

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-7
May 10, 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
Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro
Assistant Parks and Recreation Director, Carolina Vester

Public Speaker(s)

Gay Bondurant
Marlin Ebert

Agenda Item G-7 [3:35 p.m.]
Discussion regarding Country Club operations.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)
(Sponsored by Commissioner Menendez)

Mayor Lago: Alright, moving on to G-7.

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Agenda Item G-7 - Discussion regarding Country Club operations.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, Commissioners, we will be providing an update regarding the Coral Gables Country Club. I wanted to share the major issues and the current status of the facility. Throughout this process, we have worked to keep the community and neighbors informed, and we will host open houses this Saturday and Sunday, just 13 days after taking over management. I would like to thank the many Coral Gables team members that have been tirelessly working on this project, many thanks to Legal, our Parks Department, our Public Works and maintenance -- and Facilities Maintenance, IT, Finance, HR, and Economic Development. This happens -- this is -- has been a team effort and is the result of our outstanding and truly dedicated team. My special thanks to our City Attorney for her fantastic efforts on this. And with that, I'll turn it over to Community Recreation, who will now provide a more detailed update.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Good afternoon again. If we can have the...

Mayor Lago: Carolina, how are you?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Presentation. So, right now, we'd like to show you just a few of our images when we started doing the assessment of the building. When we got in there on Monday, these are kind of the things that we found. Carolina, I'll let you...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Yeah. So, this side is actually the seating area with the Liberty Café side. This is actually the only part of the historical building from the 1920s, the rest had burned down in the fire in the '80s. So, you have the historic arched windows there that are of historical significance to that building. We knew there was extensive termite damage. I guess we didn't know just how bad until we went in there and did the initial assessment. So, these beams are just decorative.

City Manager Iglesias: (INAUDIBLE) if I may say something. There are three beam failures in this splice. The new (INAUDIBLE) in the middle.

Mayor Lago: So...

City Manager Iglesias: And let me...

Commissioner Anderson: Say that again.

City Manager Iglesias: Sorry, I had to say that.

Mayor Lago: You and I understand that.

City Manager Iglesias: I had to say that.

Mayor Lago: You and I understand that. Speak...

Commissioner Menendez: (INAUDIBLE) asking him for help.

Mayor Lago: Speak so under -- speak so everybody else understands.

City Manager Iglesias: I had to say that, but the middle is where you don't splice the beams.

Mayor Lago: Yes, yes.

City Manager Iglesias: So, I am sorry, but I had to say that.

Mayor Lago: No, no. That's...

City Manager Iglesias: But I'll talk to you, so you understand.

Mayor Lago: Between you and I. Look, I'm very happy -- just so you know, I'm very happy that you've included this picture.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: There's a few more pictures, and you'll see...

Mayor Lago: Yeah, but I just want you to -- I want you -- I want to tell you this because, first off, both of you have done incredible job. I have to commend you. And I know that I've been saying that. I'll continue to say that. I ran into you yesterday at lunch. You know, I wanted to tell you how much of a good job you're doing. The Manager challenged you. You always step up. You deserve all the credit, all of it belongs to you and your team. I'm happy that you're putting these pictures up there because when -- you know, there's been a battle for a year and a half over the country club, and we're taking assets back, okay? Ortanique, they owed us hundreds -- I think hundreds of thousands dollars in back rent. The country club, you're seeing the state of the country club, okay? Issues that we're having with Burger Bob's, we're now going to deliver on a world-class, you know, facility for the neighborhood. It's going to be something great. The golf, the same situation. And that's going to continue to happen across the City. We're going to deliver the best for the residents and for this community. This is unacceptable for a City asset, for somebody who was entrusted and is paying \$20,000 a month in rent, which is a steal, similar to what Merrick Park, in my opinion, was doing in the lack of landscaping, the lack of accountability. This, to me, you know, we should be embarrassed. We should be embarrassed. They should be embarrassed -- excuse me -- to basically turn their back on a City asset of this importance and let it deteriorate to this level. And when we talked about taking over and the fact that on the first day, we literally had to close it and we had to tent it, you know, it was an uproar, like Commissioner Menendez said, a lack of -- you know, it was misinformation about what was our plan, what were we doing. When you guys saw the state of this building, you had to take action. And I would love for you to continue showing the pictures because this is a story that I think should be told so people understand that you can't leave an asset like this and continue to run it. You have to step in there

-- and I know the contractor who's working there. He didn't want to tell me the extent of the work. He goes, "Vince, I have a confidentiality agreement. I work for the City. I know we're friends." All of us in the construction industry, we know each other. He told me, "I cannot believe that this got to this state." There's parts of the building could have collapsed...

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah, I know. This is...

Mayor Lago: Because of the state it was in.

Commissioner Anderson: This is horrific.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. So, please show it so people understand it. I think it's important.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And it's important to note we did do an assessment before, but we really couldn't get into stuff...

Mayor Lago: Walls.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Until we actually had the keys turned over to us, so the keys were literally turned over to us last Monday. Tuesday, the Manager was onsite, everybody from Public Works. We walked through with the contractors, and we started exposing things, and that's when we really found the extent of the damage. So, the beam that you see right here, that's just decorative. We didn't even get yet into the rafters and what's above that. So, and...

City Manager Iglesias: And we could see that (INAUDIBLE) were so high that...

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

City Manager Iglesias: There was so much cracking in the plaster that you could tell there was eminent failure in some of these areas.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You can tell in these images this is exactly what the Manager's talking about. We could see the ceiling...

Mayor Lago: Stress.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You can see the stress. You can see that there wasn't a lot holding it up, and then we found out.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And this is all the wood...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, that's...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: You know, framing, the windows. I mean, it's literally -- you just push your finger right through and it's crumbling, and the inside is hollow. And in the middle there, you see one of the rafters exposed once we got in there.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: That's the termite damage.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Pretty extensive termite damage.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. I mean, this -- it's a building that hasn't been taken care of in...

City Manager Iglesias: Rot.

Mayor Lago: In a decade.

City Manager Iglesias: Rot and termite damage.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And the Manager was pointing out to some beams that had been repaired at one point in time, poorly. And you can see that that's the newer wood section in the left-side picture. So, there was actually already a failure that had happened that we weren't aware of, of the ceiling collapsing, and they basically just patched it back together. So, there is obviously more than just the termite -- with the termite conditions, it's not just in the wood and the building. We also have subterranean termites. So, as -- after the tenting takes place, they'll be doing treatments underground for the subterranean. And what we found, that affected all the ballroom floors. So, we originally thought we had water damage because they were all warped. And as they started exposing the ballroom wood floors, it's not actually the water damage. It's that the subfloors had rotted out and were all eaten up from termite damage as well. So, we haven't gone through the whole floors yet, but we know that there's extensive damage, and we'll find out more as we go into that later this week.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: This is Liberty Café over here on the right. They had all that wood paneling. And as you can see, as we started lifting that up, what was behind there on the walls. And we have an image later on, we were able to complete something there that you'll see the Liberty Café and the difference in the look.

Vice Mayor Mena: What's the --? With respect to the Liberty Café, what's the gameplan? I know we talked a little bit about there's going to be a concession arrangement, but the...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We...

Vice Mayor Mena: Build-out, is it going to effectively be...?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's the same way.

Vice Mayor Mena: Cosmetic updates of what's there now basically?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah. You'll see the cosmetic...

City Manager Iglesias: You will see a picture of that, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You'll see the cosmetic update, and then some equipment upgrades later on.

City Manager Iglesias: We're working on an agreement right now with what we feel is a company that can do excellent work and provides -- should be excellence performance.

Vice Mayor Mena: Great.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, also, we've been doing -- obviously, for the last year already, there's been roof work being done. We did a small interruption to the roof work while we're tenting. The tenting should go down, if not by end of day today, tomorrow. So, they've mobilized very fast. They had a big team to do all of that. So, one of the big concerns, of course, and that's been a hot topic of discussion is the pool pump room underneath the pool, and the leaks of the pool, and the damage that has happened over extensive period of years.

City Manager Iglesias: Which is the pool equipment room -- there is infiltration, so there's chloride damage. We are shoring it up, and we're going to have to provide repairs. Show the next slide.

Mayor Lago: So, that is...

City Manager Iglesias: I'm sorry, the slide now.

Mayor Lago: But can you go back? Can you go back for a second? You didn't touch on that rebar.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Mayor Lago: That rebar -- people really don't realize it. Over that pipe, you see those black lines?

Commissioner Anderson: Right.

Mayor Lago: That's not lines. That is exposed rebar.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: So, what you're seeing there is the actual concrete delaminating.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, concrete spalling.

Mayor Lago: And you have concrete spalling. So, that eventually could result in, obviously, a structural collapse.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah.

City Manager Iglesias: There is a (INAUDIBLE)...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We have a piece that...

City Manager Iglesias: Damage so we are...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: They have a piece that fell on poor Mitch.

City Manager Iglesias: We're already putting pro-shores. We've put pro-shores throughout.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. So, what they're doing is they're -- like the Manager said, they put pro-shores, which are not -- I don't see them there, which is holding up that structure until you can come back, remove corroded rebar, and repour that slab.

City Manager Iglesias: There's also secondary beams that...

Mayor Lago: Yeah, or beams and columns, whatever is required.

Commissioner Menendez: So, to understand a little bit more in terms of the location, so you have the pool that's below or...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, this is below the pool. So, this is where your pump storage chemical chlorination system room. The first thing that we wanted to prioritize is getting -- making sure that all the plumbing is up-to-date, it's secured properly, because a lot of that had corroded. You didn't want to have failures there, so we wanted to do that right away. We have a pool company...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We did that.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: That's doing that, cleaning the pool, assessing all the -- not just the pool, but also all the fountains on the perimeter. the next step -- and we'll go over some of the steps coming up. We're going to do a leak detection, so we'll do a dye test in the pool. We'll identify all the leaks. We'll probably have to look at resurfacing and acid wash of the pool vessel and maybe long down the road, we'll have to do more of a bigger repair to the pool.

Commissioner Menendez: So, that's going on over the last, who knows, 10 years or so. Meanwhile, we have kids, families swimming in the pool with this right underneath them. That's terrifying.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, also, you know, everybody has been working hard on this. Just to get the tent -- the building tented, we had to do an extensive landscaping removal because they have to do a complete seal, and it's a pretty large, massive building. So, Greenspace Management, as well as the contracted staff, they've been doing all the clearing of the landscaping, so the entire City has mobilized since last Monday to really stop -- I mean nonstop work in the site and this building to fast track and try to commit to reopening as quickly as possible.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, as the City Manager mentioned, we're looking at doing an open house for the fitness center and start membership drive this coming Saturday and Sunday from 10 to 3, so we'll do an open house. We'll have the ability to register people. They can see the fitness -- we'd like to show -- we don't have the new fitness equipment in, but we have entered into a contract for it, so we want to show the pictures of some of the stuff that we've purchased that's on the way. We're hoping, if we do have an agreement with the concessionaire, that they will be there to greet the public and let them know who they are and what they're going to bring to it, to the café. It won't be called Liberty Café. We'll come with a different one. So, then we're hoping that we can actually open the fitness center for operations that Monday. It is

subject to some state licensing. One of the things that when we had the agreement with the country club and the separation, they did at the end agreed to transfer the licensing, but then -- so we had to get the licensing, then we had to send it to the State. And I do know that we have our friends in the State working for us to expedite that. I know Naomi's helping us with that as well and trying to get that done. So, if we can get that operating, then we will open as soon as we can. We do have our fitness center manager. He has been hard at work, and we are already hiring some other staff that will be in there that day with them.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Just for the fitness center operation, some things that we've accomplished is not just opening the doors. We had to draft membership agreements that have to comply with the Department of Agriculture's Consumer Safety Act, so you have to draft agreements. They have to be reviewed as part of the application for the state license. We've also had to draft new agreements with all the instructors, so there's a variety of fitness instructors that the membership there really, really is fond of and wants to keep. We're working with those individuals. We have to draft a formal agreement so that they become contractors under the City umbrella, and they have to comply with the requirements.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: And we have had at least one of the instructors has already been doing classes over at the Youth Center in the meantime. And we have given certain members -- they've been using the Youth Center in the meantime until we can get open.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Yes, we prorated the fee, so it's just one month so that they can continue to use the fitness center at the Youth Center. It's not up to the same standard that they're used to, but they're happy to be able to continue to, you know, use their regular equipment and their exercise routines and work with Andy, the instructor we have at the Youth Center.

Commissioner Menendez: I'm sorry to cut you -- interrupt you. I want to piggyback on what the Mayor said. Just in what you described in terms of drafting agreements, licensing, everything that you all do behind the scenes, I know I've reached out to you and you're in the middle of reviewing agreements, drafting agreements. It's a monumental task. You're doing an amazing job, the fact that you're having an open house, the fact that we're right around the corner of having this reopen fully, but yet, you're doing everything possible to make the experience not only enjoyable but safe. I want folks in the community to understand that this isn't just like, "Give me the keys to the country club." Now you open the doors. There's so much that goes on behind the scenes that you all don't get credit for. It's amazing work, so I just -- just like the Mayor said, you all do so much that you don't get credit for. So, I agree with the Mayor.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And I will say we can't just take the credit ourselves. Normally, I say we don't have an army, but we have a village in the City, and they've come together. I will tell you that our facilities team, they surprised me on Thursday. It's been a rough week. Last week, at 8:30, I showed up on site. I don't know what time they got there, but between their team, they moved all the furnishings out of every ballroom to prep the space, so as soon as the tent comes down, they can start on the wood floors. I mean, I didn't -- at 8:30 in the morning, and they were done. So, that shows you, if the team is committed and they envision this to be successful, they will come. So, we have a village, and they're here to represent the City and make sure that we're able to open back up as soon as possible.

Mayor Lago: Again, but I know you don't want to take credit.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: No.

Mayor Lago: But a team has a vision because of leadership. So, when people started calling, saying how could this place be closed for a month, it's a little bit of an issue on that. But nobody in this community had an understanding of the depth of structural issues that that building had.

So, you know, we need to take a step back and understand that we can't always rush to judgment. And we have to take an understanding and take a step back because can you imagine if we would have opened up that building and somebody would have gotten injured? It's a life safety issue. And then you're in a situation where -- forget the money it would cost the City. Then you could - - who knows what could happen? Who knows what could happen? And plus, the amount of -- I heard there were some places infested by termites. That doesn't happen from one day to the next.

Commissioner Anderson: No, that's at least...

Mayor Lago: That doesn't happen from one day.

Commissioner Anderson: A decade of damage.

Mayor Lago: That just shows neglect and a lack of interest on a City asset.

Commissioner Fors: And...

City Manager Iglesias: We thought the flooring collapse was due to rot. It was due to termite damage. That's how extensive it is. So, it's a combination of termites and then rot, and it's being going on for quite some time. I viewed on Tuesday, for instance, the cooling tower. The three compressors have to be replaced. It's almost falling down.

Mayor Lago: And how much have we spent already on the roof, and how much have we spent already on the air conditioning?

City Manager Iglesias: Well, each one of those -- I'm not sure how much those compressors are, but I would say...

Mayor Lago: But how much did we spend already? We spent...

City Manager Iglesias: Oh, on the roof? Over a million -- about 1.5 million.

Mayor Lago: One point five million and probably about another 500,000 of miscellaneous. We're close to \$2 million, close already spending on this building.

City Manager Iglesias: With the air conditioning, yes.

Commissioner Fors: I'd like to say a final word -- well, not the final word.

Mayor Lago: No, you can say it. Take it.

Commissioner Fors: Final word -- my final word.

Mayor Lago: You can take the final word.

Commissioner Anderson: Your final word.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Fors: First, I mean, you can't even call it neglect. You have to call it gross neglect. But the one thing I wanted to mention was -- the one thing I wanted to do was specially commend, of course, the Parks and Recreation Department, but specially commend our City Manager, Peter Iglesias, and our City Attorney, Miriam Ramos, and the legal team. Had we pursued ordinary legal remedies -- and this is going back to the original settlement agreement with the operator -- had we pursued ordinary legal remedies, this situation would have still been ongoing today and possibly for another year or two of their -- some dispute about, you know, our right to take certain

actions in the lease. It could have lasted for years, during which this important City asset would have continued to deteriorate. Instead, they had the courage, the bravery, and the steely resolve to pursue extraordinary legal remedies because it really was the only choice to protect this asset, and that is something that they knew very well would be characterized in various different ways in the media and by out lookers who -- onlookers who didn't really know what was going on on the inside. They knew they would get heat for it, but they knew it was the only way to protect this asset. I truly believe that 99 percent of administrations would not have had the courage to take this action that they did, but they eventually did pull that trigger and achieved the exact result that we needed to achieve, not only to immediately preserve this asset and not let this situation and deterioration drag on for another year or two, but to secure in the only legal way possible, a transition like the one we're looking at now, where it's only going to be down for a very short period of time to address liability issues and immediate issues with the deterioration of the structure. So, thank you. If there was -- if this was a war -- and I'm not saying it was a war. I don't want to characterize it that way -- but if it was, we would be giving them medals of honor for bravery in the -- I don't know the exact standard -- but bravery in the heat of battle. So, thank you to all of you. And of course, to the Commission as a whole and the Mayor for signing off on it.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Anything else? This is a big step forward.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I don't know if you want to go with the timeline...

Mayor Lago: Yeah, of course.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Of all the things that we've done...

Mayor Lago: Yeah, of course.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: And are doing and will be doing.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, yeah, let's do it. It's important.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So...

Mayor Lago: It's important so people understand, again...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, we...

Mayor Lago: The level of the lift and the level of transparency.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, as we started the -- you know, we talked about we did a complete building assessment for the maintenance and infrastructure needs. We did all the waste removal and litter throughout the building -- and we would have funny stories to tell you about that if you'd like later on -- clearing the building of perishable goods in preparation of termite tenting. We started installing all the IT infrastructure, which is important, you know. If anyone has been in the building, you know that the Wi-Fi is spotty, and the cell service is very spotty. Pool plumbing and pump repairs, what we talked about, the pictures that we showed you. We just shored it up. We didn't the massive concrete vault repairs that we need to do. We did the demolition and repairs to the café seating area, the ceilings, and the rafters. We were looking at the operational plan for the fitness center and the café space, and we're close there. Landscaping and tree trimming in preparation of the tenting. We did the pressure cleaning of the service entrance and the dumpster replacement and some of the oil. There was some stuff back there that we had to take care of as well. And then we're looking at the building rekeying and securing of exterior access points. We're starting on that, and we still need to complete some of the rekeying. You can go to that.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, we're in the second week now, so we're currently tenting the building. If you drive by, you will see a tent up. And like I mentioned, it should be down by end of day today, if not tomorrow. They'll clear the building for us tomorrow, and then we'll be able to go back in on Thursday. We've scheduled some custodial cleaning of the entire building for the rest of the week with a focus on the fitness center because that's what we're going to open first, and we're still going to be doing work throughout the rest of the building. We're going to focus on the exterior painting and the repairs. There is a vine that's on the exterior walls we have tented. Most likely, it will -- you know, will die. We'll have to remove. And it also causes extensive damage over time anyways to the paint and to the façade of the building.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, we're going to redo all of that. We're going to focus from the interior -- the exterior and then move into the interior for the painting. We're looking at the kitchen, doing a brand-new epoxy coating of the delaminated kitchen floors to comply with the Health Department on that and make sure that it's safe for anybody to work in there. We're looking at a complete haul over of all the air conditioning system and refrigeration systems. Most of the freezers, everything works, but there's extensive damages to the doors, the units, et cetera. We need to go ahead and clean and recertify the hood and kitchen exhaust system, as well as the suppression system to be able to reopen and use the kitchen as well as...

Mayor Lago: How dirty was the hood? It's okay. You can say it. I want people to understand the extent...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Let's just say that...

Mayor Lago: The extent of the lack of respect for people going to eat at this restaurant and the hood is that filthy.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: I won't share that we opened the oven doors not 'til later on in the week because nobody really thought to check on the ovens, and there was full out trays of food in the oven, some of it burnt through. Crème brûlées on a tray. So, we found quite a few surprises. And yes, the suppression system was not in compliance right now, and the hood -- we're cleaning that on Thursday, so we'll tell you how bad it is, but it's not looking good.

Commissioner Menendez: So, it would have made it to the Dirty Dining list.

Mayor Lago: So, you know, that's funny because I -- there was an article that came out. I think it was in The Herald that came out talking about the country club and the process that we were taking as a city. Don't worry. The City Attorney doesn't have to cringe or anybody else here. It's the truth. You know, The Herald wrote an article about the country club and the position that the City of Coral Gables took. I wonder if they'll write an article now after watching your presentation and seeing the extent of damage and the lack of respect for a historic building. I mean, they are about history and preserving history. I find that interesting. I find that interesting that an article was written in an effort to sway us from not doing what we had to do, similar to what we had to do in Ortanique was another example, well over six figures of past rent that was due, and now we're in the process of bringing in a new tenant there, which I think is going to be something very positive for the city. The reason why I bring that up is because don't always believe what you read until you see it firsthand. And this is an example of, in my opinion, misleading information, fake news, which is clear as day the current state of the building and the lack of respect for a City-owned asset, especially a historic asset. So, thank you for mentioning that. And by the way, you shouldn't be afraid because I had heard that the kitchen equipment possibly hadn't been cleaned in who knows how long, and you're out there eating that actual food. And I think that's something -- that's filthy, that's gross.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: We even found a freezer that was a walk-in freezer that was hidden behind appliances.

Mayor Lago: And how clean was that?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It was empty.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: No, it had tortellini in there.

Unidentified Speaker: It had tortellini in it.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Let's go back to the...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: If I can have the presentation come back up.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I don't...

Mayor Lago: It's filthy.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Let's just concentrate on what we're going to do. Let's go to the next slide.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah, let's get to the good part.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, I think walking...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I -- we can...

City Manager Iglesias: The building Tuesday morning, it's amazing the condition it was in, but it was also fantastic to see the potential...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: That this place has.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

City Manager Iglesias: The potential is tremendous.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, these are some of the items. It says third week, but it will be ongoing. These are some of the items that we're going to get to. The ballroom, as we talked about, the hardwood floors, that has to be -- if you go in there, you'll see why you need to fix that. We're going to do the pool leak detection, as Carolina said, the repairs, and the acid wash. We're going to do some electrical repairs. We're looking at the window restoration, especially certain areas where we had a little bit of water damage. There is a pool elevator exterior that hasn't worked for we don't know how long, and that's an ADA issue. We need to fix that. Preparation for delivery and installation of the new fitness equipment, we're excited. We're going to get the brand-new, top of the line, what they're used to there, the Technogym. We're going to get the newest version of that equipment. So, we're -- they're not going to -- the only thing they're going to see and notice is that the stuff is new. We're going to do continuation of landscaping, painting, and air conditioning repairs. We're going to keep on with the IT infrastructure, the roof repairs. And as we talked about, there are some improvements that we need to make in the kitchen. So, this is stuff that we have presented before. These are our membership types and our fees. As we transition into a complete open country club, you'll see that we'll be able to offer all those memberships. We're going to concentrate on the fitness memberships right now. The fitness

center is the first thing that's going to open. And then we're going to continue to move forward. You're going to see the pool open, and you're going to see the café open...

Vice Mayor Mena: How does this compare...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: In short order.

Vice Mayor Mena: To the prior membership fees?

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: It's -- so, the only complaint we received -- the fees for residents are in compliance with the fees that were there before. So, a lot of the membership that's reached out to us that are non-residents, they feel that all their fees have almost doubled because they're now being, you know, charged the non-resident rates. So, there's some complaints on that side. There was also a lot of feedback on the need for a couples' membership. So, originally, we had discussed not having one. After extensive feedback from the community, we decided to go ahead and put that back in because that was very important for them. Now...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We did...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Keep in mind that the previous management company offered a lot of BOGOs, buy one, get one.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yes. We had some...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Deals.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We had some feedback that there was some -- a few things like, you know, grandfathered in from -- "Oh, I've been paying 300 forever. That's what

I've been paying." Nothing we could substantiate, but we did find that -- we did find some Buy One Get One Frees, Valentine's specials, that kind of thing, which, you know, we -- as a government entity, based on our fee ordinance, we wouldn't do.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: But otherwise, as a resident, they are basically the same fees.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And we've talked a little bit about this. But again, the membership includes amenities such as the fitness center, the steam room, the pool, and tennis courts, with an initial two-court limit. We are in the process of finalizing negotiations with Neighborhood Tennis for a short-term plan through the end of the summer, and we'll reevaluate the agreement at that time. We're also looking at capacity of no more than 2,000 members and adding component family and platinum membership as part of the membership structure here. Coming soon, so things that we've discussed before -- and really, these came out of membership and resident feedback and lots of conversations. A need for a smoothie bar upstairs in the fitness center, poolside bites and services, a kids' club, programming, and amenities as part of the membership services, looking at member exclusive social events, a new café concept, and an extensive programming schedule for the fitness instructors. So, we're setting up that June schedule, and there was a big need for more classes. And like we mentioned with the fees, those kind of classes, they'll be determined on an annual basis based on direct costs, if there's a fee to them. So, the fitness classes themselves are included in the membership, but if it's personal training classes, semi-private classes, those do have additional fees. And the café.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, yeah, we're working on a prospective agreement. I don't know what the status is currently, but we're close, from what I understand.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: What we can share is...

City Attorney Ramos: Business terms are in good shape, and we're turning an agreement around.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Perfect.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And it's based on what we discussed earlier, a concessionaire agreement.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's the same thing. It's what I discussed earlier, what we want...

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: To do at Burger Bob's. And we -- the concessionaire seems to be in favor of that setup.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Just again, a basic floor plan. And before we end, I want to ask if the team can put up some more pictures...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We have a couple more pictures.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: That we...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Stuff we couldn't get into the presentation by Thursday, but some more completion of stuff that we wanted to show you.

Commissioner Menendez: By the way, what are we doing in terms of getting the photos of the termite damage, the rot to the public? Is there something like a little package we could put on eNews so that everybody sees it? Because I want everybody to understand what's going on, and I think that those pictures are very powerful, and we have some narrative. Somehow, some way we need to get it out.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes...

City Manager Iglesias: Vice Mayor, as I men...

Vice Mayor Mena: I would say yes and no. Look, I...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We can post the presentation maybe.

Vice Mayor Mena: I...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Mena: Listen, I appreciate the -- more -- as much as anybody, the sort of, you know, victory lap, if you will, as far as dealing with a problematic tenant, but we got to shift modes now to positivity and optimism about this asset and getting people excited about being there, I think. So, we just got to be careful about overpromoting...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: For record...

Vice Mayor Mena: The deterioration of the facility because we want members and people to come back and people to use it.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah, let's just move on.

Vice Mayor Mena: So...

Mayor Lago: I mean, Vice Mayor, they're going to come back.

Vice Mayor Mena: No, no. I'm...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: They're going to come back, and we...

Vice Mayor Mena: Listen, I'm just -- it's not a great marketing campaign.

Mayor Lago: But we have to be honest. But we have -- listen, let me be honest with you, okay. Look, we had a conversation here over the last year, and at one point, they were putting up signs on palm trees around the country club to recall me.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Mena: I hear you.

Mayor Lago: Okay?

Vice Mayor Mena: Trust me, I know.

Mayor Lago: To recall me based on the country club.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: And you know, we got to be honest with people about the current state because people are calling me, "Hey, Vince. You're closing the country club." We're not closing the country club.

Commissioner Menendez: Right.

Mayor Lago: we need to explain to you the extent of the damage that was done here. And as fiduciaries on behalf of the City, you can't just allow somebody to walk into this building and fall through the floor.

Commissioner Menendez: Right.

Vice Mayor Mena: Totally.

Mayor Lago: So, trust me, people are going to come back.

Commissioner Menendez: And for me, it's not, you know, a victory lap. It's -- to me, it's just to help recapture the trust of our community. I mean, there were petitions out there. There was a grassroots campaign that painted a picture that was inaccurate. And though a few people understand now why we're not opening immediately, not enough do. And the last thing they remember is hearing from a neighbor that the City is doing things in the, you know, in the...

Commissioner Anderson: Backroom.

Commissioner Menendez: Shadows, backroom deals. And I just want them to know that we're doing right by them. And I agree, I don't want it to be the -- the emphasis should be, going forward,

you're going to have the best country club experience you could ever imagine. Everything we promise you, we're going to deliver. But this is what we're encountering it. We're encountering it for the benefit of you, residents, community. We're here to protect you.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, Commissioner, if I may add, because we have some of our fellow members here from the community who are very concerned and have been advocating for Burger Bob's. That was another situation where we're not going to do right by the community. We've made a significant investment as of today. The architect will be released. This Commission is lockstep in believing that -- what we need for Burger Bob's. The Manager is going to be negotiating now with Rita. But that was not what they told me. That was not. So, we've had multiple incidences where, you know, there's been a kind of narrative of lack of trust, that we're going to do the wrong thing on behalf of this community. We're not going to do the right thing. We're not going to fix the White Way lights. We're not going to buy pieces of property. We're not going to buy parks. We're not going to refurbish parks. We're not going to fix Burger Bob's. We're not going to do the country club. And what do we do as a community? Every -- as a Commission? We come here, we work hard every single time, and we deliver on behalf of the residents. Six hundred thousand dollars for Burger Bob's, and Rita's going to be able to run it in conjunction with the City. So, the reason why I bring that up is because we're committed to this community. And every time that we come up on this dais, we show how committed we are, every single time, every single time. So, they can talk about recalls. They can talk about running for office. I welcome everybody to run for office, it's great. It's a great opportunity. Stand up here and come to these meetings and see how the bread is made, right? I think it's a good opportunity. But when we struggle up here every single day to do the right thing, and when the Manager tells me, "Hey, Vince, we only have X amount of money for this. We won't have X amount of money for that. We got to make a last." We do the best that we possibly can, and this is an example of our staff, the Manager's staff, working relentlessly to deliver on something that this Commission asked and set unreasonable expectations. So, yeah, I'm taking a -- we're taking a little victory lap right now.

Vice Mayor Mena: No, no.

Mayor Lago: We'll take a little victory lap right now, you know, just like we'll take a little victory lap with Burger Bob's, and we'll take another one with the White Way lights. By the way, the White Way lights just started arriving, you know. We'll take a victory lap. We'll take a victory lap when we could take it.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah, absolutely. Listen...

Mayor Lago: And you deserve it.

Vice Mayor Mena: Listen...

Mayor Lago: By the way, the dog park, you've been working on there for five years. That's a victory lap for you.

Vice Mayor Mena: Listen, the facts -- hopefully, I trust that our residents, hopefully, hopefully, see the facts, you know.

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Mena: And the facts, at the end of the day, were there was a proposal made for assets that were in the building. There was a receiver appointed by a court here in Miami-Dade County. That doesn't happen casually or flippantly, or as some lawyers like to say, that it seemed like communist China. I forget what the ridiculous comment was. It happened in an American courtroom by a judge who understood we were trying to preserve an asset. And it was the right move. We did preserve the asset. And within days, the tenant settled for a fraction...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Of what was previously on the table. That wasn't because of anything but they were cornered. And it was either that or open up the books and records and have a real look at what's been going on here for years.

Mayor Lago: And by the way...

Vice Mayor Mena: And so, we made a tough decision.

Mayor Lago: That's a great point you mentioned. To this day -- and it's very important for the record. To this day, Mr. Manager, have they opened the books for us to see the books?

City Manager Iglesias: No, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: No, they did not.

Vice Mayor Mena: And we had to make a tough decision, which frankly was, you know, upsetting to have -- it's tough to -- it's compromise. That's the nature of a settlement. And the compromise was we need to ensure a smooth transition for our residents to get this place open and operating as soon as possible. Trust me, there's nothing more I would have liked than to get into those books and records and shed light on what was actually going on there because everybody knows the answer. But I'm comfortable and happy that we're moving forward, and so that's all my point is. I think people see that. I think people can read between the tea leaves -- can read the tea leaves, excuse me. And you know, I'm excited about what's coming up. And you know, I think I've said this to the Manager, I'll continue to reiterate it. You know, I think we need to do a good job of communication here. I think you have a lot of members. You know, I'm glad we're doing this

event, you know, this weekend. We just need to communicate with people, "Hey listen, the gym will be open as soon as we get our license." It's ready to go. We're ready to move. We just need that state license kind of checked off. Hey, on the café, you just showed a nice picture of stuff you've already done very, very quickly.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yep.

Vice Mayor Mena: As soon as...

City Manager Iglesias: (INAUDIBLE) is the new look.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah, as soon as you get the concession agreement done, it's going to be up and operating. You'll be able to come in and get a cup of coffee. You know, same thing with tennis. It's going to take some more time probably for the event space, but we just need to make sure there's a constant flow of communication so that, you know, people come back, and they know what to expect. They know, hey, I'm not going to be able to go to the gym for...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You're right.

Vice Mayor Mena: Another week, or I'm not going to be able to grab my morning cup of coffee for another two weeks, or whatever it is.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We have -- luckily, we've been in...

Vice Mayor Mena: I know you have. And so...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: No, no. And I will give...

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Carolina a lot of credit in this because she probably talked about 500 people through emails or phone calls. And I will tell you, you know, the feedback that we receive, even if at first they're -- once we -- either I email them or talk to them, or she talks to them, they're perfectly reasonable and they understand. They say, "Oh, that makes perfect sense." So, yes, you're right. As we get the communication out, I think we're going to do well. And we're going to try to do some things in the short-term to, you know, get people some stuff while we're closed. And that's coffee vibes -- if anyone has been to our farmer's market, they know it's a self-contained -- so we got a special event permit for them to be there.

Vice Mayor Mena: Great idea. That's a great idea.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah, and then...

Commissioner Anderson: Excellent.

Commissioner Fors: I don't know whose idea that was, but that was genius.

Mayor Lago: It's awesome.

Commissioner Fors: Genius.

Mayor Lago: That was awesome.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Actually, I got to give credit to Ralph for doing it.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Ralph.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: He's from Facilities.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Ralph Rodriguez from Public Works.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: He's like, don't you have...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: He said...

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Have an awesome coffee vendor?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Why don't you guys do the guys at farmer's market?
And I'm like...

Mayor Lago: Ralph's good people.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Oh, that's an awesome idea.

Mayor Lago: Ralph's good people.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: And it's a good look. Although it's still -- you know, it's a mobile unit. It's one of the nicer looking mobile units you're going to find.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: They're very popular...

Commissioner Menendez: They're wonderful.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: At the farmer's market, as you know, if you're there.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, we're going to have them there. And then we'll -- right now because they got to be away from the tenting, they're a little bit over on the golf course side, but we'll move them back over closer to the country club once the tent's released.

Commissioner Anderson: Excellent.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, they can get coffee, snacks. I think they're going to have some pastries because people were asking for food. People were very excited, and they wanted them open. They were like, you're late, open up.

Commissioner Menendez: That's great.

Commissioner Anderson: We want coffee.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I think that's it.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: That's it.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We're done.

Commissioner Anderson: Oh, you...

Mayor Lago: So, listen, through a testament -- I want to just touch on something that Vice Mayor -- the Vice Mayor mentioned before. We're all working together. If there's residents that have any questions, is there a way that they can get in contact, get immediate information? Because I want it to be no rumors.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Absolutely.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, we've created a dedicated mailbox that goes basically to myself and Fred directly until we get the entire professional team on board and access to everything. It's Coral Gables at -- sorry, country club at Coral Gables dot com. So, country club...

Mayor Lago: And by the way, I've seen you responding to emails. Everything from -- hey, I'll give you an example. "Hey, I want a membership to the gym at a charitable event. Will you be honoring that membership?" She responded -- I think it was on a Saturday night in the middle of the night. She says, "We'll be honoring it, yes." And by the way, I even thought to myself, should we honor it? Of course, we should because it's our name brand. But at the end of the day, I think it's a good gesture on behalf of the City. That was -- we could have said no, but we honored it, and it's the right thing to do. So, I just wanted to tell you, those are examples of how people don't realize it, but you know, the City steps up. And just, we're ramping up. We're getting a lot of these great projects done. We're moving forward. So, what was the number you were saying -- or the email address?

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: So, it's countryclub@CoralGables.com.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: So, you function in the multiverse...

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Because you're...

Mayor Lago: Not in the metaverse.

Commissioner Menendez: You're at multiple levels.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: I do feel like I have two roles, one during the daytime, where it's logistics and operations, and at nighttime, I can go behind the computer and respond to all the inquiries. So, there's been about 500 of those so...

Commissioner Menendez: Mindboggling, amazing.

Mayor Lago: So, listen, I congratulate you both. Thank you, your team, Manager, everyone here. Thank you so much for your hard work. I know that we're pushing forward, but we're making a lot of progress.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yep, we're excited.

Commissioner Anderson: And thank you because we were getting the emails earlier, and you've -- I have not been getting any emails from -- once you took control over it. Thank you for the remarkable work you've done.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: And something to disclose, a lot of people were upset because they felt that we should have emailed them in anticipation. Unfortunately, we never had an email distribution list of the current memberships, so it's very important to note that as soon

as they -- the court-appointed receiver asked them as part of negotiations to send that one last email that Friday with that contact information for the Parks Department, and then that's when we started to get the opportunity to respond. So, we really didn't have an opportunity before because we didn't have a list of memberships to...

Commissioner Anderson: Excellent.

Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Vester: Email.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Great work, team.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Great work. Thank you, Mr. Manager.

Commissioner Menendez: Don't go too far.

Mayor Lago: You have a -- any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir. We have two members of the public requesting to speak.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Gay Bondurant.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Bondurant, welcome to the City Commission. How are you?

Gay Bondurant: I've been running around here because there are a lot of interesting issues this afternoon. But I'm experiencing déjà vu all over again with the country club. I'd just like to make a historical comment. Back in the day, previous regime at the country club, I spent lots of money on a lifetime membership. Fortunately, I'm still alive. My membership is not. I lost a lot of money when that issue -- when that collapsed over there. Is there any way, going forward, that the people who buy these memberships are going to be protected? I handed out my good money. I thought the City was behind it, and we were talking before -- and I don't want to mention any names, but I know the names. I put money down, and voilà, in four years, it was gone. So, just a thought.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Bondurant: I'm not finished quite yet.

Mayor Lago: No, no, just saying thank you for bringing that up.

Ms. Bondurant: Yeah, because...

Mayor Lago: It's important. We don't want...

Ms. Bondurant: It's an issue.

Mayor Lago: To forget that.

Ms. Bondurant: A lot of people still talk about it.

Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Ms. Bondurant: And it's some years ago, but it's \$10,000. It's a lot of money for some of us...

Mayor Lago: It is a lot of money.

Ms. Bondurant: You know.

Mayor Lago: It is a lot of money.

Ms. Bondurant: And the other thing -- and this is a wound for all of us, maybe Mr. City Manager in particular, with the bad press. What about Mr. Barreto? How is he functioning in all of this? We'd like some clarification on that.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: For the record, I have never met with Mr. Barreto on this issue. Our Asset Manager was the one that initially negotiated when the RFPs were out, and I don't believe she has met with Barreto in the last six months, so I have no idea why that was said. But I have personally not met with him.

Ms. Bondurant: Okay, good enough for me. Thank you.

Commissioner Fors: Two things. First, I don't think we'll have the issue with the lifetime membership again, which I know that issue very well.

Ms. Bondurant: I'm sorry, sir. I can't...

Commissioner Fors: I'm sorry.

Ms. Bondurant: You know, we -- the worst place to hear you folks talk is right here. We cannot hear 90 percent...

Commissioner Fors: Really?

Ms. Bondurant: Of what you're saying.

Commissioner Fors: Well, the risk of people losing out lifetime memberships is no longer going to be a risk because there's not going to be any...

Ms. Bondurant: Well, I understand that.

Commissioner Fors: Lifetime memberships.

Ms. Bondurant: We're talking about before.

Commissioner Fors: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ms. Bondurant: But I'm just saying if there's any way to protect people who buy memberships. You know, I don't know how to do that. I'm not a businessperson.

Commissioner Menendez: Now, there's no middleman; now it's us.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: There is -- and with the licensing, there is a surety bond that we had to have to operate the fitness center, and part of that is so -- in case -- it's industry wide. If something happens and the fitness center goes under, there's a surety bond that pays off the memberships. So -- and we will only have annual memberships right now, so we're -- we won't have those initiation fees and some of the things as a lifetime membership that you had. So, we

don't anticipate having those problems. And if, at some point, we're inoperable, like we've been in other facilities throughout because, you know, community recreation runs a lot of them, we have a refund policy and we would prorate, and we would work with someone if ever something like that were to occur.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think...

Commissioner Menendez: So, it's basically -- I'm sorry, Mike. So, it's like the Youth Center membership, basically, same rules and regulations will apply going forward.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think -- listen, I think the goal here, obviously, having the City operate this is to bring some stability. It's no longer going to be a third party who, you know, we can only monitor up to a point, so you'll be able -- you and anybody else will be able to hold the City accountable to the extent you're not satisfied with the level of service, your membership, anything else. And the City's not going anywhere, so...

Ms. Bondurant: I hope.

Vice Mayor Mena: You know, people can have the peace of mind that their membership is with an entity that is stable and...

Ms. Bondurant: And just my own personal opinion is that that annual membership for a person of my vintage is very reasonable. I think it's a good...

Vice Mayor Mena: So...

Mayor Lago: That's the whole point.

Vice Mayor Mena: The main goal I think that we had and the message to staff was, every resident, if they're paying whatever they're paying now for gym, or tennis, or whatever it is, we want them to be able to continue at that rate. We understand people are on fixed incomes. We understand a lot of older residents use this facility, younger ones as well, but we just wanted to make sure that there was -- we could look residents in the eye. Even going back now, wow, five months, you know, I was telling residents, whatever happens here, I'm committed to making sure your membership fee is the same, and that you'll have that option available to you that you have now. We didn't know where this was going to go at the time, but now that we're here, we're following through on that commitment.

Ms. Bondurant: And I have a number of stories. I have a story for everything. But having belonged to the gym, one afternoon, I got a call from them saying I hadn't paid for my trainer and what have you. And I said, "Yes, I have the credit card receipt." It turns out they had put my money on someone else's account. These people were not competent at all. And I had to go down -- and they wouldn't give me back -- they wouldn't just put the money into my account, change it. I had to go back. They gave me a check back because they didn't know how to do it. They gave me a check back. I had to write them another check. They put it in the right account. They were using abacus over there, I feel sure. But at any rate, we've had some good things going on here this afternoon.

Commissioner Menendez: And by the way, we're going to discuss in a little bit a resolution to -- and eventually create an ordinance to have an advisory board, just like we have for Merrick House, just like we have for landmarks, one that oversees the golf and country club. So, it'll be further access for our residents to be involved and to help us guide the country club and the golf course going forward (INAUDIBLE) input.

Commissioner Fors: If I could add one thing, just for the record, because I think it's only fair to clarify that, you know, the question of Barreto Hospitality and their involvement, you know, I still

believe that there was a path and a possibility for them to be the best option in this case. I know there's been no further discussion, and it doesn't really matter now. But what happened with Barreto Hospitality was that the operators -- when they were still -- when they were trying to sabotage the deal that was being discussed -- went out and told everybody, "This is what Barreto plans to do, and this is what he's going to do," and therefore, people immediate -- your immediate reaction was, "We don't want Barreto Hospitality to do this." When, in fact, you know, during my experience and when those negotiations were ongoing, Barreto was willing to do whatever the City asked them to do, whatever the neighbors asked them to do, including keeping Rita, putting her -- employing her and all the current employees, extending health benefits, maintaining the exact same menu. We wanted a peanut butter sandwich. You know, who was going to --? Is the new restaurant going to have a peanut butter sandwich? They put the peanut butter sandwich on the menu. What's the maximum seats? We never got to the end of the road of that negotiation, but they were very -- they conceded on every -- they were conceding on everything we requested. So, there was a path and a possibility. And I just want to clarify it because they were kind of victimized by somebody framing them as having certain plans for the operation when they didn't really have those plans. So, I wanted to clarify that. It doesn't matter now. We're on a good path...

Ms. Bondurant: Okay.

Commissioner Fors: And we're going to do a good job. But just in all fairness, I wanted to say both sides of that.

Ms. Bondurant: Sure.

Commissioner Menendez: Bottom line, they were feeding the community much more than just gelato.

Mayor Lago: Yes. Thank you very much.

Ms. Bondurant: Thank you, thank you.

Mayor Lago: Nice to have you.

City Manager Iglesias: Actually, Commissioner, the gelato machine was broken, so they weren't using -- actually, they weren't...

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Making the gelato themselves.

Mayor Lago: Oh, my God. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Marlin Ebert.

Marlin Ebert: I didn't mean to speak again, but Commissioner Menendez said stay for this next presentation, and I'm glad that I did. As a 34-year resident and almost that long being involved in historic preservation, I'm appalled at what you could see what was going on at the country club. Might we learn from that. Do we have yearly inspections of our historic buildings, Mr. City Manager? Do we have --? I mean, do we do any yearly inspections? I mean, how did this get to be so bad, so horrible? Did they not let you in or...?

Mayor Lago: We have an Asset Manager who's here, which she's more than welcome to step up here and speak on the issue.

City Manager Iglesias: I can tell you that our current leases allow us to do all this. This lease was done quite some time ago under different circumstances. And our new leases will allow us to inspect the properties, get the audits, and do everything that we need to do.

Ms. Ebert: Good.

City Manager Iglesias: So, that problem has been taken care of.

Ms. Ebert: And next, now that you mentioned the golf course, when is the Pro Shop going to be closing? Is that on pretty much the same timetable as the restaurant?

City Manager Iglesias: No, that's -- that construction is coming very shortly.

Ms. Ebert: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: That will take care of part of Burger Bob's because it will add the...

Ms. Ebert: The glass.

City Manager Iglesias: The glass -- the impact glass and so forth and generate a slightly bigger restaurant to incorporate the handicapped bathroom so that both facilities can operate separately. They will be interconnected, but each facility can operate separately.

Ms. Ebert: Okay. And I do want to say that being an advocate for Burger Bob's, we felt all the way along that we did not get involve -- didn't want to be involved with the country club. And I always said, when they go low, we go high. And I really think that we did kind of. We were very positive the whole time, along with Burger Bob's.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah. I would...

Ms. Ebert: And I hope you think so too.

Vice Mayor Mena: I would -- yeah, in fact, I do, and I would say it was actually the opposite situation, which was they were trading on Burger Bob's goodwill...

Ms. Ebert: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Mena: And basically, they had entered a settlement agreement. They were on their way out the door. All of a sudden, the Burger Bob situation arose. There was a lot of goodwill from the community and positive remarks.

Ms. Ebert: Good.

Vice Mayor Mena: And they hitched their train to that wagon and thought, this is our path to re-trading this deal, and it was two distinct situations. We understood that, and we appreciate that from you and from everybody else that was involved.

Ms. Ebert: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Ebert: Thank you.