

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Non-Agenda Item**  
**February 23, 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**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Raquel Regalado, School Board Member**

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Non-Agenda Item [9:19:50 a.m.]

Mayor Cason: Although it's not on the agenda, Raquel Regalado is here. Raquel would you like to come up? She has some information she'd like to discuss with us.

Ms. Regalado: Thank you very much. Thank you for taking the time. Raquel Regalado, School Board Member, representing District 6. I had the opportunity to speak with most of you regarding this issue. I was talking to Craig, speaking of how great Craig is, I was talking to Craig over the weekend and I decided to pass by today and give you all an update on what's happening with West Lab. For those that are listening and watching, we've been working with the City of Coral Gables to change the way that public education has been offered to its residents for close to five years now. We started with a conversation when I was first elected six years ago to end controlled choice, and I know that it was difficult. I predicted that it would be difficult, but I think we got to a resolution that is beneficial for all the residents and right now for those that are listening, obviously at the end of the day we are going to be looking at it for the next two years, but I think even in this magnet application program there are a lot of parents that were very

comfortable with knowing which was their neighborhood school, and it was about time that we stopped explaining to people why Coral Gables was the only City that did not have neighborhood school choice. So I'm very happy with that outcome. When I presented that to this Board, one of the things I talked about was West Lab as another option. West Lab has been and remains Miami-Dade County's oldest magnet program. It really was the genesis of our choice programs here in Miami-Dade County, and I have said for years that we needed to change that and provide a neighborhood option for Coral Gables residents. Now organically a lot of the residents, a lot of the people that attend West Lab are near the area of Coral Gables, but we really wanted to create something that was more concrete and provide West Lab as a true option for Coral Gables residents. As you know, there was always an issue with the land directly adjacent to the School Board property because it was owned by the University of Miami. I can tell you that six years ago when I knocked on the doors of those residents, one of the first things they asked me about was, what was going to happen to the Lincoln Trail property?- and if the University of Miami was going to place housing there?- and I know that as Commissioners you deal with those questions also. So we started working on a plan to resolve that problem for the residents and also to update West Lab, and I think that where we are right now is a great place. As of today, Baptist Hospital has committed to \$20 million in order to build a parking lot at West Lab that will be used by the employees at Baptist. I had spent three years talking with the University of Miami; Baptist had been negotiating with the University of Miami for parking for a very long time. For those of you who travel that corridor you know that the lack of parking for Baptist creates a huge amount of traffic on U.S.-1 specifically for their programs that provide valet parking, because they have to go all the way around to park on the other side of U.S.-1. So I think that this plan will alleviate several things. Number one, it will alleviate the traffic congestion; number two, it will alleviate resident's fears as to what will happen to the UM property because we are going to split the parcel and provide programming for the residents, but also space for our kids to play that the residents can use on the weekend similar to what we do in our other schools, and hopefully also provide seats for Coral Gables residents. Where we are right now? Everyone is ready to go and we are hung up on this one issue of best efforts, which is what I wanted to talk about today, and I had the opportunity to talk to Craig about it. The issue right now is there is \$3 million that are going to go to Coral Gables seats. The price that the School Board gave was \$4.5 million, so Coral Gables is getting that at a discount. The School Board has not been informed as to who exactly is putting up the \$3 million, but that's not here not there, right. The key is that the City of Coral Gables through the Manager has requested best efforts for 25 percent of the remaining magnet seats. This was a request that was made when I did the MAST extension at Coral Gables, and I'm going to say now the same thing that I said then. The District cannot guarantee certain of the District-wide seats, that creates a legal issue for us and that's why Craig was talking about maybe using best efforts. My problem with that is, I'm running for Miami-Dade County Mayor, I have no idea who the Governor will name to replace me in District 6, nor how they will feel about West Lab or West Lab expansion. My concern is

that this may not happen if it's not done before I leave. Normally, it takes the School Board member about a year and-a-half to figure out how their district works, and I know that Baptist is very anxious to finalize this. I can tell you from the numbers, and I'm happy to provide them to this body. From Key Biscayne, even though Key Biscayne asked us for 25, more than 25 had gotten seats from the general magnet. It just happens organically. People have a tendency to apply to the magnet nearest them, and I don't think that it will be a problem. What I don't want to happen is to have this point issue hold up this entire project. I can guarantee that if we promote it, and I'm happy to have the District help in the promoting in this magnet for Coral Gables residents, I think that that's something that we can do without tying the District to a 25 percent, but we can easily promote it within Coral Gables residents. We can send out e-mails, we can send out calls, we can focus on the neighborhood schools and having them apply for the magnet program, but that's really the best that I can do. I wish that I could do 25 best efforts, I really wish I could, but legally what's going to happen is then every single magnet in every area is going to ask for the same, and we are going to find ourselves up against a lawsuit regarding our access to magnet programs. We've had this issue in the past when we tried to change the requirements for magnets, because magnets are regulated by federal law also, and we have to provide access. So even the carving out of the seats has been something that has been challenging, but we have been able to uphold and that's why I offered it as a solution to this problem. So, I'm happy to respond to any questions about West Lab, where we are in the West Lab process and also any other issues. I know that some issues have come up about Coral Gables Prep and the roof, I'm happy to talk about that, because we are working on that. But at the end of the day, we do our construction in the summer. Right now we have missed the window, which means that West Lab will not be under construction for this summer. I really wanted it to happen this summer, because I wanted to start the process. We may be able to start some of the parking this summer, but we are not going to be able to tear down the building and build a new building until next summer, so this keeps getting pushed out, which is what I don't want. I really want this to be a viable option for Coral Gables residents as soon as possible, and I definitely want it to be a viable option before we get to the end of controlled choice, because I think that this will impact the conversation of controlled choice and if we wait too long then we are going to have an artificial data in terms of how residents feel about controlled choice, if West Lab is not online yet.

Mayor Cason: What percent of the students there now are Coral Gables residents, West Lab?

Ms. Regalado: We talked about these numbers earlier on. I think its 30-something percent.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Its 18 percent.

Ms. Regalado: 18 – OK. 18, the other ones are in like Little Gables and some other areas. West Lab is interesting in that they weren't part of the digital magnet process. As we talked about this, when we started this conversation about a year-and-a-half ago, the parents just lined up outside and that was what they sort of did to apply for the magnet, so we had people camping out for 24 hours, which is not the normal way that you promote a magnet and that's one of the things that we have to change about the West Lab application process. So I think that the 18 percent is just word of mouth, but if Coral Gables residents knew that this was a viable option a lot more would be attending. The other big issue with Coral Gables residents and West Lab has been that's it's not a K-8, that it ends in fifth grade and we have a middle school problem. A lot of Coral Gables residents, and this was part of the issue with the University of Miami, are not interested in Ponce as an option, so West Lab sort of back them into Ponce as a middle school option. So West Lab being a K-8, I think will change the numbers in the interest dramatically.

Commissioner Lago: I think what you are seeing a lot too, and I've met with the teachers and the principal and also some of the residents who their children go to school, one of the big issues that they are having is that they don't want their children to go to three and four different schools in their lifetime. So that's why they are pushing more importantly for the K through 8, perfect opportunity to jump from eighth grade to high school.

Ms. Regalado: The K-8 is approved and it's part of this expansion. We are adding sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, so I think that that completely changes the dynamic of the school and the appeal. And we've talked about this, not just in terms of accessibility to parents and convenience you know, but also the continuity. There is a lot to be said about the parochial model and parents that are interested in the parochial model and not having to change students.

Commissioner Lago: I have a few other issues I wanted to discuss in reference to the fact that I appreciate the update and I'm extremely grateful for it, but I'm not really ready to discuss anything today until I've have a serious discussion, at least one public meeting with the residents. I've spoken to the residents, walking door-to-door, my wife uses that piece of property all the time, as much as this community does, but I think what I think we need to have is, and I talked to the Manager about this and I was just waiting for to have some sort of public discussion when we are ready, when the University of Miami, Baptist, the School Board and the City of Coral Gables is ready to have all hands on deck and give some sort of presentation which states, these are the options that we are analyzing. Now residents please provide us with your concerns, your ideas because we may be looking at ideas that may not encompass what the residents in that area want, that's just my opinion. Again, if my colleagues have a different opinion, as always I respect your opinions, but I think we need to be a little bit, pump the breaks a little bit.

Commissioner Slesnick: I agree too. This is really a complicated issue and I'm not sure the television audience, we understand the problems here. What you are talking about and maybe the City Manager might mention why we are talking about adding extra grades and having the City fund.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I know the other Commissioners want to talk too. This is a very complicated issue. Your City is absolutely approaching it in good faith and what is best for the neighborhood, what is best for the larger community and what is best for public schools. We are working with Baptist, with the University of Miami, with the School District, we will continue to do that, but at the same time this is a school within a single family neighborhood. We have to make sure that they are well attended to as well. I wrote down and I so appreciate the School Board member attending. I did not realize that this issue was coming up when Craig and I talked about having it on the agenda for the update. I think the concept that Commission Lago is talking about – you know we had a Town Hall meeting where 300 came up. It's good when we have additional information that we are waiting for that we repeat that and expand it to the full Coral Gables community, and at that point we will have all of the information provided, so that our goal has always been to have it be a five-way win. A great win for the City of Coral Gables generally and their families, a great win for the School District because you have said many times that we believe in the school system, the public school system, and it's your desire to bring more families into that school system, a good deal for the University of Miami. We are the ones that are negotiating with the University of Miami on the future of Billy Lincoln property, so that it can be open space for your community, one of your top priorities; and then also an appropriate deal for Baptist. Baptist is a commercial operation; the presence of a garage on that site in that area requires some community benefit that the City will bring. Craig Leen has talked about a balancing of interest and then the win for the neighborhood that is right across the street. So our approach has been, let's find that five-way win that works for everyone, and most particularly the families in the public school system. You all have been strong supporters of not only K through 8, but pre-K through 8, and even if there is an opportunity with the University of Miami to expand that on the younger side, if possible. So it is a very complicated, but critically important discussion and we look forward to that public forum when the Commission chooses to schedule it.

City Attorney Leen: May I add one thing to what the City Manager said. There is a long legal process here. This is just at the beginning, because we have to get the best possible deal for the City, but then it has to go through – there would be hearings related to land use issues, there will be hearings related to your approval. You are not bound to any of that, you have to make a decision and hear from the residents. I know that the City Manager cares deeply about the residents' views, so do I. The main issue here just so you know, Ms. Regalado, is that and I mentioned this right at the beginning with the City Manager, before she even presents this to you

is that she has to be comfortable that a balancing of interest has occurred, because the City is not going to be – the City has to basically in applying its land use regulations, the City has to ensure that the residents are getting value, and it can't just be value we pay for. It also has to be value that comes from basically this 25 percent issue. Now the best efforts language was a proposed, by the way it was just talked about, it was not approved by anyone, but basically the City's view was before we could even propose this we would need to have 25 percent certain and the School Board didn't have the same view. So this was a proposed compromise and I guess, ultimately I'm not a policy maker. I want you to understand the context of the legal aspect of it, because we are trying to put this in a way that you could approve if you wished, but ultimately it's up to you, but we need something like that in order to be able to even propose it under our Code.

Ms. Regalado: And again, I understand the Manager's point and I couldn't agree with Commission Lago and Commissioner Slesnick more. I think that we should have a public meeting, there's going to be several public meetings before the end of this. My point is, I started this conversation with the University of Miami five and-a-half years ago, and I know you weren't the Manager, but understand that this has been in the works a long time. There were several options that were considered. We've gone through, we have a new President now, we are having the conversation all over again. I have held off the bond work for this school because once I spend that money I can't tear that school down, so I have put fixing that school on hold and we are getting to a point at the District where we have to complete the bond promises that we make. There is a timing issue; we've been talking about it for a long time. My understanding from the School District is that the one hang up is the 25 percent. I personally negotiated this with Baptist. I've spoken with the University of Miami about it, you know, and of course ultimately we have to take it to the residents, but the way that these things work with so many parties and so many interest is, people have to decide what's the deal-breaker, right, and if there is a deal-breaker here that we cannot agree to, then it never goes to the residents, OK, that's the reality of this. What will happen is, I will sign off, they'll fix the bond – the bond money will go out to West Lab, we'll patch up West Lab and we'll move onto another school. I have really tried to ensure that this is a great project. I really do believe that we could do so much more with West Lab. The University of Miami in terms of the pre-K, I have been speaking to them about that for five and-a-half years. We have a compact with West Lab that they have ignored for decades, so I would love to see the University of Miami engage more with West Lab, but that really hasn't happened. Now the residents have been concerned about that parcel for a very long time. Once I fix the school it will be another 25 years before this conversation is had again at the School District, and I have been very honest with people about that. We got the...expansion, I'm happy to work with the residents, but there comes a point where I have to do my job as a School Board member, and as much as I want to do a public-private and I want to bring in money and I want to ensure that there is a benefit here to everyone, we have a timing issue, and that's my only point. Of course, we are going to have public meetings, of course the residents will be able to weigh in,



that's part of this process. This has to go before my Board, this has to go before Baptist, this has to go before your Board, there are zoning issues, we have to look at the traffic. We've talked about this all internally. My point is, we are running out of time, and I know I said that like a year and-a-half ago, but now we are really running out of time. Whatever you guys need to do to talk internally, obviously you can only do in the Sunshine, which is why I'm here. If you want to have a special meeting to talk about West Lab, if you want to bring in the partners, so that we can talk about it. As a School Board member, I have an obligation to the students that are already there and we already lost a summer, so I have to fix it at some point, and if we are not going to do this with Baptist, then Baptist needs to know, right, because Baptist has a parking crisis and they need to find another solution, if this is not a viable solution then we need to cut them loose, right? That was my point. I understand your point about the 25 percent. I'm telling you that legally it's going to be very difficult for me to do it. I think the better way to do that is to have as part of this MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) that the School District is going to promote parents applying Coral Gables that were going to go out, I mean you have my commitment that that we can do. It's just very difficult for me to say, you are going to have the Coral Gables seats and then on top of that you are going to have 25 percent of the overall pool because we've never done that. I have pushed the envelope on these things. When I brought the expansion of MAST Academy, everyone said that it couldn't be done. It's had a tremendous impact on the property values of Key Biscayne, everyone is very happy with it. District 6 is the only district that has these public-private partnerships. Sadly, other Board members find this a little too complicated to do, but I really believe that the future of our School System is on these types of partnerships. Now we are finally doing one in Doral because there is such a need, but this is not an easy thing for government to do. You guys know that it's a lot easier to stay with the status quo, and the push-back that I'm getting in terms of the status quo is, pull the trigger on the bond, fix West Lab and move onto your next school. So, I'm just being honest about that. You know, I've put in five and-a-half years on this, I think it's a great project. I think it's something that the residents will appreciate. I've spoken to the residents that live across the street; they want to put this to bed. You know, no one is ever going to be 100 percent happy with the outcome. I hope you learned that through the controlled choice. One of the things that I talked to you guys about when we were going through that process is, what I have learned as a School Board member is, people feel strongly about their children, it's a very emotional issue and you'll never have 100 percent agreement on an issue because there is always someone that gets left out, that's the nature of compromise. But I think that this would be great for Coral Gables, it would be sad to see it fall apart, and I hope that you can make it a priority because to your point Commissioner Lago, there are still a lot of meetings, there are still a lot of things that have to be done, but we have to decide what the deal-breakers are. I think that, you know, Baptist is on board, University of Miami is on board, and my concern is that if we keep throwing stuff into this, it's just going to fall apart and I'm going to have to make the difficult decision of just fixing West Lab and moving on.

Mayor Cason: Any other questions?

Commissioner Keon: I do have one. Thank you for coming this morning.

Ms. Regalado: No, my pleasure.

Commissioner Keon: Is the application process for West Lab now on the digital magnet program or is it still...

Ms. Regalado: It's on the digital magnet program.

Commissioner Keon: It is on the digital magnet program. So when do they apply for...?

Ms. Regalado: The application deadline was January 15<sup>th</sup> for all magnets.

Commissioner Keon: Right – January 15<sup>th</sup> and then when are they notified?

Ms. Regalado: About a month they'll get their letters.

Commissioner Keon: So by this time.

Ms. Regalado: Yes in March they'll get their letters. But again, that's something that we can help promote through Coral Gables and that's just sitting down logistically talking about how you want to do that. We are happy to do it, have the District come out, if you want to do a meeting right before the magnet deadline and then have the District come out and talk about the magnet. If you want us to blast parents in certain zip codes with the information specifically about West Lab. We have a very complex system of reaching out to parents, we do it by robo-call, we do it by text, we do it by e-mail, we can find them. So it's just a matter of putting in the MOU that there is going to be a push to do that for this particular school. That's something that we can do that's not complicated. Other municipalities have not asked us to do that, but I think it is clearly within our ability to communicate and I think that that will probably have an end result of more than 25 percent by the time everything is said and done, because we push out all magnets and we tell all parents you can apply to four magnets, but there are lots of things that we can do to ensure that there is more local participation in that magnet application process.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you very much. I think this Commission has been, has really recognized the value and the importance of great public schools.

Ms. Regalado: I'm very appreciative of that.



Commissioner Keon: And we only want to be a partner with the School System in making it better. We have always recognized that it is certainly the School System's School System and what we can do to help and what we can do to make it better, we are very willing to do because we know how important it is for our community to have great public schools. And I think the issue here with West Lab is, you know I think that there are probably some legal issues that it's not that the Superintendent and your legal representation from the School Board, the School Board's legal staff and our City Attorney and Manager really need to come to an agreement. We believe that we are allowing commercial property and what is not zoned for commercial properties we need to change that. We need to look at how do we do that?- why do we do it? What is the benefit for the community to do that? In addition to the issue with the schools, it's our intention to pay for those seats, so that we come to agreement on, but I think as Craig said, it's that issue of how can we defend a...change, it's a quasi-judicial hearing, yes?

City Attorney Leen: It's legislative.

Commissioner Keon: It's legislative but we have to be able to defend why...

City Attorney Leen: But a full public hearing.

Commissioner Keon:...but a full public hearing – you know why we are going to do that. So I really think and I know for certain we will have public meetings on the whole issue, but the real issues that need to be ironed out need to be ironed out now between the parties that are at the table. So I'm going to hope that the Superintendent engages in this along with your legal staff and our staff and the University of Miami and Baptist, because I do think its achievable, I do, and I think it would be an exceedingly good thing to this community. So I don't think that any of us want to not see this happen. But thank you for bringing it here, thank you for making us more aware of it. Hopefully we will push from this side; hopefully you will go back and push those people that work for you as a School Board member...

Ms. Regalado: Right – and I've already done that.

Commissioner Keon:...and we'll come to an agreement.

Ms. Regalado: And I understand. My point was, can we look at other options to get to that 25 percent you know, and that's what I was talking to Craig about.

Commissioner Lago: I think we can. I think we can.

Commissioner Keon: Absolutely. I think we can.

Commissioner Lago: We want to request as a Commission, we want to request from the City Manager to go back and analyze what can be done. I just want everyone at home to understand, this has been going on for many, many years, this is not just the School Board in the City of Coral Gables, this is an incredible balancing act.

Ms. Regalado: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: You have the University of Miami, you have Baptist, you have a lot of interest here, and more importantly you have the neighbors here, I just want to be clear about that. You have the traffic issues in reference to the main thoroughfare which is currently used as an internal road, we have those discussions, we have the discussions of open space. A lot of residents and I've spoken to them, have a misconception in regards to the Billy Lincoln parcel, and they think that the City owns that parcel, they don't. We don't.

Commissioner Keon: We own a portion of it.

Commissioner Lago: Not a majority of the piece. So one of the main efforts of this deal besides all the great things that are going to happen for the public school system, and for education for the residents, because by the way, when we all ran for public office, Commissioner Slesnick will tell you she is the latest one that ran, the residents were very concerned about choice and were very concerned about sending their kids to multiple different schools and that which results in excessive traffic, like you mentioned before. I know individuals in this community who have three and four children who send their kids to three and four different schools in Coral Gables. How does that make any sense? That is why we have so much congestion in this community. Prime example, how does everybody feel when there isn't any school and you go to work in the morning and you get on Bird Road and there is no traffic, there is no traffic. Again, that's a problem we have to face and that's a reality of living in all cities, but when there isn't any school, there isn't any traffic, and the interesting thing about it is if we are able to change the ways that we do business, I hate to use the word business, but the way that we educate our children, which we are hopefully going to do that now with the ending of controlled choice, it's going to really offer a relief when it comes to congestion. But I want to make sure, and this is something that I've spoken to the Manager because, correct me if I'm wrong, we've probably met four or five times, you met with me four or five times to discuss what's going on with West Lab.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We've met with all of you four or five times.

Commissioner Lago: Since we can't because under the Sunshine we can't meet, she's only met with me four or five times that I know of. I want to reiterate the importance of not only the traffic and the residents, and also making sure this deal happens because it's a spectacular opportunity for this community, but we need to focus on open space, we need to really push that. Like you said before, we are talking in the Sunshine so I'm taking advantage of the Sunshine to make sure that my residents know my position.

Mayor Cason: Well we are going to have a lot more discussions on this obviously.

Commissioner Lago: And thank you for representing us, thank you for your efforts. Thank you for taking time out of your day, I know you are very busy and I appreciate you coming here and really pushing the ball forward.

Ms. Regalado: And just to your point, Commissioner Lago, I totally agree with you. This is a quality of life issue and I've impressed that upon the School Board, right. Historically, Miami-Dade County Public Schools has dealt in a silo of just education, right. One of the things I've tried to do in all of our schools throughout District 6 is to change that mentality. So I totally agree with you that it's a quality of life issue, it will have a great impact. That's the battle that we fought with controlled choice, right, and I think we got to the end of that, and even though there was a lot of noise, right, we got to a good end. I think in this case there'll be a lot of noise too and then we'll get to a good end. I just wanted for you guys to have the opportunity to see where we're at in terms of, I've been told that this is a deal-breaker and I don't think it's a deal-breaker. I think that people can talk about it and figure it out. My understanding is that UM is a go, that Baptist is a go, and that we are just at this point. So I just wanted to remind you that there is a lot more to do in terms of the process, so we need to figure out what is a deal-breaker, and then timing-wise just because, like I said earlier, I want this to be online when we reevaluate controlled choice. I don't think you can evaluate controlled choice if this is not online. So we've already lost one school year, right, now we move into the next one and another thing that's going to happen too when we have these meetings is, people think this happens like immediately, right, and you know that that's not the case. This is going to take a long time to get it done. The more we can talk about it, I'm always available, you know that. I've met with all of you on this. I'm happy to be here, I'm happy to bring staff. If we have to have a Sunshine meeting to figure it out, happy to have a Sunshine meeting to figure it out. I believe that if we talk about it we'll come to a resolution. I think we've come very, very far and I think that getting all these different stakeholders to buy-in and understand that this is good for everyone has been challenging, but I think that we are at a point where just a little bit more pushing and just a little bit more conversation can get this done.

Commissioner Keon: But Ms. Regalado who is the one from the School System that will make that decision?

Ms. Regalado: The District will take it to the Board, whatever the final is, and then obviously the way that our Board works is it's my District, so if I think it's a good deal the Board will respect that. I'm not asking for public money. Usually there is a hang-up over on our end, but this is a private venture and I think it will have the support of the Board. But I'm happy to come with the Superintendent and staff and talk about it. The Superintendent is our employee so he will do what the Board says and I can bring it up at our committee too and explain it to the Board. But again, this is a unique issue to District 6, so they are going to tell me well this is your baby, right, what do you want to do over there?- So I just think it's the legal issue and how we can work it out.

City Attorney Leen: Can I make an observation just as the legal...

Commissioner Keon: So I think once you do that it will be fine. I mean it's another Superintendent engaging himself in a discussion too with your legal staff and yourself that this problem can be solved.

City Attorney Leen: Besides raise legal issues, but it sounds like we all agree on the number, so there must be a way to right that in a way that satisfies us both, I would think.

Ms. Regalado: I'm happy to talk to you about it and I'll talk to Irida about it. Obviously, we are in Tallahassee now and we are getting to the end of that, so once we are done with Session it's a lot easier for us to bring staff in to meet about these issues. She would have been here, but she's already in Tallahassee as we have committee meetings today.

Commissioner Lago: I met with her last week.

Commissioner Keon: We will miss you as a School Board member. You have been an outstanding member of that School Board and you are working with us to do all the things that we have accomplished. You are a wonderful, wonderful School Board member; I can't imagine that they will find someone to replace you that could ever live up to what you have done.

Ms. Regalado: Well hopefully everything will be done so they just have to mind the store. They'll just be the steward.

Commissioner Keon: And we wish you the best of luck going forward.

Ms. Regalado: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: You have been a wonderful, wonderful School Board representative. Thank you Ms. Regalado.

Commissioner Slesnick: Again, I have to reiterate. You have been a wonderful School Board member and I appreciate working with you in the past. One footnote that I'd really like to put in, as long as we are expanding the school is David Lawrence and I and many people up here would really like to have K – pre-K 3. I know we've talked about pre-K 4, but even pre-K 3 added to the list of items coming up.

Ms. Regalado: I'd be a huge proponent for pre-K 3; you know that Dave and I agree on that. The issue with that is logistically the funding and the placement.

Commissioner Slesnick: We can make it work with your help, and I really appreciate it. I'm sorry you are going to be going off the School Board.

Commissioner Lago: And I just want to reiterate what Commissioner Slesnick said in reference to that. That is something that I've heard from several of the residents who are asking for that opportunity. Like you said, we can make it work. It may take a little bit of massaging, but let's try to figure out a way to proffer that.

Ms. Regalado: There is definitely the space. The bigger issue with the pre-K 3 is to ensure that when we approve the architectural plans for the school that there is space for that. Maybe we don't figure out the funding right now, but as long as we have the space allocation we can get to the funding and the placement later. What you don't want to do is build to capacity, right, and then come up with the pre-K 3. The good thing about little ones, which I tell people all the time, is that they need very little space. So those are very easy to accommodate. It's the bigger ones that we have issues with. So pre-K 3 or pre-K 4, we can make it work, it's not a big deal. We just have to make sure that there is a part where we can separate them. One of the things that I've asked the District to look at with the design of this, and we'll talk about that later is, there'll be a separate eating space for little ones and then obviously, sixth, seventh, and eighth have their own bathrooms, their own eating space, they are on the other side, right, because you want a K-8, but it's always important to have some separation between the little ones and the bigger ones. But we'll talk about that when we get to the designs, we still have to do that. I'm a believer and you know that, I think the younger the better; and if I had my way we would have pre-K 3 countywide, because I think it's that important and Dave knows that. So you have my commitment that we'll do everything in our power to ensure that happens.

Mayor Cason: Thank you Raquel for coming.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Ms. Regalado: Thank you all.

[End: 9:55:53 a.m.]