

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items 2-1 and 2-2
August 24, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Sue Kawalerksi

Agenda Item 2-1 and 2-2 [Start 11:35 a.m.]

2-1: A Resolution of the Coral Gables Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission oppose any proposal by any outside agency that would allow golf carts and/or other motorized vehicles on any shared use path that is designated for the use of pedestrians and cyclists.

2-2: A Resolution of the Coral Gables Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission reconsider the original sidewalk funding made by the Public Works Department for the upcoming Fiscal Year and restore it to the 1.2 million dollars originally requested.

Mayor Lago: Moving forward, 11:30 a.m. time certain, I apologize we're five minutes late, Agenda Items 2-1 and 2-2. Can we have our staff. Hermes are you representing staff on this item? Please. This is a resolution of the Coral Gables Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission oppose any proposal by any outside agency that would allow golf carts and/or other motorized vehicles on any shared use path that is designated for the use of pedestrians and cyclists, that's 2-1, let's start there. Good morning.

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Ms. Kawalerski: Good morning Mayor, Vice Mayor and Commissioners, thank you for this opportunity. I'm Sue Kawalerski, I'm the Acting Chair for the City's Transportation Advisory Board. We actually brought this resolution to you at the last Commission meeting, and you asked us to go back and find out which municipalities have certain regulations for the use of shared use paths. I think that became all mute on July 8th when the Miami-Dade County Public Works Department and Transportation actually ruled on shared use path usage. And just to give you a genesis of this. The Village of Palmetto Bay had requested that the county look at the feasibility of allowing golf carts, specifically on the Old Cutler Trail, and of course, we know that Old Cutler Trail runs partly through Coral Gables. And what the county decided and in fact, my colleague on the Transportation Advisory Board is going to hand you the actual opinion from Miami-Dade County Public Works and Transportation Department. That opinion states and I will cut to the chase here, that the path and that being the Old Cutler Trail, is not designated or warranted for the use of golf carts. After reviewing the request DTPW, which is Department of Transportation in Public Works, does not recommend the use of golf carts along the Old Cutler Road shared use path. They have expanded their purview also onto Old Cutler Road regarding golf carts and as well denied that request by the Village of Palmetto Bay. The Transportation Advisory Board in this resolution asks that the City of Coral Gables takes a proactive stance on this by passing this resolution of making sure that everyone knows that we are not going to allow, per the county, any kind of motorized vehicles on a shared use path. And by the way, this is for safety purposes, as the county states there are a lot of pedestrians, cyclists, and non-motorized traffic on our paths. Introducing motorized vehicles, like the golf cart on a path jeopardizes the safety of the vulnerable path users. So, we just want to make sure that we are proactive in our stance as a city and alerting our residents that we are not going to allow golf carts on the Old Cutler Trail or for that matter on any shared use path. And I do want to cite that, this resolution from the time we came before you last time, changed slightly. I hope you have the amended version, because the TAB voted to amend the outside agency phrase here to anyone. So, anyone that comes before you requesting golf cart usage would be denied based off the county's resolution.

City Attorney Ramos: I believe Ms. Levi-Garcia sent the updated version.

Vice Mayor Mena: Just for clarity, are we, this is a resolution of the Advisory Board. This is not an item that we have to vote on, it's their resolution, right?

City Attorney Ramos: Right. It's a resolution of the board asking the Commission to take action. The Commission can or doesn't have to.

Commissioner Fors: And we can vote on it.

Mayor Lago: Its following suit in regard to the county's measures and what's been recently brought forth.

Commissioner Fors: One thing is that I was not briefed on these, because I guess they were Transportation Board or Advisory Board resolutions. I don't know if staff has anything to add to it.

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Mayor Lago: Hermes is here, that's why I asked Hermes.

Commissioner Fors: It makes sense to me right now. I was just wondering if there is anything I don't know that I should know.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good morning, Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director. We don't have any objections to this resolution. We think that the county's thought process on this makes sense. We don't have anything else to add, other than we don't object to it.

Mayor Lago: I just want to add something here because I've spoken to several residents who have called me, not in regard to this, but in the past about golf carts and electric vehicles. Those are fully welcome in the city, as long as you comply as required by the code. The more cars that we can get off the street, especially that are combustion engines the better. So, I don't have any issues at all with this. If anybody else have any other comments, I'll entertain a motion.

Commissioner Fors: By the way, I'll say very briefly that staff usually does brief us on the board resolutions. I can't remember why, could have been my fault, I wasn't briefed on this one. I wasn't briefed on this one.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move to adopt the resolution.

Commissioner Fors: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Now moving forward to item 2-2, a Resolution of the Coral Gables Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission reconsider the original sidewalk funding made by the Public Works Department for the upcoming Fiscal Year and restore it to the 1.2 million dollars originally requested.

City Manager Iglesias: If I may say Mayor, that the American Rescue Plan Act has provided us with additional funds and that \$1.2 million will be restored using this federal funding.

Mayor Lago: As we discussed yesterday, I think it's a good move for the city. We have a few projects, one of them being in front of Ponce Middle School, which hopefully staff will be bringing to the Commission soon. I know it takes a lot of effort to design that, but we've had two walk-throughs at the site and there is a lot of connectivity issues that need to be addressed in regard to sidewalks and I think this is a good opportunity to use these funds to continue to address that

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problem. It's been getting much better throughout the city, especially in my neighborhood where you would never see that last connection piece to the street so people could cross and have to go on the median. So, I think this is a good move and that we got lucky, we got lucky with that money and staff, obviously saw the importance of reallocating those funds.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you. Thank you, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: I'll entertain – do we need to entertain a motion, or I'll entertain a motion just to solidify this.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Fors: Second.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Have a wonderful day.

Ms. Kawalerski: Thank you Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners.