

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C – Public Comments
July 13, 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 (Absent)

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Samuel Lawson

Pastor Bill White

Pastor Ryan Reed

Joanne Marr

Rip Holmes

Susan Rodriguez

Sheryl Gold

Chase Howard

Agenda Item C [Start 5:05 p.m.]

Public Comments

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, 5 o'clock.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

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Mayor Lago: 5:05 p.m., sorry about being five minutes late, I apologize, public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: So, Mr. Mayor, the first speaker during public comments is Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz, good afternoon, the floor is yours. I will ask you, which I try to avoid, I usually give the floor to everybody, and they can speak as much as they'd like, but let's try to keep it concise, two minutes, because we have a lot of people, I think that may want to speak, I imagine by the stack of cards the Clerk has. The floor is yours.

Ms. Cruz: Okay. First of all, Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. First of all, I'll like to thank you for your comments about Cuba, that was very important for me; and second of all, I'm going to say thank you for having this meeting at 4 p.m., and the only warning that I have for the people that are watching is, don't be scared away because it may be long. We only have one meeting in the summer every month in the summer, but surely, we have two meetings later on, so the rest of the meetings after August will not be as long as today, so please exercise your right to come and talk and maybe I won't be the only one that will be here, so this is a good comment. You'll see the other Maria Cruz later, but today, public comments is to thank you all for everything you do and let's make sure that this tone continues. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Maria. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is Mr. Bill White.

Mayor Lago: Mr. White the floor is yours. Thank you for being here.

Mr. White: So, we are all together. I think we've got three speaking cards. So, good early evening Mayor, Commissioners and all the other city directors and managers and Coral Gables citizens here and present online. First of all, I'd like to say that I sat in on the City Budget meeting earlier and I was very impressed overall, and I'd like to say Mayor, the emphasis on financial conservatism in this day and age in politics and what you said about the budget surplus in Florida is just, that's amazing and it's really good to hear. I was shocked by the low milage rate of Coral Gables comparatively speaking, that was quite a surprise. My wife is always complaining about taxes and now I have something to say. I was extremely happy to see the police and other services being protected and enhanced, and I can't emphasize that enough. I don't know if there are any police officers still here, but I cannot emphasize that enough.

Mayor Lago: Officers, please stand to be recognized.

Mr. Lawson: I want to say that we feel, and I think I recognize a few of you, we feel extremely safe in Coral Gables, and we love that. It's an amazing experience and looking around the country, we can't thank you enough, and I want to go a step further to say that we are not only faith, but the Coral Gables Police Department actually treats us as individual neighbors and citizens with so much friendliness and openness. We never have any kind of a negative vibe or feel. So, you protect us, and you are our friend. What could you ask for better than that? In my life I have never seen that in any community that I've lived in, so thank you very much. And thank you to the
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Commissioners and everybody for supporting that and protecting us. We appreciate that. So, my name is Samuel Lawson. My wife and I have a home at 450 Camilo Avenue. This is Pastor Bill White and Pastor Ryan Reed, and they are Christ Journey Church, like I said, they have a speaker card, so they'd like to go after me. In brief, I voluntarily become the spokesperson and organizer, project manager, for a group of residents and neighbors whose homes and church directly about the Coral Gables Youth Center. For a lack of a better term, think of us as the Youth Center community. Currently we are 35 individuals on board representing 23 properties, but we are quickly expanding with the target of about 60 properties that we think are most closely connected geographically to the Youth Center. We now have bi-weekly meetings in person and by the way, all of you are always welcome at any point to come and attend. The next meeting that we are having is Thursday at 8 p.m. at 450 Camilo.

Mayor Lago: I'm sorry to interrupt, I think we've had two Zoom meetings already.

Mr. Lawson: Yes. We've had several calls and e-mails and Zoom meetings as well. So, thank you.

Mayor Lago: Just saying it's a testament to your accessibility and interest.

Mr. Lawson: Your accessibility. Your all accessibility, it's been incredible. So, the church is one of our group members in that perimeter around the Youth Center and I want to point out, they have about 1,500 active members, I think 5,000 members in their database, a large portion of which are Coral Gables citizens, taxpayers, and some of whom are very affluent and influential members in the City of Coral Gables. Some of our group members are here today, some are on Zoom, but they are all in support and we open up all their e-mail addresses and contact information to any of you if you ever wish to reach out and contact them. So, we organize ourselves over the last couple of months because we heard that there was some discussion about possible development projects on the green space lots across from the Youth Center, that would impact all of us and also impact parking overflow used by the church, and other Youth Center Coral Gables events. Since that time, we've met and sat with many of you at _____, I think. We are here today to say that we'd like to get more involved behind the scenes and hopefully embed ourselves in the decision-making process and express our singular voice and opinion. And again, I'd like to say to the Commission members and others that have met with us so far, and it was not just Commission members, it was other city employees, I'd like to say thank you very much for your responsiveness. Thank you for your willingness to be helpful to us and we look very much forward to the process going forward.

Pastor White: Mr. Mayor, respected Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor and esteemed Commissioners, thank you for the privilege of being with you today and we're saying thank you for your responsible and respectable leadership for so long and we appreciate what we have experienced today as well. I'm here on behalf of our neighborhood and on behalf of maybe one of the best kept secrets, success stories of Coral Gables and that is the congregation that I'm privileged to serve. A congregation that was begun 95 years ago at the gift of property from George Merrick and has been blessed over these years to serve people, not only from our City Beautiful, but from all across the county. And the way that our success has taken place has not only been due to those that are willing to share their families with us that we might seek to bolster and build our community better, but because of the collaborative effort that we have had with our city, not only from its founder, but from our

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Commission and from the city itself for these many years. Where I'm going with this is that in order to serve so many we have to be able to seat them and we have to be able to park them, so if we can't park them we can't serve them; and so, the lot in question that I'm coming to say thank you for the opportunity was the opportunity to park at the library, to park at the Youth Center, to park in the swale, to park on the streets and then to park in the overflow lot what has been considered, I suppose, an overflow lot, the grassy area on the other side of the Youth Center; and because of that we have been able to serve the people that we have been and I want to say thank you for that, and for the fact that for the past four decades the City of Coral Gables through a document has allowed us the privilege to park on that space and I'm just here to say thank you for that and we hope that that collaborative responsive partnership can continue for the benefit of all concerned. Thank you.

Pastor Reed: Mr. Mayor good to meet you in person. We spoke on Zoom a couple of weeks ago, Commissioner Menendez good to see you again, Commissioner Anderson great to meet you and to the other esteemed Commissioners, thank you for your time today. And I also – my name is Ryan Reed, I am the Executive Pastor of Christ Journey Church, a congregation of which I am privileged to serve as well. And I just want to come before you and also say thank you for the last four decades of allowing us to use this green space to help park our people so that they may experience the transformation and the benefit of being a part of our congregation. Pre-Covid we offered three services on Sunday morning, 9:30, 11:00 and 12:30, we are slowly building back to that. We have 9:30 and 11 now and is anticipating 12:30 soon, and on Sunday mornings, we would oftentimes host anywhere from 20 to 30 vehicles on an average Sunday morning, and then on larger Sundays where we might be offering Christmas Eve services, we might have upwards of 50-plus cars using that piece of property. And so, we want to come before you and echo the good words that Mr. Lawson mentioned about wanting to beautify that land and see that land in the stream of values that we hold dear in the City Beautiful, and we also want to ask that we might be able to continue using that land as we've been able to do so for the last four decades. The shadow side of not being able to use that land will have the potential of those cars flowing out into the neighborhoods around us and parking on swales of neighbors that may or may not attend our church, but that would be another issue that we would need to encounter, and so, this land has been a way for us to resolve that for the last four decades. We would be most honored to work alongside of each one of you, the neighbors in the Rec Center area in that neighborhood there to think through what that land might, how that land might benefit all of us for the next four decades to come. Thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here.

Mr. Lawson: Final words. The church is very focused on a parking issue that's very real. The other properties, we are focused on the green space and keeping it green, that's what we're about. But I do want to bring one last thing to the attention of everyone here and I'm actually the one probably most qualified person in Coral Gables to talk about it, which is overflow parking. My wife and I live directly across the street from the lot, so when the cars, when we moved there and we started to see all the cars, we didn't like it, okay, I'm going to say that very straightforward, we didn't like it, a lot of cars, but little by little we grew kind of accustomed to it. We grew accustomed to it because we noticed that all the people were wonderful people, whether they were the church,
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whether they were the soccer teams, whether it was the Easter Egg Hunt, the voter overflow, whether it was the 4th of July extension of parking. And if you look at pictures of the city from 100 years ago, you will see overflow parking being used on all those spaces. So, I know that some people – I’ve personally grown accustomed and I’m actually quite a fan, the incredible blessing that the church and others bring to us, and I’m no longer at odds with parking on the green space, it’s not a constant thing and it happens from time to time, but I will say this, being the person that lives there, I can tell you that it is frequent for many entities and parties, not just the church, it’s really utilized by many people and quite frequently. So, whatever we do going forward, we need to keep that into consideration. So, thank you very much this evening and thank you for your leadership and congratulations to all of you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here. I appreciate it.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: And as I told you when we spoke several times, if there are any steps that are taken one way or another, there will be open meetings, we will have discussions and I promise I will make every effort to accommodate you and we understand your needs. Thank you very much.

Mr. Lawson: We appreciate that.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Joanne Marr.

Ms. Marr: Good evening Mayor and Commissioners, Joanne Marr, 1225 Valencia Avenue. I’m a proud member of the Villagers Historic Home organization, but I’m not here representing them today, but I always like to mention that. Mayor, just a few moments ago you said, it is very easy to discard someone and not show the proper respect and I took that to heart and I’m hoping that the Commission and those who are listening will understand that my comments are a direct response to that. My letter sent to the Commission on Sunday went into greater detail about why Burger Bob’s is a beloved institution, and no doubt you have heard and will continue to hear similar sentiments via e-mail or in person, so I won’t read my entire letter here in the interest of respect for your time. My original e-mail didn’t make it into your office because it was sent with an attachment and IT, being very aware of issues related to attachments, I understand, kicked it back out, but I wanted to show you, my attachment. This is my attachment. It is a picture of me and Bob and my son at the diner on the day before he moved to California and when we came into the diner Bob said, Oh my, your son grew up here and my family situation about my son growing up at Burger Bob’s is not unique at all, and I, in my letter go into three more paragraphs describing that, but according to a recent New Times article, Miami diners are dropping like flies and first there was the closure of North Miami Beach’s Hamargery, followed by all SNS diner locations, but don’t worry, this article says, don’t worry, a long time Gables diner, Burger Bob’s is still going strong no matter how ritzy the City Beautiful becomes. Well, unfortunately it appears that the New Times will soon be wrong, there is plenty of reason to worry. Not only is Miami losing its diners, in this case it is losing about the only remaining bastion of old Coral Gables. The city touts its status as world-class city with a hometown feel, but I ask you to consider very seriously where is the evidence of our hometown feel. You must admit it’s getting harder and harder to find. It has

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been a tumultuous year, of course, with citizens begging for more transparency from the city. Under the current administration it seems as though our concerns are finally being heard. It gives one pause, therefore, that there has been no attempt to communicate or very little attempt to communicate with Coral Gables residents the fact that Burger Bob's is indeed closing, and one would think that the city would want to open a dialogue as to what type of restaurant we would like to see in that place. Of course, if I had my druthers, I would suggest that Bob's lease be extended until he is ready to retire, but if that just isn't going to happen then taxpaying residents should at the very least be provided with the opportunity to weigh in on the future of this city owned space. Here are my proposed solutions; one, extend Bob's lease for at least six months in order for him to be properly honored and celebrated for 27 years of bringing value to our community. This marine veteran deserves a Proclamation and a Key to the City, rather than being unceremoniously booted from the premises; two, give serious consideration to a proposal that will soon be submitted by long-time employee that's 26 of those 27 years, Rita Tenison. Throughout the pandemic Rita and the rest of Bob's loyal crew provided sustenance and a smile to scores of residents through their takeout service when they were finally allowed to do so. She has ideas for enhancing the facility and the menu while maintaining the atmosphere that makes the place such a treasure. Listen folks, once you have sampled her fried chicken and waffles, you will be convinced that she will continue to serve delicious unpretentious food that will keep folks coming through the door; three, make the bidding process truly transparent. We are told that the bids submitted last February was unsolicited. Might I suggest that out of courtesy and respect the representatives of the city should have informed the people of Burger Bob's of this bid, giving them ample time to develop their own prior to lease end. We have, I believe, 16 more days until they are closing their doors and the lease ends on August 31, as I understand it. And then finally, invite Coral Gables residents to have a voice. There are plenty of modern upscale places to eat in the city, but do we really need another one serving chaprassy salad with fig reduction? – no. We need our breakfast and burger joint where everybody knows your name. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: First of all, I just want to say thank you for being here. I know you take time – how many times have we met this week probably?

Ms. Marr: Three times.

Mayor Lago: Three times this week. So, I know that we are going to be meeting next month again to talk about Pelican Harbor, which is something that I think, my colleagues on the Commission are going to enjoy once they understand the full depth and breadth of what that organization does on behalf of wildlife in this community, but we are not here to talk about that. Commissioner Menendez has requested to discuss this item on the agenda, and I think it's something that we should discuss, but I want to be very clear, and we'll discuss it in further detail. We, as elected officials, have a fiduciary responsibility and we have to be – I love the photo, you can leave it up there if you like, no, it's all good. You know, we have to be very careful; we have to be very careful to follow procurement process, but as you know, because you've been copied on the e-mails, I have worked with Rita to get her in contact with Zeida and Zeida and her team has done a wonderful job. As a matter of fact, Rita responded saying that she will be responding to the RFQ, excuse me, so to me personally, I don't have an issue providing as much time as necessary to provide for her or anyone else in this community, because it's not just Rita, its anyone else, and

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we have to be very, very careful, because just like I can't discuss this any further because the Vice Mayor is here, a prime example is the Greco lot, which we will be discussing later. We have to be very careful and handle things in the Sunshine and always remember that we work for everyone that's in this room, and extending leases because we like somebody or because they are our friend doesn't really paint us in the best light, in my opinion, but we are helping Rita so that she is able to provide a response and hopefully, not hopefully, it will be a fair process; and I hope that many people submit as part of the RFQ, because that's what we want, we want competition, because at the end of the day we have to offer a fair rent, we have to offer a product that we will all be, again, happy and that it would be something that is in line with what we are expected to do as fiduciaries on behalf of this community. So, would I love to have Burger Bob's here for the next 30 years? – yes, I would, but leases come, and end and we need to be very careful because we could put ourselves in a position where we are favoring one over another, and I don't think that's what we want to do. Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: Thank you Mayor. Last week or so, I received a lot of calls, a lot of texts from folks I've known my entire life. You can see the importance of Burger Bob's and the lives of so many Coral Gables residents. It is to so many people its family. The opportunity to gather year after year, as was mentioned, kids growing up, that's what community is all about. So, thanks to – and it's interesting, folks that reached out to me were of all ages. I was surprised by some of the folks that reached out to me, in their 20's and 30's, and it was important to them, and I've spoken to the administration. Extending the lease is doable. We just got to find the right way to get there and how best to do that, but what I ask our residents and I ask the community is that just the fact that you're here speaks volumes about the strength of the Coral Gables community. We watch out for our own, but I ask that you reach out in a productive creative way to help us in the city find a solution that works for everyone, because you all have the resources, and you all have the expertise, and you all have the connections that can help Burger Bob move forward with the city in a creative fair way. So, I appreciate everyone reaching out, but there comes a time where we have to do more than just reaching out. We really have to sort of step into their shoes and to, okay, how can we make this work for you. So, I ask all of you to help us find a solution that is a win-win for everyone, because I think at the end of the day that's what we want. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Rip Holmes.

Commissioner Fors: I'm assuming there will be more speakers on Burger Bob's and there'll be more discussion regarding it.

Mayor Lago: Yes. Yes.

Mr. Holmes: Okay. The building collapse – Surfside. Can it happen here? Is there something we need to do to prevent it? You all may have seen from my videos that I've sent you. It's a tiny bit of déjà vu for me when that building collapsed. Back in 2006, I was living on Miami Beach right down the road at 3820 Collins Avenue and we were notified that our building was condemned, what's now the Corden Arms Hotel, and we were going to have to move out. And what I found

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out from a very experienced beach contractor is that concrete back in the day was put together using sand from the beach. Problem being that that contains salt and salt eats steel. I'm telling you, if you had seen what I saw in my building you would never forget it, because I'm looking at – they were going to renovate the building and you are looking at the construction, you are seeing the concrete, you are seeing what should be a steel beam and it's not, like its more than half eaten, it's like disappeared steel that supposed to be holding up your building, and you see this and you never forget that image. And so, I learned salt eats steel. Now, Coral Gables is a slower version of Miami Beach. We know that despite some really great efforts from the City Commission, sea level rise is probably going to end up flooding Coral Gables completely and if Coral Gables will cease to exist due to sea level rise, pick your timeframe, I'll say 50 to 250 years. So, why am I saying this? The sea water that may have destroyed caused this building collapse and could destroy buildings right here is coming. The sea water is coming, and salt eats steel, so that's a creation – why was my building condemned? Why did I have to move out? – because it's an unstable building that could have collapsed. So, what I submit to you is that we need a moratorium on buildings allowed by the new zoning code to find out if they have protection against salt eating the steel in those buildings.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Holmes, I think you would be happy to know that under City Manager items, under I-8, we are discussing 40-year certification program and how the city is handling.

Mr. Holmes: I'm talking about new buildings, not 40-year-old buildings. I'm talking about new buildings under this zoning code, what protection is there against salt, standing sea water penetrating into the steel in these new buildings?

Mayor Lago: I think we will discuss that under I-8.

Mr. Holmes: I don't think so, because you are talking about 40-year recertification, and if you wonder, if I know what I'm talking about, I can tell you right now, first of all the Fifth Street bridge on Miami Beach was closed. We almost had a bridge collapse there, because the jet-skiers were spraying up salt under the bridge, salt eats steel. We almost had a bridge collapse on Miami Beach. If you study it, you'll see you'll know what I'm talking about, that I know what I'm talking about, excuse me. Let me tell you another secret about Miami Beach. Some of the famous buildings over there on Bay Road have standing water in heavy rain; they have underground parking garages. You have Cadillacs over there that gets flooded out on a regular basis, because you have standing water. Now, is that standing water sea water? – I'm not sure, but if it is, those buildings are in jeopardy. I think we need to start – we need to have a moratorium on new buildings authorized by this new zoning code to make sure that they have special protections in the steel to keep sea water from penetrating.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Thank you for being here. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: So, we have other speakers signed up for agenda item F-8, but I will go ahead and call them during the item comes up.

Mayor Lago: Okay,
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City Clerk Urquia: On Zoom we do have two speakers, the first one is Ms. Susan Rodriguez.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Rodriguez the floor is yours.

Ms. Rodriguez: Thank you. Good afternoon or good evening Commissioners, Mayor Lago, my name is Susan Rodriguez, I'm a Coral Gables resident of 35 years. I am currently the Coral Gables Garden Club President and I have lived on Coral Way, across from the Merrick House for the past 28 years. I'm very concerned about the strangler figs that make their homes on the historic oak trees on Coral Way. As President of the Garden Club, people have come to me to ask if anything can be done to eradicate the figs. They are on almost every tree from Anderson to Alhambra they will kill the oak trees if they are not removed, that would be a tragedy and a blemish on the City of Coral Gables if that happens. When I brought this issue of the strangler figs in the past to city officials, they suggested to me to contact the county as Coral Way is a county road. The trees are not in their jurisdiction even though it runs right through the city. Coral Way is a county road, but it is also in the center of historic Coral Gables and should be a concern to all of you on the Commission. Do you want to lose the canopy on Coral Way, probably the most iconic street in Coral Gables and is a representative image for the city all over the world, if not respectively, you need to do something about this now by getting the county to remove the figs or the city needs to take care of this. I am asking you all to come up with a solution. Let us take care of the trees that have been here longer than any of us and need our care. I am grateful that Commissioner Anderson has put this issue on the agenda and is bringing this to your attention. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Sheryl Gold.

Ms. Gold: Sheryl Gold, 721 Biltmore Way. Good afternoon Mayor and Commissioners. Thank you for enabling, sorry, I just got a message, came across. Thank you for enabling public comment for those of us who cannot attend in person meetings, much appreciated. I'm here to call your attention to the ongoing lack of transparency, lack of public notice, and lack of engagement with affected residents. Today you are being asked to approve the minutes of the March 25th Parking Advisory Board meeting. The minutes were not posted on the city website for over three months. I happen to stumble upon a cryptic description of a Biltmore Way parking proposal while reading attachments to a totally unrelated Commission Agenda Item, the sale of 350 Greco. I was incredulous to discover that the Parking Director requested approval for giving what he described as a limited number of on-street parking spaces in the two residential blocks of Biltmore Way, to businesses that have limited onsite parking. This was really curious since presently there are no businesses in the 6 and 700 Blocks of Biltmore Way. Through multiple public records requests, I learned that a well-connected businessman purchased one of three commercial spaces in the David William, he contacted the former Mayor, because the commercial space only came with two onsite parking spaces, and he needed an additional 20 spaces. Those 20 spaces represent 23 percent of the available on-street parking in the 600 and 700 Blocks where high-rise condos line the street. Mr. Kinney's pilot program calls for selling to the businessman 20 parking permits for \$80 per space, per month, taking away spaces used by residents, visitors, workers and service companies.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli described it as a creative suggestion that Mr. Kinney had come up with. This is an abuse of power. If someone purchased a commercial space in a densely populated residential neighborhood, knowing full well there is inadequate onsite parking for their employees and clients, they should not expect the city to make up for the shortfall, they should buy somewhere else. Imagine the businesses employees paring for eight hours in front of condo buildings taking most, if not all of the spaces. Where the plumber, the electrician, painter, elevator repair man, housekeeper, caregiver, visitors supposed to park? - or in emergencies when for weeks 150 cars were relocated to the street from the flooded garage in the David William or the cars from other buildings along the street with garages that consistently flood, or when residents worked remotely from home or isolated during Covid, every space was taken. The giveaways to businesses and developers at the expense of residents must stop and this parking scheme must be cancelled. I appreciate very much that Mayor Lago has made transparency, public notice, and resident engagement part of his strategic plan, and I have every confidence that these priorities will turn into action, and that action should result in agendas and minutes of advisory board meetings must be posted in a timely manner, not three and four months after the fact when nobody knows whatever happened at meetings. Meetings must be recorded and accessible to the public and residents in the neighborhood must be noticed about an action that will affect them. I plead with you to support cancelling this egregious action that actually got approved at the March 25th Parking Advisory Board meeting. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Ms. Gold. Quick question for the ACM. Can you give me a little bit more background in regard to the minutes that Ms. Gold is talking about?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Mr. Mayor, I do know that there was an issue with uploading the Parking Advisory Board minutes to the website, that was corrected. I think it was somewhere between the Clerk's office and the Parking Advisory Board itself. Regarding the issue that Sheryl Gold just mentioned, we will look into it, and we can provide a full report to you and happy to meet with Ms. Gold and discuss her concerns. It's the first I hear of this.

Mayor Lago: She is not here right now, but my concern, the agreement that the city made with this individual we can really address later, its not a priority for me right now. What is a priority for me is the fact that you have a meeting, and those documents aren't uploaded for three months. It sends a message and maybe its not the most appropriate message, when by the way, I'm 110 percent certain and I don't want to speak for you or the ACM, but there was nothing shady, there was no malicious intent, but you can see where someone can come up with the idea that potentially maybe we were holding back information.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Or just because you may disagree Ms. Gold's understanding, I have to agree with Ms. Gold. For something to be withheld for three months just sends a poor message in my opinion. It was an error. It's okay. Its fine.

Parking Director Kinney: I just want to – there are two points I want to clarify.

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Mayor Lago: Before we get into the clarification, through the Manager, I would like for you to answer me, please, was it three months or was it not three months?

Parking Director Kinney: It was not three months. The meeting was March 25th. I went to the Clerk's office during the May Commission meeting, and I asked if the minutes had been posted and I was told the same day that the Commission meeting was happening that they had just posted them. They should have been posted before that, but that would be the end of March to May, so it was probably a month and-a-half, I don't know the exact number of days. That should not have happened. They should have been posted before that, but it was not three months. On the issue of the e-mail from Mayor Cason, it was not an idea that I proposed.

Mayor Lago: It was not Mayor Cason.

Parking Director Kinney: Mayor Cason proposed that to me and I said I would look into it. I do not automatically approve those, and it requires me to go out to Biltmore Way, count open spaces at the peak of the day and see if its something that's even feasible, and the truth of the matter is, on the 6 and 700 Block of Biltmore Way, if you go out there during the peak of the day, there are 35 to 45 open parking spaces. So, the Parking Advisory Board allowed for a pilot project six months only of no more than 20 permits. If at the end of that time or during that time it would not work, it would be cancelled.

Mayor Lago: When does that pilot program expire?

Parking Director Kinney: To be honest, there has not been a permit sold yet. The company that has the use of David Williams, that is moving into the David Williams, that's not a decision that Parking makes. Parking is trying to deal with the fact that they have a right to go into the David Williams, they have a certain need because of the number of employees they have, and we are trying to accommodate a use that's already approved there, and they are moving in the 26th of July.

Mayor Lago: And will run it for six months to see.

Parking Director Kinney: Or less. I don't foresee there being an issue, because every time I've checked 6 and 700 Biltmore Way and if you look back at traffic, actual formal traffic studies that have been done there, there is more than enough open space on those blocks for this purpose. Now, we limited it to a maximum of 20, that's not an agreement for this company to have 20 spaces. There are other commercial spaces in the building, so we are dealing with trying to balance the interest and that was something that I did take to the Parking Advisory Board. There had been conversations. I will tell you the code says that the City Manager manages meter zones. Hindsight there has been conversations about when we are dealing with larger multi-family condo association-type areas, maybe we invite them to participate directly, rather than just post it on the agenda, and that's something we are looking into. But this is very standard where we are dealing with the meter zone and the City Manager delegated to me is tasked with managing the meter zone.

Mayor Lago: And that's fine and I have the utmost faith and confidence in the Manager. But what I want to be clear is also that, my understanding is that in the last Parking Advisory Board meeting they requested that you do not move forward with releasing these 20.

Parking Director Kinney: Is coming back up at the meeting in July, yes.

Mayor Lago: By the way, I want to make it clear, I don't want to discuss this right now. What I want to discuss is the simple fact that we all, goes back to my comments, all of us need to start putting things and not letting things slip through the cracks where we are two months, if you say its two months and she says its three months, we'll split the baby, its two and-a-half months, where we give that sense of maybe not wanting to put certain documents out there. We've got to try to – and I'm not blaming you, I'll blame myself, not a problem, that's okay. We are very defensive all of a sudden. So, let's just try to – if we were to put those documents out as quickly as possible, we wouldn't have been in the situation having this discussion today, I'm pretty sure. I want to hear from the Parking Advisory Board in the next Commission meeting, why are they requesting for you not to release it, it's a concern if the Parking Advisory Board...

Parking Director Kinney: Its not that they requested it, its just in the process from it getting from the Parking Advisory Board to your agenda to being posted on the website, there was a delay.

Mayor Lago: Are you telling me that the Parking Advisory Board did not request that you stop the process?

Parking Director Kinney: Oh, no, no – stop the – yes, they asked me not to sell the permits right now.

Mayor Lago: So that's what I said.

Parking Director Kinney: Because they wanted to revisit it in July.

Mayor Lago: That's what I said before and then you told me that that was not the case.

Parking Director Kinney: Oh, I thought you were talking about the minutes.

Mayor Lago: No, no, no. The minutes should be up as quickly as possible, just put them up as quickly as possible.

Parking Director Kinney: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Whoever is responsible for that, let's push that forward and make it happen across the board, but I have a concern when the Parking Advisory Board put it on the record that they want you to stop the process. I'm not saying that I'm against this. I want to understand a little bit more.

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Parking Director Kinney: In fact, they are not saying they oppose it, there are two new board members on the Parking Advisory Board, and they would like to be up to speed on what the purpose is.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: Some one in the audience would like to...

Ms. Gold: Vice Mayor, I just want to take two minutes, or one minute. This is just misinformation that you're getting. The City Clerk can attest to when they actually posted the meeting minutes. It was not in May, okay, it was three months. Billy can certainly attest to when the minutes actually went up. The second thing is, the Parking Advisory Board was so surprised that one, nobody knew about this that there was no outreach to the neighbors, to the neighborhood, that's when they said we will not allow you to sell these permits and this will have to come back, be noticed and it will be taken up again. And the third point I want to make is, Mr. Kinney says that he's gone out and he surveyed, there is no evidence that he did it, he didn't document it, we don't know what days he went, we don't know what times he went, we don't know how many empty spaces there were, so this is not a professional way to determine, do we have more cars than we can accommodate already and why are we giving away 20 spaces which is almost a quarter of...

Mayor Lago: Ms. Gold, this is why I want a little more clarity at the next Parking meeting and then we can bring it back to the Commission, but let's just hear from the doctor just one quick moment, if you could be as brief as possible, so we can really discuss the issue.

Dr. Sokoloff: I'm a new member of the Parking Advisory Board, I'm happy to be a member of that board. I had been the Chairman of the Transportation Board and served on that board for eight years. I'd like to point out a few just very briefly, I think there is a lot of improvement that can happen by the staff to supply the minutes, get them online. I would get my minutes to my Transportation Board meetings sometimes within 24 hours before my meeting, that's unacceptable. There is a lot of improvement that needs to happen. As far as the surveying of the numbers, I had another issue of my own with Mr. Kinney where my dental office looked out at a block that day in and day out it's a building put up by MG Developers, they submitted a petition to take away parking on an entire block, which was approved and there were no tenants even living in those brand-new buildings. I brought it up to a few of you about if that was correct or not, the actual process, which I don't think it was. I think there is a lot of improvement that's why I'm on the board. I listened to Ms. Gold during the last Parking Advisory Board and quite honestly, if I were a business owner and I was putting a business in the David Williams Hotel, the first thing I would ask the landlord is, how many parking spaces come with this unit? – and if they said two parking spaces, I would say, I'm going to look somewhere else. So, I think its their problem, it shouldn't be the city's problem and they are building, I surveyed that area and as you know, there is a lot of construction going on up and down where David Williams is, they are building in front of it, behind it, and there is not that much available parking, and what they did have is MG Developer build something else, which took away six more spaces from that area and I think to give that parking to Navarro for his business in David Williams is the wrong thing to do.

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Mayor Lago: Thank you doctor.

Dr. Sokoloff: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much for being here, I appreciate it.

Commissioner Menendez: I wanted to ask the administration if it would be possible with regard to any city board, advisory board, whichever type of board we have, if there is a delay uploading the audio, the minutes, the recordings of the meetings, let's say more than two weeks, if the City Commission can be notified because the first thing that the residents do will reach out to us and we have to follow up with the administration. So, if we could set a two-week number that if there any delay for whatever reason, we are officially notified so we can be on top of it as well.

City Clerk Urquia: Just really quick, Mr. Mayor, the meetings were uploaded on May 27th at the request actually of Ms. Gold, who brought it to our attention and Dr. Sokoloff. We normally upload the minutes of the boards when they are brought to the City Commission, so we did this before the fact, because they weren't scheduled to be brought to the City Commission until today. But those at the request of Ms. Gold and Dr. Sokoloff, they were uploaded on May 27th.

Commissioner Fors: Just for a point of clarification, that's to the Legistar application?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes. Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Do we need to pull these minutes if they were in any delay in posting them and approved at the next meeting?

City Attorney Ramos: What I'm hearing the Clerk say is that typically they are not even posted till after the Commission approves it.

City Clerk Urquia: Correct. All the minutes that were approved by the Commission today, we would post them tomorrow.

Commissioner Fors: They were posted early.

City Clerk Urquia: But these ones were posted earlier because we got the request from several.

Commissioner Fors: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Moving on. Commissioner Menendez, to me its simple, I want to have these meetings, I want to have either taped or transcribed up as quickly as possible so that the community as-a-whole can review them in a transparent fashion. You want to work on some sort of legislation together.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes, absolutely.
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Mayor Lago: Something that, again, goes in line we can work on something together. We can call a Sunshine meeting and we can sit down and try to figure out a way to make it as easy as possible and work with the Clerk. I also want to be fair, I've been here eight years, the Clerk has never misstepped in his life.

Commissioner Menendez: Oh, I know. I have the highest respect for the Clerk.

Mayor Lago: What his team does is incredible, so again, I think what we are trying to do is just make the system even better.

Commissioner Menendez: Even better.

Commissioner Anderson: Now this does relate to the discussion item I had on about notice to residents, to the Parking Advisory Board issues, the Biltmore section was in particular what I had in mind, where we have these condo associations that are impacted by the changes in the parking.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So why don't we when you bring up your item, we can talk a little bit more about it with Commissioner Menendez and we can coordinate with the City Manager to have some sort of meeting so we can discuss this, come up with some ideas, brainstorm.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Happy to engage in that.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Mr. Manager.

City Clerk Urquia: We have one more speaker is here in person is Chase Howard.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Howard the floor is yours. Thank you for being here with us.

Mr. Howard: And thank you for allowing me the time to address you all. My name is Chase Howard, I'm a lifelong resident of Coral Gables, located at 1217 Venetia Avenue, that road that everyone uses as a cut-through. So, I also want to talk about Burger Bob's today, as one of the many your folk who grew up going there, and I'd like to take a moment just to tell you a really, really quick story. So when I was a kid learning to ride a bike with training wheels, I wasn't very good at staying upright and I was learning to ride this bike on Granada right in between the two sections of the golf course, and I wiped out on the sidewalk, skinned my knee up pretty bad and so, of course my mom who is right over there, my mom, she took me with my father over to Burger Bob's and immediately I walk in and a waitress named Rosy offered me an icepack, a scoop of ice cream, and I sat down and I got lunch there. So, it took a really bad day and it made it a lot, lot, lot better. So that was twelve years ago. I am 18 now, I am in college and ultimately, I haven't been back to Burger Bob's in over two years because the pandemic and college and everything; and in that time my appearance changed pretty drastically, I have pink hair now. However, despite that when I walked in, Rosy recognized me, not a second hesitation, walked up to me, asked about my family and we recounted stories of me going to Burger Bob's. Burger Bob's is the only establishment in all of Coral Gables where I could ever expect that to happen. Burger Bob's is

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community institution, and we ought to treat them as such. We ought to give staff the time to restructure their lives. We ought to listen to the heated voices of our community who have turned out today telling us what Burger Bob's means to them and we ought to give back to Burger Bob's and its staff the way that they've given to Coral Gables for decades. I urge you to please extend Burger Bob's lease, not because he's my friend and not because they are going to earn the city the most money, because if we are being frank, they likely would earn us less money than what this huge institution coming would earn us, but because he serves us, the residents of Coral Gables, the ones who have lived here for 18 years, the ones who have lived here for 22 years, the ones who have lived here and retired here and built their lives here, he serves us in a way that no other restaurant that comes in to occupy that space could or ever could even dream to. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for your poignant words. Thank you. Mr. Clerk can we close the public comments?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir. Perfect. Let's take a five-minute break before we move onto a time certain 5:30 which is Items 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3.