have Celeste Walker that's going to be presenting on Zoom.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Celeste, good afternoon.

Assistant Finance Director Walker: Good afternoon. Can everyone hear me?

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am. The floor is yours.

Assistant Finance Director Walker: Okay. As stated before, this was a competitive RFQ that was issued so we could engage a contractor for the pre-construction and the actual CMR services for the Mobility HUB. We had seven proposers, and we had two different phases of the evaluation. We had a pre-orals and post-oral evaluations. Out of both phases of the evaluations, The Weitz Company ranked first, not only in ranking, but also points. The committee recommended them to move forward for the award. They felt like that they were qualified, had the experienced team and would be recommended for the services. So, at this point, we would like to move the agenda item forth.

Mayor Lago: Okay, quick question before the Manager -- before we move forward. Did we --? I know that we've -- Can you refresh my memory from the last meeting that we had when we talked about this issue?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes. This is for the initial construction management phase of this project, which will deal with constructability and cost.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: And then when the project is about two-thirds complete with construction documents, then we'll get the -- then we will -- we -- at that point, we would work with Weitz to provide a guaranteed maximum price. If at that time we cannot agree to something, then we would go with the -- with number two. So, this is for this portion to make sure that -- we are under design right now. We are finishing the programming, so it's kind of essential that we get involved in constructability and cost now to make sure that the project is on budget and on time.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Ramos: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: After reviewing the documents, you're fine with everything in regards to the procurement, everything is fine?

City Attorney Ramos: Our office doesn't have any concerns, and as said, no protest was filed.

Mayor Lago: Because I want to make sure -- this is a pretty significant project, and I want to make sure everything is as clean as possible. If my colleagues do not have any other questions or any other concerns in regards to this process, I will entertain a motion.

Vice Mayor Mena: I just had a quick note. This -- and I spoke to -- this is for the Mobility HUB, right?

City Manager Iglesias: Mobility HUB, yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay. And I spoke to the Manager, and we met with Diana. Well, I met with Diana and the Manager about this, but I've asked them to basically prepare a report that goes back -- you know, we had the proposal that we discussed, now I guess, two years ago, and there's this deadline to get this project started because otherwise there's this clause that triggers the agreement that we signed and...

Mayor Lago: I think it -- but I think it's important that -- and I know we've mentioned it a thousand times, but why don't you explain just in 15 seconds why we're under the gun here? Or if not you, the Manager; somebody's got to explain it. Because I want to put it on the record for this conversation.

Vice Mayor Mena: Well, in a nutshell, the resolution -- I don't know if it was a resolution or not, but whatever we passed at the time...

City Attorney Ramos: It was.

Vice Mayor Mena: Was that we would commence construction on a parking garage in this location, and if we didn't, that the agreement that -- or the proposal that was being discussed at a time would come into effect, which would effectively trigger, you know, certain terms that were laid out in detail, which I don't have at the tip of my tongue.

City Attorney Ramos: And a specific project, which the Commission did...

Vice Mayor Mena: But it was basically where the proposed -- the applicant or the proposer at the time would pay to build a garage for us. They would get development rights to build on top of that garage and so on and so forth. There was a lot of discussion about it at the time. What I'd like at least the Manager's Office to -- and not today -- but to send us a report on because I think it's important so that we can all sort of have the peace of mind and be able to answer the question

should it arise, is we've decided to proceed with building this ourselves. You know, at the time back then, we thought that was the best approach, and we continue to think that's the best approach, but we should -- given the change in the numbers, we should have some sort of report from the Manager's Office and from Diana that just lays out, "Look, even though the numbers for this project have changed over the last however many months, two years, whatever it is, it's a different project that's conceptualized." It's a Mobility HUB instead of just a parking garage. The budget is -- give or take -- \$40 million. At the time, I think it was 31 or 32.

City Manager Iglesias: 32.

Vice Mayor Mena: 32. I just want you to come back to us with a report similar to what you gave us then. And this is what I went over with Diana and Peter, that basically just said, "Look, if you go with Option A, here's what it looks like financially." We know what it looks like from a development perspective -- right? -- which is a whole other issue like on its own.

Mayor Lago: Where's the cost of money right now? What are we borrowing?

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Mayor Lago: How much is it better than it was two years ago?

Vice Mayor Mena: Correct.

Mayor Lago: So, we can kind of...

Vice Mayor Mena: Just bring it forward. The analysis we did at the time, just bring it forward. And I don't want to slow down in any way -- let me be clear about that -- what you're doing right now because the last thing I want is for you to not meet the existing deadline.

City Manager Iglesias: September 30.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right. But I think at the -- while you're doing that, I think it would be helpful -- and I did this with Diana sort of going off the old version. She was kind of -- during our meeting, kind of updating certain things. And she's going to update it in more detail and get -- provide it to you guys so that you can kind of see -- it was basically a graph of the cost of the bonds that we would need to take out for this versus how much it would cost if somebody else built it and so on and so forth.

Mayor Lago: And what we would see more preferential returns if we did it ourselves, and what we could see in regards to the rates, where do we see the rates in two years, in five years, or in ten.

Vice Mayor Mena: You know, give us the full picture, exactly. Because I just think it's important for us to have that. I think...

Mayor Lago: I'm with you.

City Manager Iglesias: And we're moving to our Coral Gables Parking Authority, which would be -- as time goes on, we would have two garages, looking at the Minorca Garage, which is a public safety initiative (INAUDIBLE) Garage 1. As mobility changes, this parking garage will change with it. And then maybe we can look at our other parking garages as different projects, maybe P3s, things like this, bring back mixed use. Whereas in that Coral Gables Parking Authority, we want to mobilize existing parking. We have a lot of parking in a lot of buildings that can't be used for anything else. It's that seven-foot height. You can't use it for anything else. So, this initiates that new Coral Gables Parking Authority, and where we're moving in the next -- it's not that long, it's 10 to 15 years. But we are building buildings now the last 50, so that's what we're looking forward to. And using a lot of the parking that can't be used for anything else, using that as a -- as using the private and public parking together in that Coral Gables Parking Authority.

Vice Mayor Mena: And look, this -- I want to be clear. This is not a purely financial decision, alright. The finances are part of the decision. There may be somebody who feels like whatever the financial picture looks like, the trade-off of that much more development isn't worth it. That's fine. Anybody is entitled to that opinion, but I think you need to have the information at your disposal to be able to formulate and move forward. So, I still want to move forward with this today. Again, I'm in favor. I want us to keep moving forward. I think we need to do that and be responsible about the deadline, but I also think it's important that we get that financial picture so that we can...

City Manager Iglesias: And Vice Mayor, we'll be happy to provide that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Commissioner?

Commissioner Anderson: Just a couple comments, and it's really questions here to staff. Because at the time the bids were considered, you didn't have the input from the Chamber. And the Chamber has written a very nice letter on August 6 emphasizing the fact that one of the bidders, Kaufman Lynn, reached out to the Chamber, reached out to the business community, and wanted their input from the very beginning, and that the Chamber was impressed by their plan. With this additional fact weighing in on this, I think this is, you know, warranting some discussion at this point.

City Manager Iglesias: Well, let me say, Commissioner, I'm certainly impressed by that, but I'm also impressed by results. And Weitz Construction went through the full procurement. Weitz Construction provide -- worked with us in the Public Safety Building under very difficult circumstances. We built that building under a pandemic, and we did not pay Mr. Codina one penny in late fees. So, there is a previous record. Even with that previous record, we decided to go to

full procurement. And this went to the full -- again, the full procurement process, and they came in number one. And that's what I'm looking at.

Mayor Lago: You know, and again, I've been in this business for a decent amount of time. There's people that have a lot more experience than myself. Weitz, Kaufman Lynn, exceptional contractors, exceptional. They do some of the best work not only in Miami-Dade County, but throughout the world, so we'll be blessed to have any of those two individuals to do the work here. What I'm concerned about when we do any procurement is the process, is the limitation of litigation and exposure to our community, to our staff. So, if staff feels comfortable with this and there isn't a reason -- and our City Attorney feels comfortable, and our Manager feels comfortable, and my colleagues feel comfortable in regards to Weitz -- the reason why we pushed off this decision was because I wanted to make sure that every t was crossed and every i was dotted. And if they can't give me one reason why we shouldn't move forward and there wasn't a protest -- and I have protested bids before in public projects where there has been a reason to protest, where I have shown that the package was not properly introduced or the bond was missing for the entity that came in first place, or there was some sort of funny business in the process. If we don't have that here, I'm ready to move forward. If anybody can prove to me that Weitz is not capable and that we should use another contractor, then I'll have that conversation, just like I've had that conversation here before, where I've gotten rid of contractors and brought in other contractors based on their litigation history, based on the fact that the procurement process was flawed. We're all humans. We make mistakes. I make mistakes every hour. So, I want to make sure that if there isn't one here, we could move forward. Because like Vice Mayor Mena mentioned before -- and asked that it was put on the record -- this project is going to be under an immense amount of scrutiny, not only because of the project -- if you thought the Public Safety Building was difficult -- people think "How can a parking garage be difficult?" It's not a difficult construction project. But this -- we're under an immense amount of timeframe, deadlines, and no one has ever built a world-class parking garage like you're about to see be built in the City of Coral Gables. So, I want to make sure that if everybody's fine, we move forward with this today or we have -- or we continue having a discussion.

City Manager Iglesias: And Mayor, you said something very important, that we had an excellent procurement. We have an excellent number two. This was done very, very well. I think the procurement process was exceptional. And the fact that we've got a number of excellent companies just makes my job easier.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, you're...

Commissioner Fors: Someone has to win; someone has to lose, right?

Commissioner Menendez: If I may, just to piggyback on some of the comments. First off, I am very interested in what Vice Mayor Mena said would be a comparative analysis.

Mayor Lago: It's a good cheat sheet for you, you could say.

Commissioner Menendez: Well, especially since Commissioner Anderson and I sort of jumped onto this -- what was it, in April? -- not that long ago, so it's good to get caught up to speed as to where things were and how we got here. The one question I do have: More or less, what year was it that the other alternative was bounced around? I would assume -- when was it?

Commissioner Anderson: A couple years ago.

Vice Mayor Mena: Pre-pandemic, I would imagine, right? It was '19, right?

Mayor Lago: March '19?

Vice Mayor Mena: March '19, yeah.

Commissioner Anderson: A couple years. I watched the debate.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah, so, you know, a lot has changed since then, so I think it's -- at the very least, it's important to get -- refresh the memories, and for some others, to get caught up to speed, so make the right decisions going forward. And I agree, we can't afford to slow down the process, especially if there are key deadlines coming up. But it's something we definitely -- I look forward to seeing. And I also agree -- I have no questions with the process, you know, the way we, you know, did the bids. You know, I think our staff is phenomenal, and the committee that was involved was, you know, excellent. The one thing I do want to acknowledge is we -- I should say -- honored Mark Trowbridge earlier today, and he's the one who signed that letter from the Chamber of Commerce. So, I -- you know, I appreciate the Chamber of Commerce chiming in, giving their thoughts in support. It's something that I think getting support is always important for all of us in whatever decisions we make. So, I would just want to acknowledge the Chamber for, you know, sharing with us their insight and their thoughts. But I'm ready to follow what my colleagues...

Commissioner Anderson: I'm ready to move it forward. I just want to make sure, since this was a new letter, that this was something that, you know, staff had considered.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, we have, Commissioner. And again, looking at past performance, looking at the procurement process, I think everything went extremely well. I'm very happy with this procurement, and we've got an excellent number two that I can rely on. And so, I think that we are very satisfied with the procurement and with the process itself.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think there were things about the other applicant submittal that the Chamber found valuable. What I would say is, it may not sway your ultimate decision; that's fine. But I would look at what aspects of the submission were important to them, and it should be something that we should keep in mind regardless as we move forward. You know, what are the things about it that persuaded the Chamber, and presumably, the business community about one applicant versus the other. Because I suspect there are things that can probably, you know, be considered,

and perhaps folded into whatever you end up doing. The last point I would make is -- only because I think I mentioned it last time -- the one thing that had been brought up that gave me a little bit of pause -- because again, I agree with exactly what the Mayor said. It's really about the process to me. The one -- and the process seems reasonable here. But the one thing that had given me a little bit of pause briefly the last time was the fact that the two members of the committee who were City staff members, if you kept -- tabulated their score, it ended up being a different result. But I've satisfied myself in asking the City Manager's Office and speaking to staff members that, you know, it really wasn't a major difference of opinion between the applicants. And so, therefore, I'm sort of inclined to let the scoring sit as it came out and allow the process to proceed because I thought the process was otherwise fair.

Mayor Lago: If I may...

City Manager Iglesias: We have an excellent number, and we have an excellent number two. Somebody has to win. That is...

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: As Commissioner Fors said. And -- but having an excellent number two makes my job easier.

Mayor Lago: And if I may, I just want to leave one comment. I want to put it on the record. And not that I need to tell you this, but I'm going to say it anyways. If number gets -- as we say in Cuban -- (COMMENT MADE IN SPANISH), get rid of them. Move them to the side. We need somebody -- I'm not saying they would -- but we need somebody who understands what we're trying to here, that they must be within budget, and we're not going to allow for change orders to happen. The plans are going to be the best plans under your watchful eye, and the ACM, and Suramy, and our very capable team that we have here. So, this is not to crush the City change order after change order after change order. They have a good relationship with the City. They

did a great job at the Public Safety Building. But we have a budget, and we expect them to adhere to that budget and do everything in their power to fight for the best deal for the City of Coral Gables. We have a lot of work forthcoming in the near future. And if for some reason we're incapable to come to a number in regards to profit and general conditions, please move forward. We have a great number two who's waiting in the wings. And I tell you that they would do a great job. I've never worked with them, but I've seen their buildings. And just like Weitz, they have an exceptional presence about themselves in this community.

City Manager Iglesias: I don't disagree with you, Mayor. And as I've said it very gently, it makes my job -- having a great number two makes my job easier.

Mayor Lago: Okay. We have one speaker. Thank you, Mr. Manager. We have one speaker.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir. Mr. Jackson "Rip" Holmes is on Zoom, and he would like to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Can we close the public comment? Thank you. Mr. Holmes, the floor is yours.

Jackson "Rip" Holmes: Thanks so much. I appreciate it. So, I missed -- first of all, I want to thank all of you for all of your work on this. As you know, this Mobility HUB will be abutting my property, and this is a true rescue for me. I haven't done all of my homework; you all have. And I salute you and I support you. I also support the reservations that you expressed, Mayor Lago, you know, make sure we have the best contractor. One thing I noticed, despite not having really done the homework I needed to do to render any conclusions, it seemed as though the number two has more experience doing parking garages than number one. But I hope -- I want to specifically thank you, Mayor Lago, and our former Commissioner, Pat Keon, for holding the line on our doing this ourselves. Mr. Mena's pointed out we have a deadline. I think that has to be our overriding concern. Let's meet that deadline because I think that a reversion back to the people

that wanted to do this would be a disaster. I could go off on that -- and I'll just mention one thing. Can you imagine an office building in the middle of Dadeland? I mean, they want to put an office building in the middle of our retail Miracle Mile. It's a disaster -- excuse me for saying that. And then one last item because I'm not quite sure what was said in the Chamber of Commerce thing, but I heard talk about other garages. I do believe and I assert for your consideration that with this mandatory remote parking part of this ordinance for Miracle Mile development, mandatory remote parking is a killer of retail. We need to preserve -- I assert for your consideration -- the 345 Andalusia existing parking garage for parking. Again, God bless you. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. So, I'll entertain a motion if there's no further comment.

Commissioner Anderson: I think I moved it already.

Mayor Lago: I'm sorry.

Commissioner Fors: Second.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you.