

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item D-3
December 16, 2008
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Maria Alberro Jimenez
City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
City Clerk Staff, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Dennis Pastrana, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of South Florida

D-3 [Start: 9:43:00 a.m.]

Dennis Pastrana, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of South Florida, Inc. (Goodwill) to request the City Commission to consider allowing the temporary placement of a Goodwill Trailer (ADC) on Parking Lot 43, along 5900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, to receive donations through January 31, 2009.

Mayor Slesnick: We are going to just take D-3 out of order now; and that’s Dennis Pastrana, President and CEO of Goodwill Industries South Florida, requesting us to consider allowing the temporary placement of the Goodwill Attended Donation Trailer on Parking Lot 43, which is approximately at 5900 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. Good morning Dennis, welcome.

Mr. Pastrana: Good morning, my name is Dennis Pastrana; my office is at 2121 N.W. 21st Street, Miami. For the last thirty (30) years I have been the President and CEO of Goodwill Industries of South Florida. I am here to make an urgent appeal to the City of Coral Gables to help Goodwill create jobs for hundreds of severe and disabled individuals in our facilities. I am here to plead for your permission to place an attended donation center (ADC) in the City of Coral Gables. However, before I give you more details about the request, I would like your permission to speak to you about Goodwill Industries. We are going to pass to you a folder. It has an Annual Report and has actually a catalog with pictures about Goodwill Industries, so you can see how large our facilities are, and what are the activities that we do. Goodwill is a non-profit organization; we are dedicated to provide rehabilitation, training, and employment to individuals with severe disabilities. If you were to ask the local United Way, they will tell you that Goodwill Industries is one of the largest, most successful, and reputable non-profit making organizations in our area. The people that Goodwill serve in addition to severe disability, ninety-seven (97%) of them are

poor, about one-third are single parents, many have been the victims of abuse, neglect; a large number of them will become homeless if they did not have Goodwill Industries programs and services. Goodwill operates a very unique business model that enables us to be successful. We operate business activities that enable us to provide for our support as well as for the services to people with disabilities. We manufacture many types of clothing in great quantities; we manufacture uniforms for the United States Army, for the United States Air Force and Navy; we manufacture the most important flag of the United States of America, which is the internment flag that goes on the caskets of soldiers and veterans; I am sure you have seen that many times. In the newspaper, we have a very large contract with the Miami Herald newspaper, and at the Goodwill plant we assemble a large part of the newspaper, and the rest of the production of the newspaper, the work is done at the Miami Herald; we provide all of the labor for the production of the Miami Herald. Outside of our facility, we have a very large janitorial contractor; we employ close to four hundred (400) severely disabled individuals, cleaning one hundred and thirty-seven (137) buildings, also the Federal Building, the County Building; we provide grounds-keeping services in military bases; we have a contract with Miami-Dade County to actually clean the entire fleet of buses. Every bus you see on the street is actually cleaned and processed by Goodwill, all for the purpose of employing individuals with severe disabilities. The entrepreneurial business provide three elements that are important to our success: work – as we use as a means to provide job training and employment to the disabled; and in the total grant that we are passing to you, you are going to see many individuals with very severe disabilities, some of them with I.Q.'s as low as 45-40, which is kindergarten level, actually making a living, working at Goodwill Industries, because of the training that we provide them because of the ability that we have to provide the work. We are successful in doing this because of our entrepreneurial approach; with our entrepreneurial approach we support ninety-seven percent (97%) of our budget, and only three percent (3%) come from public funding. Last year from our sixty-two million dollar (\$62-M) budget, only five million dollars (\$5-M) came from public funding, and at the same time because of our program last year, we served four thousand eight hundred (4,800) individuals with disabilities; we placed in jobs one thousand eight hundred and twenty-three (1,823) in Miami-Dade County, which are working today; we actually assisted another nine hundred (900) people to transition into other educational activities today; we created thirty-five million dollars (\$35-M) in new earnings for individuals with disabilities. If we look at this thirty-five million in new earnings for the severely disabled individuals and you compare them to the five million dollars that we receive in public funding, we actually created a return of seven and-a-half dollars (\$7.5) for each dollar of public funds that we receive. Now, we are able to operate this program and be as successful as independent because of our donated group program. We collect donations in attended donation centers that they are sold in Goodwill stores. This is an activity that generates about twenty-four million dollars (\$24-M) in sales for Goodwill Industries and about five million dollars (\$5-M) in net income to support our program. Well we are in a major setback, since the month of July our donations have decreased thirty percent (30%), and by the months of September and October, we are losing about two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) of net income, and if we do not reverse this trend, we will face a major layoff in Goodwill Industries. This is a very serious situation. Goodwill Industries has been in Miami-Dade County for fifty years, and I have been there for thirty years in Miami-Dade County. When I came in, in 1979 Goodwill collected donations in about two hundred and sixty (260) collection boxes that were all over town, and we were not successful, they were being vandalized, so I changed the program to the donation center, which is a trailer, painted with

Goodwill logo, it is attended by an individual, by a Goodwill employee, seven days a week, and I have to confess to you that when we started thirty years ago, we have many problems; but over the years we have overcome all of the concerns that we have been operating this program. If you look at the list today, we are operating in many areas that we'll only be able to do it if we have a program that is effective and meet all of the concerns. If you look at the list of locations that you have in the order that we distribute; we are in Dadeland Shopping Center, we are in the Aventura Shopping Center, International Mall, and like that, near many banks and fine institutions. Our program has become accepted; and the presence of our trailer has become a brand; all we need to do is place a trailer in one location and immediately people will start coming in; in no time we have a very large amount of donations. We have forty-seven (47) sites, and because of your high zoning restrictions, we have avoided the City of Coral Gables, we have tried to surround you, and collect donations from Coral Way, but this is no longer possible, we have a crisis. The City of Coral Gables residents have the means to solve our problems, because they have the capacity to provide the donations, they have the willingness, and not only that consider what will happen to Goodwill Industries since operations. Goodwill Industries is probably the most effective homeless prevention program that you have in this community; all you need to do is look at the population that we serve, and the large number of four thousand eight hundred (4,800) people; you have to look at the number of individuals. Besides that, we have right now one hundred and ninety-eight City of Coral Gables residents enrolled in Goodwill Industries program. If you allow us to place a donation center, not only will you be supporting a program that will prevent homelessness, a program that will actually help some of the most needed citizens in our community, but at the same time it will support your "green" efforts. Each one of those trailers collected between three hundred and fifty (350) and four hundred (400) tons of material that is recycled, that at the present time in many cases are going to the landfill; seventy percent (70%) of those materials are reutilized, and thirty percent (30%) are taken to the landfill to Goodwill Industries. So I am here to plead on behalf of people with disabilities. According to United States census we have in Miami-Dade County four hundred and fifty-eight thousand (458,000) individual adults with disabilities. Of those only one hundred and twenty-eight thousand (128,000) can work, and from those who can work, the unemployment rate is seventy percent (70%). Now, the unemployment rate is becoming very popular when people become laid off; well we have among the disabled individuals seventy percent unemployment, and during the Great Depression in America in 1930, the highest unemployment rate we had was thirty-three percent (33%). So we are here to plead for your support so we can actually keep the jobs for people with disabilities. Thank you.

Mayor Slesnick: Thank you Dennis, and thank Goodwill for all it does.

Commissioner Withers: Where is the location projected to be? Let me say something about Dennis real quick; this is the five minute speech, you should hear the thirty minute speech. I had the distinct pleasure of serving as a Board of Director for several years with Goodwill, in fact Keith Phillips, a lot of Coral Gables folks served on it, but I have to tell you this man right here could run a Fortune One Thousand Company, there is no doubt in my mind; everything from...I have to tell you one quick story; there was a container of bootleg Lacoste shirts at the Port of Miami one day, and Customs was getting ready to burn them, Dennis found out about it, within an hour he had it off the Port; he had those shirts at his Goodwill facility; he had cut off all of the little Lacoste alligators, and all the little Lacoste labels, and had them selling in his store. So he's

an amazing man. Dennis I salute you for everything you have done; and one quick story. I was kind of a mediocre Board member, I wasn't really active, I would come to the meetings, show up; Dennis caught onto that pretty quickly, basically said either you are hot or you are cold, because if you are lukewarm, you know, he said you need to come down to the Goodwill Industries on pay day, I said why?- he said just do me one favor, come down on pay day. So sure enough I came down on a Thursday morning or something, and it was the most emotional I have ever felt in my life, to see folks that were literally on welfare, were really taking checks for their inability to work, move off of those rolls onto rolls where they were actually getting paychecks, and these folks would take that paycheck and they would look at it for five or ten minutes, it was just the most remarkable thing I've ever seen. So Dennis, I thank you for everything you've done for this community, and good luck on moving forward. There were only about six hundred people that we served, and now you are up to four thousand, so that's a remarkable growth in a very short period of time.

Mr. Pastrana: Thank you sir.

Interim City Manager Jimenez: Commissioner we have it scheduled to be along the 5900 Block of Ponce, which is Parking Lot 43, parallel to South Dixie Highway, under the Metrorail area.

Commissioner Cabrera: What are the hours of operation?

Mr. Pastrana: It will open 7 days a week; we will open from about 9 a.m. to about 6 p.m., but if we see that, we begin to find donations that people leave over night, we will continue to move the time earlier and earlier, so if anything that we find under the trailer is removed. So we may be operating that trailer, you know, let's say maybe 8 a.m. to about 6 p.m., but the time is flexible and we will be there 7 days a week, we never close.

Commissioner Anderson: Are we going to be able to notice the University of Miami for the students to let them know that, that's there as well?

Interim City Manager Jimenez: We can definitely do that, yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Because sometimes when they leave campus they have stuff they want to get rid off, our students at the University of Miami, that location is nearby, so that might be a good thing.

Mr. Pastrana: We will be about two blocks away form the area where they use for parking.

Commissioner Anderson: That would be great to announce it to them and let them know if they would be kind enough to do that, that might help your donations.

Mr. Pastrana: Besides that, I think this will not be a precedent, because we are going to be...we are at the present time obtaining other sites that will be under the Metrorail system and Key Biscayne and on U.S.-1 will be very visible.

Mayor Slesnick: Mr. Cabrera.

Commissioner Cabrera: You know, the only concern I have; there are two, one is I want to support Goodwill, that's not the concern; what I want to make sure we do is that we are very specific on the timeframe so this is only through January 31, correct?

Interim City Manager Jimenez: Yes.

Commissioner Cabrera: And secondly, what I want to make sure that we also agree on is if the Goodwill personnel can sort of look at things that get dropped off after hours, because I know that on the Bird Road location, off 57th Avenue, a lot of times people drop things off after they are closed, and then others come in and then they go through the articles, and so if something could be done to monitor that on a more regular basis, that would be certainly helpful.

Mr. Pastrana: We are mindful of that and I can assure you that we will make sure that that is not an issue, but we hope that you will make it permanent, you know, if we go through a period of trials, and...

Commissioner Cabrera: No, I'm sorry; I'm not going to be able to support you on that.

Mayor Slesnick: I don't think we are talking about that today Dennis; we are talking about a one month trial.

Commissioner Cabrera: Yeah, but I'm just not going to be able to support it on a full time basis. I just thought I'd extend the courtesy of how I felt. Those are my only concerns, so outside of that, I'm ready to vote on this item.

Mayor Slesnick: I'd like to make sure though, Maria, that our Parking Director and you have...what's your recommendation?

Interim City Manager Jimenez: Yes. We support this request, and our Parking Director has been working with Goodwill in finding a location.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll be by in dropping off my stuff.

Mayor Slesnick: I need a motion.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Withers: I'll second it.

Mayor Slesnick: Ms. Anderson moves it, Mr. Withers seconds it; this is to allow a Goodwill attended donation trailer on Parking Lot 43, 5900 Ponce de Leon, to receive donations through January 31, 2009.

Mr. Clerk

Commissioner Withers: Yes
Commissioner Anderson: Yes
Commissioner Cabrera: Yes
Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes
Mayor Slesnick: Yes
(Vote 5-0)

Mayor Slesnick: Dennis, God bless, happy holidays, keep up the good work, and hope this helps.

Commissioner Withers: You know, as a community this is really something we should be proud of and push forward, we have so much to be thankful for.

Commissioner Anderson: I agree.

[End: 9:58:20 a.m.]