

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item M – Discussion Items**  
**October 9, 2018**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Frank Quesada**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**  
**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item M – Discussion Items [3:34:02 p.m.]

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there anything else to come before the meeting?

Commissioner Lago: Yes, we do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK.

Commissioner Lago: Really quickly. Commissioner Keon, you have any comments?

Commissioner Keon: I'd like to bring to the Manager's attention is, we seem to regularly get complaints about the staging plans or contractors following the staging plans for buildings under construction. In that North Gables area there is a lot of activity now. They are going to start with 33 Alhambra then they go to 44 Zamora; there's another building being built up in that area now. You need a strategy or some sort of a plan with Code Enforcement or a way to monitor construction sites. I don't know if you do that now. It doesn't seem that its regularly done, but that I don't know if it's Code Enforcement who monitors that or who is it?

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner we've already done the north/south code enforcement and so each construction site will now be monitored and we've already changed to the north and south with two supervisors.

Commissioner Keon: OK. But, you need to designate all active building sites on their review list or watch list or whatever you call, however they do, but all active construction sites need to be reviewed a couple times a week.

City Manager Iglesias: Every construction site will be documented and will be part of the weekly review. In addition to that, we will look at also historical sites to make sure we don't have any demolition by neglect. We are starting early to make sure the construction starts on time and not six in the morning. So that's already being implemented. We are in the process of putting GPS on all those vehicles, so that's being implemented as we speak.

Commissioner Keon: A lot of it is where the workers park, that they park all over and take up all the street parking and those are areas where there is a lot of residential parking because there is very limited parking, so we need to be very cognizant of that. That's all. Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: I have a few points, if you don't mind.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Commissioner Lago: First off, I want to congratulate staff. We got a matching grant from the TPO. I sent you a memo on that. I know that Kevin and his staff are working on answering this. And the whole purpose of the matching grant, which will be used toward expanding electric vehicle services by the Freebie to connect passengers from the originating location to the regional transit options. So that's a \$209,000 grant that we got, as a result of being involved with the TPO. So, we are one of 11 cities so that's a good thing.

City Manager Iglesias: We appreciate this.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, it's a good thing for the City, chiefly for the downtown. I want to talk to you; I want to take a few minutes, I know it's been a long meeting, but I think it's something that we – we need to make a decision on how we are going to address this issue. I don't know if you saw the Miami-Dade or the Miami Herald article on October 7<sup>th</sup>, which talks about the Douglas Station Development Project. I've already been hit pretty hard on Twitter as having known about this project and I put it on the record that I had no clue of the magnitude of this project.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I don't think any of us did.

Vice Mayor Quesada: It's a City of Miami project.

Commissioner Lago: So its Miami-Dade County.

City Attorney Ramos: It's in the City of Miami, but the land is owned by Miami-Dade County.

Commissioner Lago: So let me tell you a little bit about what I found out, because I guess I maybe should have done more homework, because there is something in the County where it's called a community urban center or a metropolitan urban center; 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue; 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue; South Miami, are community urban centers. They are allowed to have 125 dwelling units per acre and a 25-story maximum height. Douglas is one of the few community, excuse me, metropolitan urban centers which allows 250 units an acre and up to 40-stories. So, let me just give you a little bit of information in regards to what was approved administratively; and Madam City Attorney correct me if I'm wrong. It was approved administratively at the County. We as a City, City of Miami or City of Coral Gables, did not have a seat at the table to even talk about the project or what we could potentially do or how we could be potentially involved, how this would affect us.

City Attorney Ramos: So, there was a comp plan amendment for which we did receive notice and that was a public process at County Commission, but that was not the site plan review. The site plan review is an administrative process that was done by County staff.

Commissioner Lago: And by the way that comp notice, we were notified the same day as the actual meeting.

City Attorney Ramos: The same day as the committee meeting.

Commissioner Lago: So, there wasn't like a 24-48 or one week notice for the City to go out there and get ready for this meeting. It was literally from one moment to the next, the meeting is happening in three hours, come down if you want to voice your opinion.

City Attorney Ramos: That said, I just have to add, it did go before the County Commission twice. I believe staff did not have concerns because it was just a min and a max, like most comprehensive plan amendments are within the site plan review, but Mr. Trias is here if he'd like to speak to it.

Commissioner Lago: So let me put it into a little bit of perspective. This site is 7 acres, you are going to have 1,500 dwelling units, you are going to have 40-stories, it's going to one of the

largest buildings south of downtown. You are going to have 770 parking spaces, 300 hundred are for transit users, and 440 are for residents. So, what I'm expecting is a big drain in regards to our infrastructure, our trolley, our Freebie. It's going to be a major issue. It's going to be massive amounts of Uber people driving around once this gets built. They are donating \$1 million dollars to The Underline. To put that into context; Gables Station, I think donated \$4 or \$5 million dollars.

City Attorney Ramos: Peter how much was it?

City Manager Iglesias: Around \$3 million.

City Attorney Ramos: It was two-something.

Commissioner Lago: Around \$3 million dollars; and let me give you some numbers in regards to Gables Station, so you can see how massive this project is.

Commissioner Mena: Weren't they subject to the same – didn't we follow suit on City of Miami?- why weren't they subject to the same...?

Commissioner Keon: No – because it's not our jurisdiction. They don't care.

Commissioner Mena: I thought City of Miami passed a similar ordinance where they committed "X" amount of impact fees.

Commissioner Lago: Well they did, but this is Miami-Dade County. So these people, they are giving \$1 million dollars to The Underline. Just to give you an idea, Gables Station, which is a project I did not vote in favor is 120 units an acre and 160 feet in height, and its 14-stories; and when you look at that, I think there was around 4 acres or 4 and-a-half acres in that site. They are going to put 1,500 units on Douglas Station. So now there's – and I'm just kind of notifying you, because you need to understand that people are going to ask you, because they've already mentioned on Twitter several times, because I was quoted in the article and I pleaded, I don't know, I wasn't there, I'm not aware of what's going on. A lot of people have been misunderstanding where they think that all the Metrorail Stations are going to be exactly the same. So you have certain Metrorail Stations, which are going to have 3 or 400 unit buildings and structures. This is a metropolitan urban center, which is going to have 1,500 units. We did not know that. So, I really think that we have to ask staff, our City Attorney if you stand by me on this issue, I think that we need to have our City Attorney and our City Manager to review the process, sit down with our staff, discuss the process with the County Attorney to see what options we have at our disposal. I am not excited. I do not want to even consider how detrimental this is going to be for the City of Coral Gables and the City of Miami in regards to the impacts

that it's going to have. I would like to see if our staff can prepare a recommendation that will address our concerns, which I've voiced a lot of them today and then discuss these concerns with the City of Miami, City Attorney and City Manager to see maybe we have some sort of Sunshine Meeting; and then report back to the City Commission and I'm willing and I've talked to the City Attorney, if this Commission will indulge me, that I want to make sure we have all options on the table.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What does our friend, the Mayor of Miami say?

Commissioner Lago: From what I remember his quote in the article was, hold on, bear with me one second, and by the way I'm in favor of TOD's, I'm in favor of development on the corridor, on the spine of the Metrorail, but you are telling me you are going to four times more development than in the other Metrorail Stations than this one? In an area which is already incredibly congested on Bird Road where you've seen all those buildings pop up. I don't think it works. His comments – let me see where they were, excuse me.

Commissioner Keon: Excuse me, I just got a message from somebody that the City channel has no audio.

Commissioner Mena: I did too. Chelsea told me that it is on.

Commissioner Keon: It is on?

Commissioner Lago: Miami Mayor said he was unaware of the expanded plans, size, height and density. Though he said he supports increased density at Metrorail Stations, which I agree with. He questioned why the County and developers did not consult with neighbors and adjoining jurisdictions to see if a 40-story tower and increase in intensity would be acceptable. 40-stories there is nothing in the vicinity that is of that magnitude or height, Suarez said. Knowing that residents in nearby neighborhoods like Silver Bluff, fought much shorter towers on S.W. 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I think people in those neighborhoods would be surprised. People have objected to buildings that have the height of this tower. For me first, we communicate with the surrounding community and then you let the community guide you as to what is appropriate. We try to convince the public there's a benefit that outweighs whatever issues there may be. I think his opinion is what this Commission has always stood by. So, I'd like to see if we can have a City Manager and City Attorney reach out to the City of Miami, maybe we can have some sort of Sunshine meeting, then reach out to the County. But, I want to make sure the County is aware that I want to move quickly and I want to have all options on the table to address this issue. If this gets built in our backyard, I'm already getting slammed on Twitter as it they can't believe that we didn't know about this and that we weren't aware of this – 1,500 units and 40-stories.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: What would you like to do?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think that the City Attorney should study it.

Commissioner Mena: Look, I don't know the details of it. I saw the article here today, somebody sent it to me as well, very upset about it. So, I'm certainly interested in looking into what our options are and what we can do.

Commissioner Keon: We need to disclaim it quickly.

Commissioner Lago: I'll show you the comments on Twitter.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They shouldn't blame us.

City Attorney Ramos: What I propose is that I reach out to the Assistant County Attorney who worked on the matter to talk about process, that staff continue their review of what notice we may or may not have gotten so that we are clear.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Or what notices are needed to get.

City Attorney Ramos: And, that I consult with Ms. Mendez at the City of Miami and if there is political will have a Sunshine meeting, at the next meeting we can talk about scheduling between the two Commissions; and then decide how we want to approach the County.

Commissioner Lago: Again, I don't have an issue with there being a project there. I don't have an issue with there being a project there that's geared toward TOD's, but not 1,500 units, and I think we should be at the table, especially when, don't forget our trolleys go into Douglas Station, so what are they going to be using?- they are going to be using our trolleys and our infrastructure. Is the City of Coral Gables committed to \$15 million dollars to The Underline, you are telling me that the project is going to have 1,500 units is only going to commit \$1 million dollars to the Underline? I think you are shortchanging the residents and we are potentially going to have an issue on our hands and I'd rather have a seat at the table to negotiate the magnitude of this project than let the County dictate what should go there.

City Manager Iglesias: Madam City Attorney, I'll be happy to discuss with that with you and the Miami City Attorney.

City Attorney Ramos: And the City Manager as well...

City Manager Iglesias: And the City Manager as well.

City Attorney Ramos:...and report back at the next meeting.

Commissioner Lago: 1,500 units we should be at the table, especially when, don't forget our trolleys go into Douglas Station, so what are they going to be using? They are going to be using...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright – anything else? I would like to announce to him too that the City Manager is going to be sworn in Thursday at 11 and for everybody who wants to be there to celebrate and there will be food, champagne, caviar, whatever it is, courtesy of the City Manager – Thursday at 11.

Commissioner Lago: Thursday at 11 – perfect.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Thursday at 11?

Commissioner Lago: Can you send out an invite Mayor, if you don't mind, tell us where it's going to be.

[End: 3:47:16 p.m.]