

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Pocket Item**  
**March 29, 2022**  
**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**

**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Development Services Director, Suramy Cabrera**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Mark Trowbridge**

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Pocket Item [Start: 9:56 a.m.]

Mayor Lago: First thing I'll like to introduce is Mark Trowbridge, I'd like him to please come up, and I'd like to ask him if he'd like to discuss anything in particular before we discuss the reason why I asked him to come.

Mr. Trowbridge: No. Its just great to see you all here on a lovely Tuesday morning. Thanks for the invite. You and I were enjoying the welcoming of our new Museum Director, Mr. Elvis Fuentes on Friday, and as we departed, we encountered...

Mayor Lago: So, with that being said, I went with the Manager; we left here Friday evening rather late, probably around 6:30 p.m., after a nice long week of work, and we joined up with Mark Trowbridge and we went to the museum. Like Mark was mentioning, to welcome our new Museum Director, who comes with a lengthy background in the arts and has extensive museum experience and is a welcome addition to the City of Coral Gables, and I think you are going to see some great things happening at the museum. We have to give credit where credit is due, Mr. Jose Valdes-Fauli  
*City Commission Meeting*  
*March 29, 2022*

played a major role in bringing this individual here to the City of Coral Gables, and I think its going to be something very beneficial for the community. So, I thank him for that. The reason why I wanted to bring Mark here, because as we left the museum, we were walking down the street having a conversation with Commissioner Chip Withers, and we walked across an area, which to me, has only enhanced the city, its at Aragon traffic calming, I guess you can call it device that has been installed across the street from the Aragon parking garage, in front of Books and Books. But what I found very troubling to me, and to my colleagues, Mark can give you a little bit more color on the issue was, the state of the landscaping that has just been completed. I think that that – we'll put some pictures up. So, this is the current state, these are pictures that I took; the current state, as you can see the landscaping is more than half dead, and the amount of garbage that was located inside, we could zoom in, you can notice the amount of garbage that was there. So, what Mark and I decided to do was, we decided to clean up the site ourselves, and you can see some of the garbage and in the other pictures it will be more prevalent, so you can see it. You can see the garbage cans, paper, plastic, a litany of different things that to me, again, are something that we are fighting here in the city, especially in the downtown when we talk about beautification. This project, I think was completed maybe six months ago, a year ago.

Mr. Trowbridge: Less than that.

Mayor Lago: I've been in office eleven months, so I think it was done some time in my term. That is brand new landscaping. And you can see the amount of garbage, that garbage has been there for weeks at a time. So, if you go to the next picture, you can see, go to the next one. By the way, the sidewalks there are filthy, as you can see. This is Mark and I after the event; I'm in a suit and tie, as you can tell. We end up spending probably about 15 minutes picking up the garbage. Why am I making this a point? I'm making this a point because I need to understand who is responsible in the city for making sure that something like this doesn't happen. Is it a private contractor? – is it the City of Coral Gables? This is an eyesore in front of one of our beautiful landmarks, Books and Books. This is uninviting, and this is something that either we make a decision to commit ourselves to maintenance, or we just give up, because at this point its exhausting to walk out of an event at the museum and see garbage right in one of our main streets, in front of one of our historic properties like Books and Books. If you look closely and you want to take another picture, you can see I have the bag of garbage here. This is where you can see in front of Books and Books thrown throughout the median. In my opinion, this is unacceptable, and I think we can do so much better. So, what I'd like to know, first of all, I'd like Mark's opinion, because he was there with me. He was on his hands and knees helping me pick up the garbage. What do you think we can do as a city? We've already had multiple clean-ups, we are working with the B.I.D., we are working with the Chamber, what do you think we are doing and where we are falling short? Do we need more intensive education? – do we need more sweeps by our subcontractors? Where do you see we are falling short? Do you have any idea?

Mr. Trowbridge: Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, I think it's a combination of those things. So, we went inside and got the trash bag, they were kind enough to give that to us, and then, afterwards went back in and talked to Steve, one of the Managers, and said listen, this is a team effort. And I know you asked him a little bit about how they maintain the frontage, and it isn't just them, its any business. But when you are talking about this beautiful new crosswalk, which the city, I think has

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

done an amazing job of putting that in and helping folks get across. There is a huge amount of pedestrian traffic on that street, probably only second to Miracle Mile, and so, having that crosswalk there that also is a traffic calming device, allows folks to come out of the garage and visit those businesses, and certainly Books and Books is the most probably well visited and attended local independent business. We talked with Steve briefly, we just said, you've got to also help us either in picking things up, because there were items also up against the curb and on the drain, not just in the landscaping. My concern is that this beautiful landscaping has just deteriorated in a short period of time, and we are trying to access and manage some of the other areas on the medians and around the downtown that have some aged landscaping that when we took our trolley tour, we had a long discussion about what the future plans are. So, it is a total team effort. I know you encouraged Steve and the folks at Books and Books that if they see something that they think is sort of looking out of place to pick up the phone and call, the city of course is always incredibly responsive in those situations. But here you have a brand new installation and we are going to have to go back and obviously look at the landscaping, and I know some of that material, because we were picking it up, goes back more than two weeks, because we had a very large event on Aragon related to the elections that were held at the Colombian Consulate, and so there were a lot of people on the street handing out leaflets and other materials related to candidates, so that had sat there for at least two Sundays, because this was the following Friday. I know a lot of folks right now don't want to touch anything on the street.

Mayor Lago: We picked that up with our bare hands, no gloves.

Mr. Trowbridge: We went inside and washed our hands.

Mayor Lago: And washed our hands after, but I think...

Mr. Trowbridge: I tried to throw the trash away, it was kept.

Mayor Lago: Its right here, look.

Mr. Trowbridge: Yes, I know.

Mayor Lago: You can have it. You want to take it with you?

Mr. Trowbridge: I'm just going to throw it away.

Commissioner Menendez: It's a parting gift.

[Laughter]

Mayor Lago: Thank you for our sponsor, Books and Books.

Mr. Trowbridge: I feel bad for them, because they should be getting nothing but positive, they were so accommodating and gave us the bag. But the best part is when people walk by and we are down on our hands and knees, and they go, isn't that the Mayor.

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

Mayor Lago: Isn't that Mark Trowbridge. So, my point is that, and this is not to call anybody out, the point is we can do better, and we will do better. At the end of the day, I'm not going to give up on this. I'm not going to under no circumstances. You are not going to tire me out. I'm going to pick up the garbage and I'm going to make sure it gets taken care of in the downtown. We have currently an RFP that's coming out for clean-up and for landscaping, that's coming out after five years. I will not accept a company who gets that RFP or wins that RFP that is not 100 percent able to address the needs that we need in regard to our downtown. Our downtown is sloppy and its unacceptable. None of you would allow yourselves to live that way with that amount of garbage at your front door. I had this conversation with the Manager, and we suffer from the same habit, we don't start the day or end the day without running a perimeter review of our house and making sure that all the garbage is picked up. I live in front of UM, I find stuff in front of my front door constantly, on a daily basis. I make sure it gets cleaned up, because that is the perception that continues to grow your home would be overtaken by all that garbage. To have that much garbage in a 5 by 8-foot kind of area is disturbing and you can only really understand it when you are standing in front of it, that's why we stopped at that moment and picked it up on a Friday afternoon. And it wasn't on a Sunday, it was on a Friday afternoon just starting the weekend. So, what I would like to know, Mr. Manager, do we know, is it city responsibility, or is it a private entity that we are paying to maintain this? And this is a simple 5 by 8-foot area that probably has two pounds of garbage in it. This bag is filled all the way up to here.

City Manager Iglesias: We explained that is the responsibility of the adjacent property owner, but I will let the Public Works Director.

Public Works Director Diaz: Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director. I will take responsibility for the condition of the landscaping, but the daily garbage pickup should be the responsibility of the abutting property owner.

Mayor Lago: And I appreciate that. So, this is what I need to understand. Ms. Cabrera, who is doing the best that she can, handling multiple departments, I need to understand why Code Enforcement, by the way, we spoke to the Business Improvement District, the Chamber was present, the Manager was present, we are going to ask for a quarterly cleanup of the sidewalks. They said it was too heavy-handed, we moved it to every six months. If you go by the calendar every six months, that means on June 30<sup>th</sup> every sidewalk in the downtown should be clean.

Mr. Trowbridge: First cycle.

Mayor Lago: First cycle. From January to June 30<sup>th</sup>. I wouldn't say that one percent of the sidewalks are clean right now in downtown, and we are going into April. They have time to do it, I understand that, but if you go on Aragon, its filthy. We as a city need to ensure that our Code Enforcement team is, not only answering the call, but looking around to see certain things. We looked at the alley between Books and Books and the museum, there were weeds growing up in the alley. There were barricades that have been there for weeks. I had to submit that into staff, to make sure that was addressed. I feel like I'm playing a Code Enforcement officer every single day and I'll continue to do it, as long as I have to, but we need for our staff to be more diligent and

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

look at what their surroundings are to not only address the issue that they are being called for, but to address the totality of the problem. If you walk by and you see this amount of garbage on the floor, we need to make sure that we notify Books and Books that they pick up that garbage. We cannot continue to allow this to grow and become an ever-growing problem, because what will end up happening is we become like every other city. So, what I would like to have my colleagues, if my colleagues will give me a little runway on this, okay. If you look at, for example, what Michael Kattou does; Michael Kattou is in charge, I think he does a wonderful job of going out there and analyzing the larger piles and charging residents for overgrown or oversized piles of green matter and the resident has to pay for that. He probably charges several hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, paying for his salary and much more. I think its time that we have a Code Enforcement person just dedicated to the downtown. We have many open positions in the city, we don't have to hire somebody new, we don't have to make a new position. I want to limit as many open positions, excuse me, I want to limit opening new positions for budgetary reasons, maybe we need to take one of these positions that are currently open and allocate them to the downtown. But something has to be done because when there is something as blatant as this, as we walk out on a Friday afternoon and there is this much garbage on one of our main streets, and it hasn't been dealt with in weeks, who are our eyes and ears. Mark Trowbridge and myself cannot be walking in the downtown picking up garbage every single day. We have to put the businesses on notice. Do we need to privatize Code Enforcement? Do we need to bring in outside help? I will not stop until this gets corrected. We can do so much better, and I need your help in this issue.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Good morning, Suramy Cabrera, Development Services Director. And Code Enforcement is one of my departments.

Mayor Lago: One of your many departments.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Yes. But as of, actually last week, we relooked at all the zones in our residential districts so that we could move and have two code officers that are dedicated to the business district, not just downtown, but also down on U.S.-1 and the 8<sup>th</sup> Street area. So, we actually have two fulltime officers that started this week, dedicated to only the commercial districts, and they are following up on everything from our trolley ride, they are following up on a walk that we took with them, and it's a process to bring people to compliance, because we need to give them time. We can't just go in there and put a running fine or a lien, there is a process to it. It's a little time consuming, but it will happen. It will happen and its happening, because, like I said, we redid the zones in the residential and all that, and as we move to our new software, I'm hoping that it will be easier for them. I'm confident, I shouldn't say I'm hoping, I'm confident because we are working for that goal to make it easier to issue citations and notice of violations, because right now it's a little time consuming on EDEN.

City Manager Iglesias: In addition to that Mayor, if I may say, when we move into 427, we'll be much more efficient. Right now, we are compressed...

Mayor Lago: On top of each other.

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

City Manager Iglesias: ...on the third floor, so once we get those offices in, which should be some time in June/July of this year, and we get our software, we'll be much more efficient, and I think with these changes I think you'll see a noticed change in the Central Business District.

Mayor Lago: My colleagues have a few comments. I just want to say something and put it on the record. I have the utmost faith and confidence in you, as director here in the city. I respect you as a professional. Your demeanor, your worth ethic is to be emulated by as many people as I can possibly find.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mayor Lago: You are one of our best employees here at the city. You never say no, and I hear that from the residents and from the business owners over and over and over again. I know you have your hands full running multiple departments and transitioning to 427 and transitioning to paper., What I'm here to say is, I'm going to continue to do this, and continue to pick up trash and continue to give thousands of dollars of my own money, not from city money, to do pick up efforts with Solanch and Mark Trowbridge and the B.I.D. and my colleagues here on the Commission who joined me, but I will never stop until I achieve my goal, and my goal is to ensure that the 27 percent of our budget that we get from the downtown only continues to grow. Our downtown is becoming more and more busy every single week; the numbers are clear in regard to the trolley use on Saturdays. We need to step up the cleanliness and that can be done very easily by holding businesses accountable, because for too long, and Mark and I talked about this, for too long we have not held people accountable in the downtown. And people need to understand that we are unlike any other city in Miami-Dade County. We need to respect ourselves and we need to understand that we have a certain, we have a reputation that we can easily lose if we do not step up our game. So, Vice Mayor, I know you want to say some comments.

Vice Mayor Mena: I just have a related question, not exactly the point of code enforcement, although that's well taken. The trash cans – I'm assuming there are best practices as far as how many you should have in the downtown area like ours. I just randomly did a Google maps street view of where the Mayor and Mark were picking up, and as far as I can tell there is not a single trash can on the north side of that street. We have trash cans by the elevators, by the parking garage on the south side of the street, but on the north side of the street, there may be one on the corners but that's a very long block, there are none on the north side. And so, listen, there is no excuse for somebody just throwing something in the landscaping, but I also want to make sure that we have adequate infrastructure for people to throw things out. I heard recently from somebody who is a dog owner in downtown that they'd like to see more of the dog bag stations, whatever we call those, so that's something I heard from a resident just like week, but I think we need to look at that. And again, I don't know what best practices are. I don't know if there should be one per block, one per every certain amount of feet in the downtown area, whatever it is, we need to look at that and we need to address it. If and when we do that, I suspect what will happen is then you're going to get calls about overflowing garbage cans. So, if we are going to do it, and we should do it, we have to be prepared to address that and properly maintain it, but that does force the issues. I see it in our parks sometimes. To Parks credit, I've called them on certain occasions where garbage cans at our parks are overflowing, because you know, there's a birthday party or whatever, it

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

happens, and they'll get somebody out there immediately to address it. So, it's just a point I'm making, because its something that has been brought up to me recently. I know I've been in the position, I'm sure others have too, where you're literally looking to throw something away and you're like, there is no garbage can anywhere, and so you've got to like, hold it. Unfortunately, there are people who don't just hold it, they just chuck it in the bushes.

Parking Director Kinney: And I don't disagree that there may be some places in our city where we are lacking a few trash cans.

City Manager Iglesias: And by the way, Vice Mayor, we have them all GIS plotted, and we are looking into that right now.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Parking Director Kinney: Because I know specifically about the block you are talking about, there is a trash can on the north side mid-block. The reason I know that is, sometimes it is the responsibility of one of the contractors for Public Works, but it often gets full, so I have staff from the garage across the street go over there and empty it.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay. I don't know what exactly mid-block is.

Parking Director Kinney: Its right next to the fire hydrant.

Mayor Lago: By the tea shop.

Parking Director Kinney: A little farther to the west.

Commissioner Anderson: So, I'm going to make a suggestion.

Vice Mayor Mena: Look again, I'm not – the building to the east of Books and Books, right.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: To the east of Books and Books.

Parking Director Kinney: Its right in front of the building to the east of Books and Books.

Vice Mayor Mena: Its not on Google maps. I'll take your word for it.

Parking Director Kinney: I know it's been there for quite a while.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Parking Director Kinney: And we empty it for Public Works just as a courtesy.

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

Mayor Lago: So, Commissioner you wanted to make a suggestion.

Commissioner Anderson: During the clean ups, we noticed some high frequency dumping areas, such as this, and this is right near the museum, this is right near the parking garage, right near the Cinema, there is a lot of foot traffic there, you've got the crosswalk there, you are going to have traffic there. So, when you have an area like this, its high frequency, the logical thing to do, just like how University of Miami design some of their walk paths, you follow what people's habits are, and place one there.

Mayor Lago: Because I don't want to belabor the point. You have something to say Commissioner, go ahead, please.

Commissioner Menendez: First off, thank you for your leadership in this matter. You brought a lot of awareness to this issue that a lot of people, including myself weren't up to speed on, so its very important. Second, it feels at times, its almost like in those movies where they fall into the quicksand, the more you fight to get out of it, the more we sink, and its almost like we're battling the battle and we're outnumbered. So, my question to the administration in terms of code enforcement, do we have any vacancies? – what's the plan, the city's plan with regards to the numbers of folks we have in Code Enforcement, because right now it seems like we're outmanned.

Development Services Director Cabrera: We have a vacancy for a parttime officer; we hired one part-timer. We had about three vacancies, we filled two of them. I believe there is only one left to fill, a full-timer. We hired two code officers fulltime that have experience from another municipality. They actually are very, very good. I'm very happy with them. So, of course it takes learning the city and all that, but we have basically, to answer your question, I think one fulltime and one parttime available still. Its just finding the right person.

Mayor Lago: And Commissioner, by the way, to Ms. Cabrera's comments, the new hires have been doing a very good job, along with our existing employees, but I feel the same way. I think you used a good analogy; I feel like sometimes we're in quicksand, and you can't pick up the garbage fast enough. You can't relandscape fast enough; and we are removing a lot of the landscaping. If you notice on Bird Road and Ponce, we removed all the landscaping next to the gas station, which hadn't been redone in probably 20 years. And if you drive by there right now, the landscaping has been removed, but if you look at the foundation of where the roots are, because the roots haven't been removed, the amount of bottles, talk about bottles that have been there for 20 years inside that landscaping, its troublesome, and I'll tell you why. Its troublesome because you're paying a company to do routine maintenance and if you look inside the bushes, by the way, Commissioner Anderson will tell you, she's been there with me, Mark was there. Mark, how many one-gallon buckets did we fill across the street in that.

Mr. Trowbridge: From Books and Books, probably about a dozen.

Mayor Lago: A dozen one-gallon buckets of trash were picked out of one hedge adjacent to the Aragon Parking Garage.

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*



Mr. Trowbridge: Its where you see a lot of the staging for the delivery vehicles, like the motorcycles for food delivery.

Mayor Lago: But by the way, you know how that's stopped, we went there, we cleaned it out ourselves, we brought in the landscaping department, landscaping cleaned up the tree, and replace a garbage can right next to that area. And I walk by there at certain times, we cut back the hedge significantly so you can see into the hedge. The problem is that they were using it as a garbage can because you can't see once you throw the can in there, it goes so deep into those green fichus that its gone forever, they don't see it. But we took out, like he said, a dozen one-gallon buckets, paint buckets that we were walking around with in downtown out of one hedge. That's why I keep stressing that's why we are going to remove all the landscaping on Ponce, which is something that we haven't done in years, at least a decade, at a minimum. That needs to be done. We need to plant trees. We need to plant small hedges that stay low. We need to maintain those hedges, and we need to hold entities with development agreements accountable. This is not an indictment on staff, our existing staff and the new members and our directors. They are stepping up to the challenge. I'm just bringing this to everybody's awareness here on the Commission and using this opportunity in the Sunshine to have a real discussion that this is not going anywhere. This is only getting worse, because more and more people area coming to our city, and they are not respecting the City Beautiful. So, I'm asking you, as the budget comes out, to please consider reallocating money to Code Enforcement; reallocating money to cleaning up the downtown. Why do I think its important? I think its important because 27 percent of our tax base comes from the downtown. If you want to see more money for the residential neighborhoods, you need to raise the property values in the downtown, because a lot of that money goes to subsidize the rest of the budget. If you want to see beautification issues really brought to fruition and hold people accountable, then we need to hold those people who have development agreements, like for example, the building on the corner of Ponce and Alhambra, that hasn't changed their landscaping in 25 years. I don't even think they have landscaping. That needs to happen. So, these are things that I will be bringing up at the next budget, as we commence the budget process. These will be priorities for me, and I would really appreciate if my colleagues would consider helping Code Enforcement, helping Landscaping, helping the Manager now as they go into a new RFP for landscaping services in the downtown, that we are very, very strict and its going to cost money, they are not going to do this for free, its going to cost money, but we are very strict, and we can do it, we can do it, and I'll give you an example. Go to Palm Beach and look at their downtown. If you want to see how Palm Beach looks, go adjacent to across from Coral Gables Senior High where the sale center is for the new retirement community that's coming. Have you seen it? They have a beautiful building, and they have all brand-new landscaping in front of it. They are selling a dream; they are selling a lifestyle. They have perennials that are planted, that are beautiful. Its maintained. That's the way our downtown should look. It shouldn't be a momentary blip to sell a dream and then you walk away, and the landscaping can remain the way it is, that's unacceptable. So, with that being said, I have nothing else. Commissioner Fors.

Commissioner Fors: Just a quick couple of observations, because we've been discussing this matter so much recently. When we look at how to solve this problem, for me, one of the critical questions that always comes up for me right at the beginning, and it came to my mind as we began to discuss this particular situation where Mark and the Mayor picked up garbage in that area is,

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

let's analyze – if the Mayor walks out of a restaurant and sees an empty bag of chips in the bushes, it could be a problem or could not be a problem. It may not be a problem if somebody threw it there right before he came out and a private contractor is coming the next day at 6 a.m. to pick it up. Now if it's still there after 6 a.m. then it's a bigger problem. In this case, you were able to identify pretty clearly that it was from the Columbian.

Mr. Trowbridge: Some of it.

Commissioner Fors: Yes, some of it, which establishes that it's been there for more than two weeks, so that's a problem. As opposed to some of the other things, and sometimes perhaps Mayor, you should not pick up certain things and pass by to see if its still there the next day.

Mr. Trowbridge: I don't believe you could do that.

Mayor Lago: My OCD just takes over. Mark tried his best to walk away from the garbage. I said listen, we can't leave this, this is Friday. People are going to see this all weekend.

City Manager Iglesias: I think Commissioner, I think you bring up a very good point, because we have a contract coming up, but certainly there is going to be a different cost in picking up once a month, once a week, once a day, or once an hour. So, there is a different cost associated with all that. So, it's something we have to look at and see at what cycle do we want, because there is a different cost to that. And just like FedEx cost \$25 and the Post Office cost 60 cents, we cannot pick it up every hour or every day, there is a cost involved in that, that with this new contract coming up, we need to look at that and certainly we can address that with the Commission. But there is a cost to implementing something depending on what schedule you want and how often you want to do it.

Commissioner Fors: Point number two – agreed; point number two, and perhaps this is intelligence that we can incorporate into the GIS system when its fully, maybe we are even able to do it already is, for instance, I know that Giralda had a lot of litter right after St. Patrick's Day. So, when we have these annual or even semi-annual, bi-annual events that we know cause a lot of litter, we can put that in the system and understand which areas experience a lot of litter right after those events and when those events are. For instance, we can input now Giralda the day after St. Patrick's Day, we can even attempt to schedule the next Columbian election at the Consulate in the GIS system and at least we'll be able to respond to those high-volume litter events and be expecting them and get trash off the streets as soon as possible. I think that's a form of intelligence that could be beneficial. Third, finally, this problem is a two-sided problem, which is the failure to cite people or warn people fast enough. I don't want to say failure, maybe the inability to do it fast enough just because of capacity and shear geographical area. The other is, perhaps maintenance contractors are not cleaning as good as we expect them to, but then there is also the other side of the issue, which is the person actually throws it out and throws it in the swale or throws in whatever area we end up finding it. Maybe we need to look at some kind of notice enforcement on that end. What comes to mind is, I remember I went to, in addition, to what we've already discussed. I'm saying there are two sides of the issue. I remember I went to Arizona once and I noticed because the people I was visiting happen to be smokers, I noticed that they all had this fear of God for throwing

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

a cigarette but on the ground. Now, I was thinking to myself, how did the local government achieve, accomplish all these folks having the fear of God of not throwing their cigarette but on the ground? By the way, in that case, it was littering but it was also the risk of fires, because its so dry over there. And perhaps there's something to be done on that end of the problem to make people understand whether they are residents of Coral Gables or not, that you cannot litter here, that it's a really big deal, we take it very seriously. I don't know if it comes in the form of education or even in the form of fines.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Yes, that's the only way. Its funny, my daughter did a science project on this, off of I-95, where we monitored for six months to see the litter and then we looked to see like how often the contractor went out, how many citations were issued for littering – zero. Zero. It was a trash can. The City of Coral Gables is nothing like that, but people – it needs to be that you enforce that you're not allowed to throw stuff on the sidewalk. That's it. Because we can only clean up after you for so long.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cabrera, I think what we have, we have also three months before June 30<sup>th</sup>, and I think now with the new dedicated Code Enforcement officers to the downtown and with the new contract that's forthcoming, that's going to hit the street soon, we are sending a very strong message. I'm going to be very clear on the dais. I will not accept, and I welcome everyone to please drive by Ponce and Bird Road and look at the median, which has just been cut, all you see is the roots. Look at the amount of bottles and trash that's inside of that hedge that no longer exist, but they obviously have to clean it out now and they are going to replant that area with some beautiful low-lying brush. Its nobody's fault, just something that we weren't analyzing for years. But you get a guy like me which is very OCD, don't laugh, because you're the same way, and you have people like Mark who will sit there and the Manager who'll do the same thing and this is going to be a priority. So, I just want staff to understand, and I tell them consistently when I see them that I'm proud of their efforts, but we've got to take this to the next level. And I know that we can, and we are going to allocate the necessary resources, and I'm asking you to support me on this with the Manager, to make sure that we really put our best foot forward. We have three months before June 30<sup>th</sup>. I want to see those sidewalks clean. I want buy-in from the Chamber, which is putting their best foot forward, from the B.I.D. and from every single entity in the downtown. Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: I just want to create sort of, as everyone was speaking, I started thinking what's the perfect example of the ideal situation in terms of cleanliness. I don't know how they do it, but hopefully with our collectively efforts we can get to the point where, when you walk into the Magic Kingdom you don't see any gum, you don't see any garbage, and they have more people, I think going to the Magic Kingdom on a daily basis than we have going to the downtown.

Development Services Director Cabrera: They have staff following people around.

Commissioner Menendez: I'm more than willing to put a Winnie the Poo costume on, if I need to, or maybe my colleagues would like to do that. But I think, you know, can we attain that level? – I don't know. I'm sure a lot of factors are involved, but I think that's the vision to have it to the point where everyday that goes by, people want to come back, because if the Magic Kingdom

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

encountered the same challenges we did, I don't think a lot of people would be going as often as they do. So obviously, it's a way to bring people in. So that's the vision that popped into my mind and hopefully collectively we can get there.

City Manager Iglesias: That's a very intensive vision and very expensive vision.

Mayor Lago: I appreciate it though, because you've got to shoot high.

Commissioner Anderson: You can come out in a Winnie the Poo costume with us the next clean up. Maybe people will pay to come see it.

Commissioner Fors: Ms. Cabrera you were going to say something?

Development Services Director Cabrera: Yes. You mentioned about when we have an event to have it known so that we can go back and clean up that area. In InterGov we are going to have a special event permit which will have an automatic inspection to go out and verify the area after the event is over. Code Enforcement will be automatically, it will be on their to-do list, so that they'll go the next day and check if there is anything broken, is it cleaned up, did they do what they have to do, so that is something that we have implemented in InterGov. When we are full force in InterGov that will be in there.

City Manager Iglesias: And that's our new enterprise system Mayor, that will take care of a lot of these issues and as soon as we move in into the building we will have electronic plan review, we'll have the implementation of InterGov, actually by the end of the year we'll also have the implementation of the finance program. So, we'll be fully integrated by the end of the year.

Mayor Lago: So, in closing, I want to reiterate. Thank you Mark for being here, as always, I appreciate that.

Mr. Trowbridge: I came to get the garbage.

Mayor Lago: Its right here.

[Laughter]

Mayor Lago: Let me help you with the garbage.

Commissioner Anderson: Beautiful service, always.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Mark. In closing, I want to say thank you, because you and I have these discussions constantly and I know you are working with your team and you're hiring new people and I think there are brighter days ahead. I ask of you to do me a favor, through the Manager's office please, make sure along with Public Works Department, when you go out to visit, or your team goes out to visit on a call, or they are driving and they stop and see a business, don't just go blinders on looking at one issue. I do that sometimes. Its time to look wholistically at the entire

*City Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2022*

situation that we are facing. Look at the alley; look at the paint on the building; look at the window, is there a broken window. We talked about a building that was called in multiple times that we are waiting months for windows to be replaced. I know that we are coming out of a pandemic, there are some issues, but we need to look at not only the sidewalks and the gum and the trash. We need to look at the entire building, the entire entity that we are facing before us, to ensure that we are just not addressing one issue and there's weeds in the alley and there is a broken window and there is a car under a tarp with four broken tires on the swale, those are things that we need to really address. And I hope that staff understands the importance of that. And its not to fine people, its not about making money. This is about having people come into compliance. Give them a warning and say hey, you have 30 days to comply. That's my goal.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Its completely understood and that's part of the training the staff which we have a, between Doug and I, we've come up with a training program that we think is going to be very, very successful, and we'll be doing that as soon as we have the software implemented and everything done. Right now, we're sort of hobbling along, but July.

Mayor Lago: And if there is any way, and I'll ask you to look into this if you can, through the Manager, is there any way to incentivize Public Works and Code Enforcement, incentivize to see what other cities are doing, I'm in favor of that.

Development Services Director Cabrera: Understood.

Mayor Lago: Private sector incentives work, and I want people to feel that the harder they work, the more they look, the more that they push the City Beautiful mantra, there will be benefits for them. So, thank you for being here. I appreciate it.

Mr. Trowbridge: Thank you.