

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item C**  
**January 27, 2026**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson**  
**Commissioner Melissa Castro (Absent)**  
**Commissioner Ariel Fernandez**  
**Commissioner Richard D. Lara**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**  
**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Deputy City Manager, Joe Gomez**  
**Acting Development Service Director, Joe Gomez**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Maria Cruz**

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Agenda Item C [Start: 10:04 a.m.]

**Public Comment**

Mayor Lago: Public comments.

City Clerk Urquia: Apologize. First speaker is Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road, and for those of you that would like to call me, the number is 305-323-2154. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. I'm going to have to talk fast. I have something that I wanted to discuss, and then I realized that I was not going to be able to talk on the consent agenda, so I had to pull something in very fast. Last Commission meeting, our esteemed Mayor took the time during D-5 to state, and I quote, never taking a trip on the city dime. That's D-5 on that video that we all should watch. And today, the travel expense budget is being amended to increase his travel expenses, the Mayor's expenses,

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from \$1,800 to \$4,500. That means \$2,700. If my math is still good, that's about 150 percent increase. No argument. I just remember hearing that he's never taken a trip on the city's dime, and today we're asking to add \$2,700 to the Mayor's travel expenses. This is what I really wanted to talk about today. All right. I've been talking about scandals and how we cover scandals in the city for some time, financial scandals, behavior scandals, but then last Commission meeting was a perfect example of what we do to cover what we don't want the people to know. And at first, I didn't believe it, but then I sat down and I watched the video. Since I have been here and have taken notes, I realized that the way we're going to cover this one was by editing the video. And, of course, I'm sure that we're going to say that it was done because it didn't look good for the city, but my question is, was it not good for the city or was it not good for the Mayor? Because, obviously, his behavior was not acceptable. Now, we talk about transparency and truth. Actions speak louder than words. What we witnessed, what the people witnessed, what made the news, what everybody's talking about now is www. Excuse me, I need to finish the sentence. All you have to do is go to Miami News New Times and read what happened and how it happened and how Coral Gables First is not going to report on it. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much,

Jackson Holmes.

Mayor Lago: We'll deal with that at the end. One more. This is the last public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Go ahead, sir.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you. So, I'm on the same subject matter. As many of you may know, there was an article published in the Miami New Times implying that this same video, it's on the slide here now, was tampered with. And so, what I propose to you all, I don't know if you remember, a few months ago, July 5th, the City Commission voted to start a criminal investigation of another city official over alleged tampering with public records. So, I think that this allegation is at least as serious. And so, therefore, what I propose is an alternative action because there's supposed to be equal protection under the law, under the U.S. Constitution. So, my proposal is that the City Commission either rescind its vote to start a criminal investigation of the prior allegation of tampering with public records or that it now orders a criminal investigation of this subject matter of tampering with the City Commission video in favor of the Mayor. Equal protection on criminal investigations. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. We're done?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir. We're done.

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Mayor Lago: Okay. First and foremost, before we tackle the New Times issue, because I was hoping that someone would bring it up. Mr. Manager, will you discuss the issue of travel? And I want to correct the record for Ms. Cruz. I've never taken a trip on the city dime. The only trips that I've ever taken, I've never gone to Israel, I've never gone to Taiwan, I've never taken a free trip. The only trips that I've ever taken were to Tallahassee to bring back millions and millions and millions of dollars on behalf of Tallahassee. Thank you to our State Legislators, our Senators and our Governor for having faith and trust that we do things the right way, except for that one year where we received zero. And they were very clear on that. They gave us zero. Madam Vice Mayor, please correct me if I'm wrong. They stated on the record because of Commissioner Fernandez, Melissa Castro, and Kirk Menendez raising their salaries by 101 percent and the way they conducted themselves for that one year where it was basically a circus here in the city. So, my statement is very clear. The only time I've ever spent any city money, and its public record, you can look it up, is in an effort to bring back money and appropriations and pass legislation in Tallahassee. So that's number one. Obviously, they'll cut and paste it, they'll put it on the coffee website, and they'll put it on the New Times, and they'll put it on the Gazette, the AI Gazette. But at the end of the day, it is what it is. Mr. Manager, will you address the issue of the additional revenue, of the additional cost for travel, please?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor. Thank you. Some of the Commissioners were low in the travel expense. We had \$1,200. We decided to multiply that by 2.5 for everyone. And that's how we came up with that amount. And those are trips to Tallahassee. And for the Mayor, you in particular have not used any of that money yet. But we went with 2.5 times the amount for every Commissioner and for the Mayor. That allows two trips to Tallahassee. And so that's why we did that. It has nothing to do with any other issue or any other travel.

Mayor Lago: And also in an effort, which I know this will not make the blogs, but I'm going to put this on the record, I wish, I wish my colleagues to the left and to the right, they spent the time to do the effort that they're putting in to smear me, that they spent the time to actually benefit the city. We had the delegation from abroad here who were here with us last week. And we were able to ratify our existing commitment with the Mayor. We went out to dinner one night and it was a beautiful dinner at Bugatti. The cost was almost \$1,000. And I insisted that I pay for it personally out of my own pocket, the food and the wine, not put it on the city's tab. You can ask staff. The Manager was there. I paid for everyone's bill like I always do. I wish that my colleagues would do the same, but for some reason, there's two colleagues that won't do that. They won't pay for the Nativity Scene. They won't pay for the Menorah. They won't donate to causes that I think are important. For example, like the LEAF event. It is what it is, but they just spend their time smearing and smearing and smearing and making up insane stories like this one. We just heard it from the Manager. It will not get any airtime, obviously, but we'll be publishing some insane story on some social media website. Now let's talk about the issue, which I'm really excited about. I'm grateful that Ms. Cruz brought it up so that we can really hammer this issue home. Mr. Clerk, would you

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like to address it and tell them exactly what I said after the meeting was adjourned, by the way? Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the record. I wanted to say that I personally have handled every single City Commission meeting video since 2011. Every single video with the exception of none, I have edited the video, and I have cut out recesses and when the Commission has stepped out. Additionally, whenever the Commission takes a recess, I have instructed Cable TV to cut off the microphones in the Chamber because we might be talking about each other's family. I might ask you about what you did over the weekend or something to that effect and it's not part of the video. It's not part of the meeting. There's times when we come back to the meeting, the Mayor asks, Mr. Clerk, are we ready? I know multiple locations you've heard the video say recording in progress now because that's when I start recording again. What was different about the last Commission meeting was that I requested Cable TV to remove the YouTube link, the live link from YouTube, not CoralGables.com. Every single video on CoralGables.com has been edited by me since 2011. The YouTube link was replaced because the microphones remained active while the Commission was on recess. That's the only reason why the YouTube video and only the YouTube video was changed. Aside from that, we have received multiple public records requests for the entire meeting video from different camera angles, and everything has been responded up until yesterday. So, the reason the Miami New Times got the entire video with the different camera angles is because my office gave it to them immediately. So, if the Commission wants me to change the practice of removing the breaks or removing lunch or anything like that from the videos that I post on the web, I'll be happy to do it.

Mayor Lago: So, let's talk about a few issues. First and foremost, what was the discussion that was had? Number one, Commissioner Castro, as you can see, is not here today, was making statements as she does on multiple occasions in regard to my family. That's unacceptable. Unacceptable. When I walked out, I said it's unacceptable. I will not talk about people's families. Unacceptable. Off limits. I asked, and correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Manager, Madam City Attorney, Mr. Clerk, I said Mr. Manager, Mr. City Attorney, Madam City Clerk, I'd like to see you in my office. And I walked out of the Chambers. That's a standard protocol. Commissioner Fernandez, for the last two years, the public record, has fought me to stop, to have recesses, to not have a recess as on multiple occasions says we won't have, we won't want to recess when they had the control of the Commission under Amos Rojas. I call the recess to have order in the Chambers. We will have order in the Chambers. We will have respect. You're not going to talk over the Mayor. You're going to talk through the Mayor and we're going to have order. Simple. The same thing that happens in Miami-Dade County. This does not happen in the Miami-Dade County Commission. To the extent that I went to speak at the City of Miami Commission in regard to Ralph Rosado, Commissioner Rosado inviting me to speak about the link, I forgot, excuse me, not the Underline, but I forgot what it's called in this moment. The loop. Thank you very much. And the Chairman cut me off in two minutes. You're cut off. Done. Literally cut me off in two minutes. Doesn't matter

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if it's an elected official, doesn't matter who it is. And I was about to praise the Commission for doing something good. So, at the end of the day, at the end of the day, there's rules. And it seems to me that certain people, for example, don't want to follow them. They want to get away with certain things. They want to push the envelope. They want to make me look back. But now since we brought up the New Times, let's have a good discussion about it. Here we go. Do you know why the New Times published that article? Because it was fed to them by a member of this Commission. I didn't feed it to them.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, I didn't feed it to them.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Lara, did you feed it to them?

Commissioner Lara: No.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, it was fed to them. And how do I know that? Because I know somebody who told me that they're involved with the New Times. And let's talk about that. Why did the New Times publish that? Because they're pay for play, just like the AI Gazette and just like the coffee website. You pay them and they'll write whatever they want. They'll smear anybody, doesn't matter. Now, what is the real reason why the New Times has a bone to pick with me? I'm going to show you. Mr. Clerk, will you run it, please? These are years of holding them accountable for not standing up to the standards here in the city. They do not follow ADA requirements. They do not follow beautification. And by the way, Mr. Manager, how many years have we been trying to work with them? We've forced them. They're unhappy about the fact that we forced them to repaint these newspaper stands. Otherwise, you can tell there's no newspapers there. Do you have any more? Look at this. This is the way it looks in our city. And they're upset because for years I've been holding them accountable. Madam City Attorney, how many times do you think we've met over this issue over the last few years to make sure that we enforce and we hold them accountable?

City Attorney Suarez: We've had various internal city meetings, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: And we've notified them many times, right?

City Attorney Suarez: I believe code enforcement has been in contact with a representative.

Mayor Lago: But we're not talking about this. This is the last month. These are years in the making, correct?

City Attorney Suarez: I know this has been a big concern of yours, Mayor, for many years. Yes.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, it's not a concern about me. It's about beautification of the city. So, what do they do? Now they're trying to intimidate me. Well, let's talk about it. Do you have any more photos that you'd like to show, Mr. Clerk? I think I sent you some more that are there. Okay. I sent a few more. But let's talk about it. So, this is the New Times that you have here. It's 10 pages.

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Look, these are some more. Some more that I personally took photos of that I sent. And it takes months, if not years, to correct this. If you want our city to look like this, then it's okay. Then we'll leave it the way it is. But I'm not going to be intimidated by the New Times, by an article saying that I stood up from the dais and I left because one of my Commissioners was talking about my family. I'm going to call a recess at the end of the day. This is another example. I have dozens of these, dozens of these. So, this is the typical intimidation by a liberal blog, liberal media, who is trying to destroy everything that has to do with who I am, my family, my business. So, let's talk about this. This is what we're talking about. This is it. This is what we're having. I don't read the article. I just picked this up for the first time. This is 10 pages. This used to be this thick when I was young. Now it's down to 10 pages. Nobody reads this. Nobody. Nobody cares. So, I will not stop making sure that they're in compliance with the city, that they're following the rules, and that we're doing things the right way because we have standards here in the City of Coral Gables. So, Mr. Clerk, you were the one that was next to me. Did I say anything outside of what we spoke about? No, so go ahead, please. I want to put it on the record.

City Clerk Urquia: No, sir.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, with that being said, we can do this back and forth, and they can write all the articles they want, but at the end of the day, I'm going to continue doing what I think is in the best interest of the city, and I will have the quorum here on the Commission floor. I think it's critically important. Mr. Clerk, do we have any other public comment on that matter?

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, I do have a follow-up on that, and to me, it really doesn't matter who wrote the article, who didn't write the article. There were several articles that were written. My concern is, and I mentioned it in my email to the City Clerk, City Manager, and the City Attorney, regarding the second break, where there was no recess called. And if you watch the video, you will see there was no recess called. The rest of us remained up here, and we were getting instruction from the City Attorney during that time on whether we were in recess, whether the motion to adjourn did have merit to move forward. That should have been part of the record, because we were having a conversation up here. Now, from the information I have gathered from a Robert Rules expert, if the word recess is not mentioned, we are not in recess. And if you go back and watch the video, the Mayor said another hour and hit down the gavel. Never was there a call for recess. At that point, I made a motion to adjourn so that we could come back with cooler heads at the next Commission meeting, which would have been today, which was seconded by Commissioner Castro. That is my larger concern. There was a discussion up here about procedure, which should have been on the record. The procedure that the Clerk's office follows of when we're up here, I've always seen video of the Commission when they're up here. Audio is sporadic because

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the microphones don't pick everything up when we're sitting up here prior to the start of the meeting. And like the Mayor said, there is the audio that says recording in progress because that is when the recording begins for the Commission meeting. I don't question that. What I do question is the fact that there was a discussion on procedure, which should have been part of the official record. Whether there's another video that is saved somewhere that is accessible if you request it or not, the official video of this Commission meeting should have kept that procedural discussion up until where the City Attorney says we are now in recess because that was what the Mayor's intent was. Until that point, that should have been part of the record, and it was not. That was cut out of the video. I watched the video several times just to see if maybe I missed it. It's not missed. It's not there. The minute that the Mayor hits the gavel, even though the word recess was not said, and we remained up here having a conversation about whether that was and getting instruction from the City Attorney, that is not part of the video that's available on YouTube or the video that's available on the city's website. So that was my concern about the video. Whether in the past there have been edits of the time that there's a break, I understand that because we do take a lunch break. We do take breaks. And if a resident is trying to watch a video at home afterward, they shouldn't be worried about a one-hour break in between trying to figure out when it starts. I understand that. But if there are members of the Commission that are sitting up here and having a conversation about the city or process, that should be part of the record.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, let me respond to you very quickly. Madam City Attorney, we were on recess, correct? I hit the gavel. We're on recess.

City Attorney Suarez: So, I have not gone back to watch the video, but my recollection is that there was, I don't know what words he used, but I think there was an understanding that we were taking a recess or a break. And then there was some question about, you did make a motion or attempted to make a motion, and there was an attempted second. And there was a question asked of me is, can we vote? And I said, if we are in recess, we cannot take a vote. And you all stood up or there was an acknowledgement of that. And that is my recollection without having gone back to watch the video.

Mayor Lago: Well, we're not here to discuss whether we're in recess or not. We're just here to do everything in our power, which is to try to make me look bad. That's what we're trying to do. It's the effort. But I want to go into something. Let's do something simple. Let's do something simple. Mr. Clerk, there is a video out there. Maybe you cut it because I think we did go into a break where Commissioner Fernandez leaves the dais and is screaming as he's running out of here, insulting me, saying that I should quit, that I should do all kinds of ridiculous things. It was probably about a year and a half ago. Saying I should quit. Was that cut also? Or was that he left running? I was still on the dais. Did I call for a recess? Or is that still available? The difference is very simple. Is that I don't take that video and then leak it to blogs. I don't need to. I don't need to do that. And it doesn't matter because the New Times is not going to move a dial here. It's not moving a dial. The

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residents here know the truth. And you can sell them that I got up, and I left and it doesn't matter. At the end of the day, we called recess. I was not going to allow the discourse to evolve into something ridiculous and disrespectful. You don't talk about people's families. You don't. I gave you every opportunity to take a stand and you took a weak, weak stand because you didn't want to hurt your colleague who is, you know, you guys are working together. I would never allow for anybody to talk about anybody's family up here. And it's not the first, it's not the second or the third time that happens. And it continues to happen. I gave you every opportunity, every opportunity to address it. And you didn't address it because at the end of the day, it's not convenient for you. So, I've never run out of here screaming, you should quit. You should do all kinds. It's on the record. You did that. Do I go and leak that to media or anything? No, I don't. It's just the same thing you've done for years. You've done for years. You've taken advantage of the COA. You've turned people into the Commission on Ethics, FDLE. You've been doing it for years and everybody knows, everybody knows. So, at the end of the day, it's okay. We put up with it for two years. I didn't use your name. So, at the end of the day, we put up with it for two years. We put up with two years. Now I know that you're grasping at straws in an effort to continue to have a circus up here. I'm not going to allow it. We're going to continue. We have a lot of business at hand. We have exceptional elected officials here that we got to get the work at hand. And I'm not going to go back and forth and tip for tat can be used on some blog posts because that's exactly what you want. Madam Vice Mayor, and then Commissioner Lara.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, during the recess, which was clearly a recess, I was sitting as Chair and in my capacity as Chair, I said that there was a recess called. Now, whether we want to split hairs on whether you understood that it related back to the prior recess or whether the word was actually uttered into the microphone of recess, it was abundantly clear we were in recess and that the motion to adjourn the meeting was the most non-productive thing that we could do. We needed to get the business of the city done. I have nothing more to say on this topic.

Mayor Lago: And it's very simple. It's very simple. The Miami New Times does not want to be held accountable. They do not want to maintain their boxes. They're not ADA compliant. They're rusted. They're not being kept up. They're full of stickers and graffiti. I just gave you some examples that DCM can tell you. I've sent them to him for the last two years, over and over and over again. We get compliance, then we don't get compliance. We're requesting Code Enforcement is spending hours writing them up, sending them letters, Legal gets involved. This is time that belongs to the residents. If you're going to be fortunate enough to have a news stand in the City of Coral Gables, half dozen or a dozen of them, you should be held to the same standard that everyone else is. For example, our garbage cans are cleaned every week on Miracle Mile. You understand? We make sure that we clean the sculptures. We make sure that we uphold the floors. The floors have to be perfectly clean. We do what we can. Take the gum off. Why do they get special treatment? Why? Because they're a media outlet and they can write a bad article about you? I'm

not going to bend to them. And they're not going to intimidate me. So, Commissioner Lara. We got to move on, by the way.

Commissioner Lara: This is it. And to that point, right? So just to respond to you, Commissioner Fernandez. I think it was crystal clear that when the Mayor, as the Chair of this Commission meeting, smacked the gavel and said, another hour. I don't even know how that can be possibly debated. Another hour when we had just had a motion to recess for, well, how long? An hour. So, when he says another hour, common sense dictates. He's speaking in the same tone and in the same context of calling for another recess. At least there was no concern or question on my mind. Once that occurred, we could have been up here talking about whether what just happened was or wasn't a recess, but it was a recess. We could have been here for a week talking about it. And I don't think that would have been a part of the official record because once a recess was called, everything afterwards is not a part of the official record, even if a motion was attempted during the recess. So, Mayor, I would urge us to move along to the next agenda item. We've got a lot of work to do.

Mayor Lago: Yeah. So, I think we should, I think we need to

Commissioner Fernandez: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner let's move on.

Commissioner Fernandez: I just, I just want to clear up one point that the Commissioner made regarding the recess. Again, my concern is not regarding whether we were in recess or not. The City Attorney made that judgment call when she said or gave us that clarification when we had the discussion. My belief, that discussion should be part of the official record. That is the argument that I'm making. It's not about whether we were in recess or not. That's based on interpretation. That's fine. That's why we have the parliamentarian here who makes those clarifications if we have a doubt. The moment that she said we all got up and left, that was the end of the discussion, but we did have a conversation on whether we were there. That should be part of the record. That's it. That's my only two cents. We could, we could go, like you said, we can go at this all day about what has or has not happened. Defamatory comments made in my direction are totally uncalled for, but I will address those in a different venue.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Let me respond. All right. So, when we're in recess and we go for another hour and I stand up, Mr. Clerk, it's over. You can have all the conversation you like, but it's not part of the record. Yes or no, Mr. Clerk?

City Clerk Urquia: That's the way we're operating on this. So, we turn off the microphone when that happens.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fernandez is wrong. Even though he thinks he's right, he's wrong. And everyone agrees with me. You are wrong. Now let me explain to you. Again, why don't we

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do something? I'm going to give you another bite of the apple. Okay. Why don't we do something? Just I gave you an opportunity to send a message to Commissioner Castro that's speaking about somebody's family is unacceptable. Why don't we make, why don't you make a motion and help me, like I've asked you, help me hold the Miami New Times, in which you were part of leaking this story. Why don't you help me? Why don't you help me hold them accountable, so we don't diminish our standards here in the City Beautiful. So why don't you make a motion and say the Miami New Times has 30 days to correct the graffiti, the stickers, and bring, bring their news stands up to a standard that's appropriate. If not, we will request for these newsstands to be removed. If you, if you motion, if you make that motion, I've been fighting this for years and the DCM will tell you, Mr. DCM, can you stand up here one second, please? I, you get my text message, you get my photos, the photos are up there. Will you, will you do me a favor? Will you do me a favor? Will you explain just before Commissioner Fernandez figures a way to wiggle, wiggle his way out of this? Will you, will you do me a favor and explain the efforts that we've made to try to bring the standards up in regard to the Miami New Times? And this is why this article is written.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: Thank you, Mayor. Joe Gomez, Deputy City Manager. We've, our team, our Code Enforcement team has had numerous conversations. We've reached out to the New Times, to the contractor that, that provides the vending, the machines for the newspapers. We've brought it to their attention the deplorable condition of many of these stands. And to date, we still have many of the stands that are in very bad condition. So, we're moving forward with additional Code Enforcement action, including bringing them to the Code Enforcement Board.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mr. DCM. So just to be clear, this is staff telling you, the City Attorney just told you, the DCM has told you, I sent them pictures, residents send me pictures, business owners send me pictures. They all say the same thing. You have laws that require me to pressure clean the front of my business. But why are you not holding the Miami New Times? So again, I'm not going to be intimidated. You can make an article that is absolutely bogus. It's actually shameful. These are the standards that we have here in the city. And again, at the end of the day, the residents know that we're fighting, we're fighting to beautify the city and continue to elevate the standards here and the quality of life. So, I think--

Commissioner Fernandez: On your point? Well, but you're asking, you're asking me to make a motion.

Mayor Lago: But you know what? I scratch that.

Commissioner Fernandez: No, you're asking me to make a motion. And actually, if we go on the record, every single time this item has come up, I have stood lockstep with you. In fact, if you go back on this issue, at one point I asked to find a way where we can confiscate these if they're abandoned for an extended period of time. And you were going to bring back legislation on that.

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That hasn't happened, but I will be supportive. And I've brought this up before, last meeting when this came up, I mentioned that I was supportive of ensuring that this is cleaned up because this is unacceptable.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, enough grandstanding. Madam City Attorney, will you explain to the Commissioner what we've done so far, please?

City Attorney Suarez: Thank you, Mayor and Commissioner. So, our city code does already provide a process when the news racks are abandoned that they can be removed. But my understanding, and of course, Code Enforcement staff, they're the ones who would inspect the news racks. And there has to be a period of time, I believe it's 48 hours after or a certain period of time that they have to be empty without a new issue after their publication date. And I believe that those factors, again, I have to defer to Code Enforcement staff. I don't think those have been triggered because I think that they do publish on whatever basis they usually publish and they're there. Now they go quickly, but that is not deemed as of now, unless we have additional facts to have been abandoned.

Mayor Lago: So as of this morning, they're empty. Okay. Because I went by there.

City Attorney Suarez: Right.

Mayor Lago: But let me respond. So, I don't need to write more legislation, redundant legislation where it already exists. So, these are things that have been working. Now we're trying to make sure that Code Enforcement addresses the issue and that they're held to the same standard. Please don't bring up writing legislation. My resume speaks for itself. I'm still waiting after three years and three years of salaries for you to write one piece of legislation that leaves an indelible mark on this community. Okay. So please do not talk to me about legislation or writing legislation because if anybody's written legislation in this community in the last 15, 20 years, it's been me. Madam Vice Mayor, let's get, let's get going because I don't want to.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'll cut to the chase. I'll make a motion to require New Times to restore them, to have these cleaned up within 30 days.

City Attorney Suarez: Mayor, can I be recognized please?

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Suarez: So, Vice Mayor, we are already pursuing the Code Enforcement process, which is the process in the code, and they would go before the Code Enforcement Board. That would be the process to address violations with respect to the news racks. And I believe that is in process that code has issued the notices of violations and begun that process.

Mayor Lago: By the way, the big issue here is also ADA. It's a big ADA concern. Sharp objects, they're rusted. You know, people are walking by children are playing with it. And at the end of the day, they're the ones that are getting injured. Mr. Ramirez, how are you, sir?

Acting Development Service Director: Good morning. Doug Ramirez, Acting Development Service Director. I just wanted to reiterate what DCM Gomez stated earlier. We have cited the New Times, and we have given them a timeline. I don't have the timeline with me right now, but it was very short, seven days, 14 days, something very short for them to get these put together correctly. We were working with them for months. We did not cite them until relatively recently when we saw that there wasn't sufficient progress being made.

Mayor Lago: Why are we escalating? Who's the one pushing this on this Commission?

Acting Development Service Director: Well, Mr. Mayor, you were the one that sent us the photos.

Mayor Lago: Okay. And who's the one that got the article written about them in the new times? The Mayor, right? Because I supposedly left and I didn't recess properly, and I have Commissioner Fernandez educating me now on Parliamentary Rules and Robert's Rules and stuff like that. It's all about making me look bad. It's all about making me look bad in an effort and it's not going to work. It's not going to work. People are not dumb. People want elected officials that work, that do office hours, that write legislation. People want people who stick up for this city, who fight for this city, not put the city in jeopardy. So, I want to say thank you to you and to your staff for working so hard, Code Enforcement. You don't get enough praise. You guys are working very hard out there and I know that it's difficult to deal with an entity that doesn't comply. At the end of the day, they don't care about our standards. They just care about selling ads and as you can tell by the thickness of this paper, I mean, pretty sure you wouldn't be able to use it for the canaries at the end of the day because it's so thin. There's nothing in here. Literally, it's ads, notice of actions and some classifieds in the back. There isn't anything of real substance here to really read except for unless you pay for a hit piece to be written against an elected official and then they publish it. So, at the end of the day, I'm not afraid. I'm not, trust me. I've dealt with it all. I've dealt with everybody, and I'll keep pushing forward to put the city first and I know that I'm going to get more New Times articles published against me, but it's okay. Thank you, sir. All right; we're moving on. We've wasted enough time on this matter and now we have something that's a lot more important than this. I would like to welcome our District 6 County Commissioner and our Tax Collector. Please join us. We're going to have a time certain item that I'm embarrassed to say, F-3, I'm the sponsor of. It was at 10 a.m. and I'd like to welcome these two esteemed individuals to please join us and I'm going to have our City Attorney read it into the record.

City Attorney: Thank you, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

*City Commission Meeting  
January 27, 2026*

