

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Commission Chambers**  
**Agenda Item D – Mayor’s Comments**  
**October 27, 2020**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Police Chief, Ed Hudak**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mayor’s Comments. And I’d like to address our “World Stroke Day.” World Stroke Day is observed on October 29<sup>th</sup> of each year, and the goal of this day is to raise awareness of the prevention and treatment of this serious condition, moral many times, and ensure better care and support for survivors. Since it is observed this week, I wanted to do my part, not only to raise awareness, but to highlight how the City of Coral Gables instituted an innovative program to help people when they are experiencing a stroke. Our city has the only program of its kind in Miami-Dade County. When the Coral Gables Fire Rescue receives a 911 call, upon arrival at the scene, our paramedics look at the patient’s symptoms. If they believe the patient is experiencing a stroke, they connect directly via tele-medicine with one of their two finest healthcare institutions that are stroke centers, Jackson Memorial or Baptist Hospital. By doing this, they can begin to treat the patient immediately, and as we know in strokes minutes count. As I said, I wanted to use this opportunity to showcase what we are doing in a real tangible way to help our residents in their most crucial moments. Thanks to the administration, to the leadership of the Fire Department for taking the lead and doing the right thing; and while I know there has been media coverage of this lately, I would like to show a short video produced by our communications team to showcase this program, which is making a difference. Billy.

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[Video Presentation]

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. And it is programs like these that make me proud to be part of, to live, and to work in the City Beautiful.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'd also like to, I have several other things, but the next is recognition of our fine Police Department. Is the Chief around? Here you are. Speaking about being proud to live in Coral Gables, today I'd like to salute the Coral Gables Police Department for their excellent work in helping apprehend an alleged bank robber. I would especially like to commend Sargent Wen for his astuteness in helping prevent what could have been a fifth robbery in our city. I know that my fellow Commissioners join me in saluting you, the Police Department for a job well done. We are all proud of our police and the great work they do to keep our community safe. So, thank you once again Sargent Wen and Chief, you make us all proud. You'd like to say a few words of what happened or how it happened?

Chief Hudak: Again, I think as we know, we had a series of five bank robberies that were taking place. The individual was using notes without saying much, the description was very similar. We were working with the FBI, as who handles all the bank robberies. Sargent Wen, who is the Detective Sargent over the Violent Crime Unit or the Person's Crime Unit, had a hunch. Every fifth day when he did his little matrix that the individual was going to hit again. He went out there on his own, told his Lieutenant, I have a feeling. He saw the individual walking in a crowd and recognized him from the descriptions in the pictures that were put out. He established a parameter, if you will, of surveillance, and as the individual walking through a back alleyway, they were able to safely take him down without any incident before he got into the bank. And they have very, very strong evidence. The case will go federally, FBI will prosecute it. The individual, as you stated Mayor was an attorney, still member of the Bar. I guess he fell on hard times. We are seeing a lot of different incidents where people are just dealing with this Covid and the different changing lifestyles. That's just one example of what the Police Department has been dealing with, and I can't tell you how proud I am of the officers. We talked about communications operators, taking care of issues. We've probably made about seven arrests in the last 48 hours for crimes. There was a bicycle thief that was hitting the north end. A midnight officer saw the individual riding another bike. An officer who came to us from Hialeah via VMP, so he's a senior officer, arrested him, cleared a bunch of burglary cases. The other night down in the south end, we had an individual broke into a construction site. And again, parameter setup; the canine officers were really great in apprehending that. We had another officer on the midnight shift. I don't think most of you know this. A gentleman was bringing down the American flag from the front of this building to set it on fire; and the officers, along with the cameras that we have out front, was able to take the individual into custody before he could set the American flag on fire. We hoisted it back up. We did the arrest. And this is just your Police Department. This is what the men and women of the department pride themselves in. I'm very proud to be a part of that police family. I think we are all excited about the move, so with that comes the anticipation. The communications operators are handling those phone calls around the clock relentlessly, and we are able to provide that service and it really is a sense

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of pride for me, for the rest of the command staff, but the officers are really engaged. And they do take it personal, they really do take crimes in this city personal, which is all you can ask for as a Chief and thank you very much for the recognition, from all of you that you do on a regular basis to the men and women, because it is not an easy time to be a police officer, even in Coral Gables. And as we get ready for the events that are coming up in the next couple of days.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Would you like to talk about Halloween?

Chief Hudak: I can, if you want to. In getting ready for Halloween, which is the young ghouls and goblins come out. We are going to try and do this as safely as we can. Based upon recommendations from my staff through the City Attorney's office, the Mayor has issued an Emergency Order or an addition to an Emergency Order that's going to limit the trick or treating and congregating of students or kids. I should say two places, San Maria Street and working with the homeowners, they will not be doing trick or treating. They are going to have officers there to make sure that we prevent for health reasons, not to have people come from outside the area. The family members that we have talked to on San Maria actually advise that if they are going to trick or treat, they go out the backyard or something like that. The second part is the Coco Plum, which is a huge attraction and when I say we get thousands of high school kids, not necessarily in costumes that are just walking around in crowds. The Coco Plum Phase 2 has hired and still continue to hire nine police officers. We are by Emergency Order, not going to allow trick or treating on the streets inside the Coco Plum sub-division, except for residents that are there. So, we will have a checkpoint set up, as people try and come in, they will not be allowed to just walk out into those streets. People that are having parties, everybody will be called in from the guard shack to make sure that we can track how many people we are letting in and what we need to pay attention to. Again, this is not to be a grinch on Halloween. However, we are seeing the numbers spike up. You know, within the Police Department it's the way I have to keep the officers safe, but we do need to engage the community and any kind of reckless exposure that could spread the disease. So that is going to go into effect, one night, one night only for Halloween. We've also doubled our patrol areas during the trick or treat areas around the Granada Gold Course, which becomes another big area. So, we are going to try and do our public relations campaign, as far as putting out messages out, and that's where we're at for right now on that issue for Halloween. The other thing, Mayor, that we talked about was, obviously at the polling places to make sure that everybody can vote, and they are not impeded at all. We have had good conversations with both the poll workers and the people there. As you can tell, its probably the highest turnout. We are averaging, at least at the Coral Gables Library site, from my information from the Miami-Dade County Elections, we are averaging about 2,500 voters a day, which is one of the largest early voting site turnouts since it started, and we've been able to manage it very, very well. Myself and other Chiefs are preparing an operational plan after November 4<sup>th</sup> for whatever will happen, might happen, hopefully won't happen in the peaceful transition of power.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Chief. I wanted to address the elections, now that you have done so. And we all know that Tuesday is the election day and voting has been very, very strong and I want to thank you, Chief, and the Police Department who have been helping to ensure the traffic flows at the early voting site and the Coral Gables Library. I also wanted to thank the Parks Department for the parking availability at the Youth Center. Its been very important to handle

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crowds. And I urge the administration and the Chief to make sure that traffic continues to flow and that there are no disruptions in our early voting site. And in general, I urge everybody to vote. There was never a time in history that opinions have more divided-divisive than currently, but our great country is a democracy and regardless of who wins the election, we are one country, one people, and we need to respect the will of the people. Respect our system of government and come together. Let's remember not to take other opinions personally or let emotions rule our reason. We are a democracy. Thank you.