

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-6
August 28, 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, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Ed Santamaria
Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-6 [5:12:27 p.m.]

Staff Update regarding conversion of street lights to LED.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Staff update regarding conversation of streetlights to LED.

Commissioner Lago: So, we're back here again. I'll give you a little quick update on something that I've been working on. I'm meeting with the Mayor of Fort Lauderdale in the next few

weeks to see if we can somehow, some way get a trade for those lights that we found -- that were found by that nice lady, the White Way lights. So, I'm working on that.

Commissioner Keon: (INAUDIBLE) Tucker Gibbs.

Commissioner Lago: Oh, I didn't find them. Tucker Gibbs found them with -- I forget her name. What's her name, the nice lady?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Karelia.

Commissioner Lago: Karelia.

Commissioner Keon: Karelia.

Commissioner Lago: Very sweet.

Commissioner Keon: Carbonell.

Commissioner Lago: Very sweet. So, I put this today again -- you know, every few months, I try to put it on the agenda because I would love nothing more -- we're going on five years -- since Jessica started counting light by light by light in the City -- to deliver on some LED lighting. Is it going to happen or what?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Yes, it will happen. First of all, good evening almost. Ed Santamaria, Director of Public Works. And, I'd like to be the first person to call Walter Mr. Lane Duck. That having been said -- and I'd also like to address your outreach to the Fort Lauderdale Mayor. It turns out that those lights are owned by a family...

Commissioner Lago: I know.

Public Works Director Santamaria: That is owning a private road. The road is actually a lot and they are looking to redevelop that land. So, the application, I believe, is in the zoning process. And when -- as that is developed, we have a contact in the City Manager's Office, at Fort Lauderdale, that is trying to coordinate with us.

Commissioner Lago: I think we're going to be able to find some sort of agreement where we can take those lights off their hands.

Public Works Director Santamaria: That's what we're trying to do. Any more I can do...

Commissioner Lago: And they're in pristine shape. I'm going to go and see them face to face in the next few weeks.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Excellent. So, in connection to the LED street lighting conversion...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can I have a question -- a preliminary question?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Yes, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is it possible to have LED lights that are yellower or softer than the very, very bright...

Commissioner Lago: White.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: White lights?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Yes. That is controlled by the temperature of the lighting. And so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And can we do...

Public Works Director Santamaria: The lower the temperature, the warmer the lighting. The higher the temperature, the colder the lighting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, so can we lower the temperature?

Public Works Director Santamaria: We can. So, we're looking -- our standard for pedestrian-level streetlights is 3000k, which is still in the incandescent level. If you get beyond 3000k, 3500, you're already starting to reach...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But we can do, okay.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But Mr....

Public Works Director Santamaria: It can be done.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But Mr. Mayor, I think what you're asking for is the amber glow, which is 2700.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So, it's not the 3000, and we appreciate what they are saying. But sometimes we get calls from residents saying they're too bright, their too sharp color, and so it's the 2700 one that you may want to...

Commissioner Mena: I put 3000 in my house, and I hate them. That's why -- and I need to replace them actually, because I think they're too bright.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: So, we do it 27.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Sure. We're happy to do it as the will of the Commission. I will also say this that higher temperatures, which mean colder lighting, also equate to greater safety and visibility. That's the only concern. You have to walk a fine line. It's to the will of the Commission. I think law enforcement prefers something that is a little bit, you know, on the whiter side. So, that's the balance that we're trying to walk, whether we have something that is amber and visibility suffers or we have something that's a little bit...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Can we do...?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Colder.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Can we do like a test where you put out...

Commissioner Lago: We have.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I was going to say...

Commissioner Mena: Just drive down Granada.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I don't know that we...

Commissioner Lago: We have.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I don't know that we have 2700 anywhere on a right-of-way that's LED. And I don't know that anyone has -- I mean, including us -- has compared the 27 and the 3000 side by side outside.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah. Because the test we did was just the same color...

Commissioner Lago: But, we did a test where I went to see it with you...

Vice Mayor Quesada: (INAUDIBLE). I remember that.

Commissioner Lago: It was right near Bird Road.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: That was not...

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE)

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: 3000.

Commissioner Lago: What was that?

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Those were 4000.

Commissioner Lago: 4000.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: And also, I could be mistaken, but it's my understanding that FPL offers 3000 as their warmest at this point in time. But I could -- they may have changed.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What I'm opposed to is the white light that shines -- it's horrible (INAUDIBLE).

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Yes. I'm not really sure where we have a 3000 in the public right-of-way right now.

Commissioner Lago: So, let me...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I don't know that we have it.

Commissioner Lago: So, how do I -- I want to make this a very brief conversation, because we'll be here for a long time talking about lights. We're nowhere near that, from my understanding, choosing a lightbulb. Where are we right now, after all these years, in regards to -- we have the catalog and we know the inventory. We know what FPL owns; we know what the City owns. Where are we? Because budget season's coming and I need to know how much money, where are we going to get the money from, how many projects can we do, what's the plan.

Public Works Director Santamaria: So, here's the interesting thing about it. In March 2017, FPL established the LT-1 LED light tariff. And, this means that without capital costs upfront per the FPL-owned streetlights citywide, they will convert to LED fixtures and then you just pay the tariff over the course of 20 years.

Commissioner Lago: What is the tariff?

Public Works Director Santamaria: The tariff is the rate.

Commissioner Lago: I know. I'm saying what is it?

Public Works Director Santamaria: I don't know the exact...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: It depends on the fixture and so...

Commissioner Lago: Because, remember, the reason why I mentioned it is because I wanted my colleagues to understand the back and forth that this team has been going with has been having to deal with FPL saying there wasn't an LED tariff, so we would have to meter every single pole...

Public Works Director Santamaria: Correct.

Commissioner Lago: And the cost was exorbitant. It was unfeasible. And, they basically made it impossible for us to even entertain going down this route. Now, that has changed.

Public Works Director Santamaria: It has changed.

Commissioner Lago: Okay.

Public Works Director Santamaria: And so, we have 3,489 FPL lights in the City. If we were to convert all of those lights to LEDs using the light -- the LED LT-1 tariff, our costs would increase -- and this is energy costs -- and actually lighting cost, I'm sorry, not energy cost. Lighting cost would increase by \$5,100 a month citywide. That is because there are different tariffs for different lights. Now...

Commissioner Keon: So, 60,000 a year.

Commissioner Lago: So, a dollar and change per light.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Well, on average. But, if we were judicious and we were only to change the lights that are beneficial for us to change -- in other words, the cobra head fixture, not our decorative pole, not anything that is a premium fixture, then we would end up with a savings. That's about 72 percent of LED lights citywide with us...

Commissioner Lago: Let me tell you why -- just let me interject one second. Let me tell why I'm not saying I'm opposed or against -- but there's a few things that make up LED lighting. It's not just the savings. It's the lighting, obviously. It's the maintenance that's reduced significantly. Some of these bulbs may last eight, nine, ten years or even longer, depending on the use. There's other features that come with a pole. You can have SOS. You can have Wi-Fi. You can have -- there's a litany of options when you go and you upgrade these poles along with the cobra head.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: So, there's the FP -- what FPL can do.

Commissioner Lago: And then there's what the private sector can do.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: And there's what we can do...

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: On our own City lights. And so, that's where the opportunity is to add the smart technology on our lights.

Commissioner Lago: Then what you end up doing is, for like example, the City of Miami hired an outside consultant firm -- I don't want to say their name -- I think they actually may be here -- and they ended up taking "X" amount of lights, didn't cost them anything, over a ten-year period, seven-year period, eight-year period was the payoff and there was a savings. The way they paid it off was with the savings from what they were paying FPL. That was -- that's the

way it broke out. So, after seven or eight years, you have brand-new poles, you have brand-new lights. So -- they got rid of the existing pole, which has been there for 30 years. They're not pretty at all, but we can get something even better. There's different options. You can either go FPL and replace the cobra head or you can go with private sector, do an RFP or RFQ and find a firm that will come in and basically do something across the board. What I would like to see happen is that, for once in five years of having this discussion, that we have something in front of us. That we have something in front of us that says, okay, guys, this is what the cost is, this is what -- the money that we need, so that we can potentially deliver on that for next year.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a motion...

Public Works Director Santamaria: So...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That we instruct...

Public Works Director Santamaria: If I may, if I may.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Public Works Director Santamaria: If I may. I have some important information. I'm sorry for...

Commissioner Lago: No, no, of course.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Interrupting, Mr. Mayor.

Commissioner Lago: I've been interrupting you. I apologize.

Public Works Director Santamaria: So, in 2015, we had a study done by AECOM.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, sir.

Public Works Director Santamaria: And AECOM, for our City-owned streetlights, which is 582, and these are the decorative streetlights that we all know and love, they came up with a replacement cost for 600 -- I'm sorry, \$912,000...

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Public Works Director Santamaria: At that point. Since then, the LED streetlight conversions using light fixtures, as was anticipated back in 2015, have decreased by approximately 55 percent. So, in this case, this delay has actually helped us with the cost. We've met with a number of vendors regarding streetlights. There's a number of folks that are interested in doing this here in the City. We're looking at potentially piggyback contracts. But right now, what we're moving forward on in the next couple of weeks is an RFP to go -- to provide -- to convert all of our City-owned streetlights to LEDs. These are lights that we already own and what we pay on them is just energy only.

Commissioner Lago: How about Miracle Mile?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Miracle Mile could be included in that because my understanding is we do own the lights on Miracle Mile.

Commissioner Lago: I think that's a very -- that's a significantly important part of the puzzle, because when you go down Miracle Mile -- I don't know how my colleagues -- and you see how beautiful it is and you see this light pole. You're like wow. It just feels out of place, even with the cobra head changed. And, that's something that Peter and I talked about ad nauseum.

Commissioner Mena: I think there's a big opportunity there to do something nice.

Commissioner Lago: We -- obviously, we had issues with money. We had issues -- it was, you know -- go ahead, Mike. I'm sorry.

Commissioner Mena: No. I think that's a great point. There's a real opportunity on the Miracle Mile side to...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Wait. Are you suggesting...

Commissioner Mena: Put much nicer poles...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: That we remove the poles -- the complete...

Commissioner Lago: I'll be...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: The pole and the fixture?

Commissioner Lago: I'll be honest with you. I'll be honest with you, and this is just me talking. I would remove it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's not...

Commissioner Lago: I'll remove it. Right now, when you -- I'm just talking. I'm just, you know, having a con -- if you go down Miracle Mile right now with the lighting that we have there, it's gotten to the point where certain people have said reduce the lighting, tone it down. It's too bright. Am I correct or -- so, the poles just look out of place? Have you noticed that, Commissioner?

Commissioner Mena: Which poles are you talking about? Are you talking about the new poles or the old poles?

Commissioner Lago: No, no, no, the old poles.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, right.

Commissioner Lago: They just look out of place.

Commissioner Keon: The cobra heads.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, the snake ones, yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Tell me -- tell me...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: (INAUDIBLE) project (INAUDIBLE). We brought a change order to change those LED. What we're looking at in the future is to use some kind of stain on them to stain the concrete, to actually brush the concrete and get them stained so that...

Commissioner Lago: What do you think if we got rid of them? I'm just asking a question.

Commissioner Mena: You're saying and not replace them?

Commissioner Lago: Not replace them. There's a lot of lighting...

Vice Mayor Quesada: On that street.

Commissioner Lago: Huh?

Vice Mayor Quesada: There's a lot of light on that street.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, a lot of light on that street. We've gotten even -- I've gotten residents who have come up to me and told me, Vince, those lights are overbearing.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We can do some studies and see how many we can get rid of. However, they've been changed to -- those are LED. We had a change order to change all of those. And then, the thing that we didn't do is look at the aesthetic issue of it, but what we were thinking about was that stain. As you know, we have many concrete treatments out that maybe we can turn those into -- from what they are now into...

Commissioner Lago: A design feature of some sort.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: (INAUDIBLE)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I would urge you not to engage in any more construction projects in Miracle Mile for a while, please.

Commissioner Lago: I think removal is a lot easier than building it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Lago: That's -- I mean, I've...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Let's get through the RFP and then make a decision.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. What were you saying?

Public Works Director Santamaria: So, we can have a study as to removing those poles. There would be a photometric study done. It would have to meet illumination standards.

Commissioner Lago: You want to do it?

Public Works Director Santamaria: I mean...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's not play with Miracle Mile. Let's have the RFP. Let's look at the 900 and whatever it is lights...

Commissioner Lago: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And go in with that.

Commissioner Lago: When is...

Commissioner Mena: (INAUDIBLE) way down on the list of priorities compared to these other extremes we're talking about.

Commissioner Lago: That's what I said. That's why I'm bringing it up. I wanted to talk to see what everybody wanted to do.

Commissioner Mena: Let's deliver on the City-owned lights and (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Lago: This is a big deal.

Commissioner Mena: Lights.

Commissioner Lago: This lighting could be transformational.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, I agree.

Public Works Director Santamaria: So, just to continue on with what we're moving forward on right now, in 2018, as you know, we completed the pilot project on Ponce de Leon Boulevard, where 64 lights were changed. And I believe these 64 lights are 4000k. Maybe I'm wrong; maybe you've seen it on social media.

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: I haven't seen any complaints about that...

Public Works Director Santamaria: But there may...

Assistant Public Works Director Keller: Type of light.

Public Works Director Santamaria: There may have been some complaints about the temperature of the lights. But these are lights in the right-of-way. They're in the Central Business District area. And so, it means that, typically, the residents that are the ones that are complaining about the nature of the lighting in their neighborhoods wouldn't chime in on this. And so, our plan is to continue to change the cobra heads, which are the basic fixture that FPL provides for street lighting throughout the City, working in the Central Business District, and then moving to residential areas. If we do that, that's 2,496 streetlights -- which is 72 percent of FPL's inventory in the City -- we would see a savings of about \$1,600 a month. And that, we can do without any upfront costs, you know.

Commissioner Lago: But it's not only the savings. To me, the savings is -- you know, it's nominal. The real issue is, one, it's good for the environment. And number two, it's less maintenance for our employees. And number three, the lighting is much better than what we currently have right now.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Well, it's really not maintenance for our employees, because these are maintained by FPL.

Commissioner Lago: I know, but the 500-plus that we have (INAUDIBLE)...

Public Works Director Santamaria: 500-plus, that's -- I had moved on from that, but I'm sorry. But yes, absolutely, that would be a reduction in maintenance. And by the way, the RFPs that we're looking at are contemplating maintenance by the vendor. So, that would be something that would...

Commissioner Lago: When will we be releasing this RFP?

Public Works Director Santamaria: I think in two weeks is what we're targeting.

Commissioner Mena: That's good. Fantastic.

Commissioner Lago: I don't want to take any more time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good.

Commissioner Mena: Okay.

Public Works Director Santamaria: And, at the same time, we're going to be moving forward with FPL to look at the other lights, the streetlights in their inventory that we can go without incurring additional costs. I understand that you're not concerned about cost necessarily. You think that it's an equitable return in terms of the benefits, but right now, I can only do what doesn't have a financial impact without further direction from this legislative body.

Commissioner Mena: You're saying \$60,000 a year, basically?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Correct, correct.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, let's go forth. Alright.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Good news.