

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-3
November 12, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Karelia Martinez Carbonell
Greg Doppring (phonetic)

Agenda Item G-3 [10:47 a.m.]

A discussion regarding historic Whiteway Lights.
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, G-3, discussion regarding historic Whiteway Lights.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'd like to see if Mr. Santamaria can just give us a brief overview of what's going on with Whiteway Lights. And then I also want to introduce you to a gentleman who I've

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had the pleasure of meeting with, and also Karelia. His name is Greg Doppring (phonetic), and he's doing some incredible things, and I'm going to show you a few things after this update in regards to the Whiteway Lights. Go ahead, sir.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Good morning, members of the Commission. Ed Santamaria, assistant director -- I'm sorry, Assistant City Manager, Operations and Infrastructure. I just gave myself a demotion there. I'm happy to inform you that the Whiteway Lights project is moving forward. We do have a plan in place, permitted drawings to effect the first phase of the work which consists of the underground utility -- underground infrastructure work. Moving forward, we'll be removing some of the poles for restoration. We'll be installing temporary poles and it will be a cycle that that follows as the work progresses, where we, phase by phase, implement that technique where we will remove poles for restoration and replace them with temporary poles. We hope to be -- provided another item on the agenda passes today -- we hope to be sticking our first shovels in the ground before the end of this year. And that item is related to a contract with ADC, a subcontractor or vendor that we've recently engaged, and it's expanding their contractual limits to allow them to perform the work for Whiteway Lights, for LED lighting conversions, both on -- for roadway and for facilities, as well as other work. So, that sums up the update on the Whiteway Lights. There is an assessment that's going on right now. I didn't mention that. And as soon as that assessment is concluded it will be very helpful in defining the scope moving forward.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Ed. I appreciate that.

City Manager Iglesias: And let me say that the power company does not have the same Code...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

City Manager Iglesias: Code requirements that we do. We have to be under the National Electrical Code, and they do not. So, when we take these over, we have to convert them and make sure they're to the National Electrical Code.

Vice Mayor Lago: Perfect. I'd like to see if Karelia and this gentleman, Greg Doppring, could come up before us, please. So, I had the pleasure of sitting down with Karelia. We meet often to talk about...

Karelia Martinez Carbonell: I'm going to wear my other hat now.

Vice Mayor Lago: To talk about different City issues, especially historic preservation. And she introduced me to this gentleman, and he brought -- he explained to me certain things that he's doing in regards to historic lighting that is incredible. And you know, one of the big signature examples of historic preservation in the City are these Whiteway Lights. And as I become a little bit more immersed as a result of the historic preservation team that we have here in reference to what was our City in the past and how is it going to look in the future. And we're trying to do everything in our power, for example, in these Whiteway Lights and this restoration project to ensure that we keep this around for as long as possible. And with what we have, let's restore it. So, Greg introduced me to a little project that he's working on and what he's doing is -- I want to -- I don't want to take your thunder away because you deserve all the credit and Karelia for introducing me to him. And we're going to show some pictures first while you speak. So, this is -- go ahead, sir. Take it away and just talk a little bit about how you found these lights and what you're doing and how you're restoring them and your passion for this.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Let me -- before you start, let me just put just a little context into this because we keep referring to Whiteway Lights. And yes, back in the day, there were over 10,000 feet of Whiteway Lights in the City. Some -- the ones that are being restored were 500 commissioned specifically by George Merrick. The others had different -- they were known by different names. These that we're going to talk about today are called Arcadians, but they are part of the Whiteway Lights of Coral Gables, okay. So...

Vice Mayor Lago: Take it away.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Take it away.

Greg Doppring: Yeah. Last year, I found five original Arcadians in Pennsylvania. And I proceeded to restore them. The first one, I have in my house because in my neighborhood of West Flagami, they had them and they took them down in the early 1970s. So, the first one I restored. The second one I restored, I also found a very rare -- what is known as a monarch's globe. It is a white teardrop globe and it's probably be the last one. And these were what the lights, like along Alhambra, the Arcadians, what they had. And I said, wow. This globe will put one of my poles in the original Coral Gables configuration. So, I restored it, beautiful. Then I said to myself, you know, it wouldn't be at home in a private collection in Miami, but it would be in Coral Gables, where people can see it and see what they originally looked like in 1925. So, I contacted the Coral Gables Museum, told them about it, emailed pictures and the history and everything. And then I followed up by a phone call. And then I mentioned, well, you know, I would like to donate it. And the director says, we'd be thrilled to have your lamp in our museum. So, we went, and if you go to the museum, it's right there in the lobby, and that was pole number two. Now, pole number three and number four, I found an old 1925 picture of the Coral Gables Country Club...

Vice Mayor Lago: In front of Liberty -- in front of the Liberty Café.

Mr. Doppring: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: You'll see it up here now.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: There it is.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Right here.

Mr. Doppring: There it is.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Those were the original...

Vice Mayor Lago: Arcadian lights.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Arcadians.

Mr. Doppring: Arcadian, cast iron, 250 pound. And you know, this is one the original fixtures.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have them here.

Mr. Doppring: And -- but then I saw -- I passed by there and there's the country club. So, I said, where's the Arcadians? I said, well, that says, well, I got three more. And I found the original fixtures. I found two original fixtures. I said, well, I think they should go back to the country club. You pass by there at night...

Vice Mayor Lago: It's dark.

Mr. Doppring: It is almost pitch black right at that corner. You can see why they put two of them. So, I have them ready to go. One, I have completely restored, ready to go. The second one, the light fixture, when I stripped the paint off it, I saw that there was repairs done to it. So, I said, no, I don't want to give the City a repaired light fixture, so I have another one coming, which will come at the end of the week, and then I'll proceed to restore it.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Totally authentic.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: And they're the original ones?

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, Greg, so first off, I wanted to thank you for coming...

Commissioner Keon: Exciting.

Vice Mayor Lago: And taking the time. And I know you've done an exceptional job and you do this as a hobby, but you know, you're really saving a part of the City of the history of our City, which is important. So, the reason why we're here today is because Karelia's group has said that they will buy one of one of the lights. The lights are \$2,000 restored. And I wanted to bring this before the Commission to see if the Commission would make the commitment of buying the other light and bringing it back to its original glory and installing them at the Liberty Café -- in front the Liberty Café, which would, again, celebrate our history, and it'd be a great tribute to that very important corner in our City. I don't know if anybody else had any interest in that, becoming involved in potentially using our City funds, if possible, to make sure that we restore this area.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Yeah, I mean just to -- this is an opportunity of a lifetime. Greg has done...

Vice Mayor Lago: The legwork.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Just an amazing work. They are authentic to our City, and if they can go back to where they were, back, you know, 90-plus years ago, I think, we can all celebrate that. So, I really hope that the Commission can sort of be behind this project, and of course, partner with HPACG.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What are we talking about in terms of money?

Vice Mayor Lago: \$2,000 for the light because...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Two thousand lights?

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no, no. One light. We only need to buy one light.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: There's two lights.

Commissioner Keon: But they'll have to be repaired, right? Is there additional costs?

Vice Mayor Lago: They're ready.

Commissioner Keon: Is it \$2,000 already repaired? And so, then it's just the installation.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Oh.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that's one light.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, and they're going to donate the other light.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: HPACG will buy the other light.

Commissioner Keon: So, it's for two lights, so that's a good...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you want to make a motion?

Commissioner Keon: I would think.

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Commissioner Mena: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: All those in favor -- I mean, will you call the roll, please?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Vice Mayor Lago: So, this is a...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Lago: My next motion, I just want to make sure we instruct the Manager to coordinate with this gentlemen and also with Karelia's group so we can acquire that one light. And then our ACM, who was talking about our forthcoming project in regards to the Whiteway Lights, to make sure that incorporate the installation of these historic lights in that exact area.

City Attorney Ramos: Do we have the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Attorney Ramos: Amount yet?

Vice Mayor Lago: It's \$2,000.

Mr. Doppring: No, \$2,100.

Vice Mayor Lago: \$2,100, I'm sorry. Let me note forget the hundred dollars. \$2,100 for one light, and then this great organization is going to donate the other light.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Ms. Martinez Carbonell: Thank you so much.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.