

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item K
June 10, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Deputy City Clerk, Yolande Davis
Deputy City Manager, Joe Gomez
Assistant Director of Mobility, Matt Anderson

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item K [4:16 p.m.]
Discussion Items

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, anything for the good of the order.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Happy Father's Day to all you fathers and if any of you want to go on a Royal Poinciana tour and learn more about Poinciana trees and exactly why they have a white petal on them, it starts at 2 o'clock on Sunday, Father's Day, down at the library. You need to reserve a seat though.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, thank you. Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Castro: No. Everybody have a good Father's Day and congratulations for being the best fathers you can.

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Mayor Lago: Thank you. Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: Well, I would love to take you up on that Vice Mayor, but I will not be in the state or else I would have been there.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes – enjoy. Next year I will save you a seat.

Commissioner Lara: Thank you. And I want to wish all as well a very happy Father’s Day.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fernandez.

Commissioner Fernandez: I want to thank our Parks Department for the incredible work they are doing with our camps. I was there yesterday. It was the first day of camp and it was smooth and painless. Thank you for all that you guys are doing and the incredible staff that we have there. Happy Father’s Day to all who are travelling and enjoying the next few weeks of summer. Enjoy your travels.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. I’m going to go through a few issues, just very quickly, and I need consensus from my colleagues to move forward on the July agenda. First and foremost, UM Development Agreement, something that we talked at the UM Development Agreement meeting, I would like for the Commission to have consensus and give direction to the Manager to move forward with that, so we can start a meeting with the University of Miami, our legal team and theirs, to get that done, and also, as part of that is the prospect of Lee Lincoln. Again, another critical piece of infrastructure and land that comes around once in a generation. So, I’d like someone who is willing to accept that and make a motion.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I’ll make a motion.

Commissioner Lara: I’ll second.

Mayor Lago: Madam Clerk.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

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Mayor Lago: That's basically giving direction to move forward and let's get the process started, its time to get started. Number two, this is an oldie but a goodie – Biltmore parking lot. I want to have our colleagues here, as a consensus, let's tell the Manager and his team, let's move forward. We've got to address it one way or another.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Move forward.

Mayor Lago: Let's move forward. Let's do it – but I'm saying let's meet with the Manager, like you all are every week and just say, what is it you want? – What do you want the money to be used for? – What is going to be the purpose of the money? – Who's going to be exempt, and I'm going to tell you why, why am I bringing this up right now. I've spoken to all seven or eight residents that live across the street, you know who they are. They are all calling me and they are saying we have people parking overnight, we have people just leaving their cars at the airport. I called the owner, Tom, and as you all know, you are all friends with him. He says, Vince, I have my hands tied. I don't know if the person is staying here for an event or not, but we'll monitor the car. So, I think it's time that we finally come to a conclusion. Either we put parameters, and we get this done the right way and we take that money to improve the asset, which is a city asset, or we close the door. I'm of the belief that we need to do something. Okay. I want to empower the Manager after you've all met with him to basically get this off the back burner and let's get this completed.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Ready.

Mayor Lago: Will somebody give me a motion just too, so the Manager can get started on this.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it now.

Commissioner Castro: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Madam Clerk.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Alright. Permit review process. I want to put a, Mr. DCM, through the Manager, what are we looking at in regard to timeline for Mr. Duos study to be completed. I won't hold you to it. Don't worry. I just kind of get an idea. I know it's the summer, but we're good.

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Deputy City Manager Gomez: I believe December.

Mayor Lago: Can we push that. Can we get it done a little earlier?

Deputy City Manager Gomez: We can talk to Mr. Duos and see if we can compress the schedule.

Mayor Lago: This is my plan, which is a plan of the Commission, if they'll all support it and it can be their plan. Okay. How much do we have in the Enterprise Fund right now?

Deputy City Manager Gomez: Enterprise Fund for Building.

Mayor Lago: You saw when she came up, she cringed. Listen to me, Mr. DCM.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Through the Manager, please meet with my colleagues, I want to deliver worldclass exceptional permitting services. I'm not going to say why. I just asked a very important question. That money has to be used for permitting. Let's get this thing done. Let's hire who we need to hire. Let's educate our amazing staff in Zoning, in the Permitting Department, in Code Enforcement, whatever we need to do, give them the tools. I want to be the envy of every city in Miami-Dade County and I'm going to be selfish, because this is what I do for a living. I depend on permitting. I want people to be sitting around with nothing to do, because of how fast we are, literally, just depending on DERM and WASA. I want it to be that good, by the way, I'm not saying we don't have the team now, but I want to just use the resources, educate, refine, after we find out what Mr. Duos is going to come to the table with, see if we can finish it. I would love for this Commission to deliver finally on something exceptional. We have the building, we have the software, we have the employees, let's do something amazing. There is no reason why we shouldn't be able to deliver on something spectacular. Okay.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: I agree.

Mayor Lago: Can I ask you a question. What is a reasonable time for you to bring me a plan of action through the Manager. I'm not putting you – you want to come back in July and tell me.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: How about you come back in July, and you give me a plan of action, after you've spoken to my colleagues on the Commission, left to right. You get their input, they build the plan with you, and we come back in July. Madam City Clerk, will you put an item under all my colleagues on the Commission who will all sponsor the item saying, a plan that will be presented by the DCM through the Manager's office stating, a plan of action that will incorporate George Duos and everything. Mr. Manager, yes sir.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you, Mayor. We are working on it right now.
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Mayor Lago: I know you are. I just want to be able to show that we are doing this and we are going to get this done. So, July we'll have this item on the agenda. I don't need to see the plan. I don't need to see it. If my colleagues want to see it, they can see it. I just need to know, Vince, March 2026 we are delivering on a mechanism and these are our goals, this is aspirational, we are going to deliver on something amazing. What do we need to get there and use the resources to get there. Okay.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Tell me what you need.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: You got it.

Mayor Lago: Final. This is a ridiculous one, but I think it's an important one. Okay. Madam City Attorney let's reminisce a little bit. For how many years now have I been telling you New Times, New Times stands.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Remember when they were full of stickers and they were full of graffiti, and they were rusted.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: And your team met with them over, I think it was a six-month period, and we got them to come in and fix and clean up and make them look beautiful, right.

City Attorney Suarez: That's taking me back, way back.

Mayor Lago: That's why I said we are going down memory lane.

City Attorney Suarez: I will take your word for it, Mayor, because I can't remember the specifics. I can't remember the specifics, but...

Mayor Lago: We did that, we did that, I brought it up here. Okay. Mr. DCM, you are the ones that bear the brunt of all my text messages with graffiti, with this and that, because I don't want to send it to the Manager, because obviously, I want to send it to you. Okay.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: Yes sir.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You're special.

Mayor Lago: Let me ask you a question. I got comfortable sending it to him.

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[Laughter]

Mayor Lago: And I send it to you at five in the morning, right, on the way to the gym.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You know he's awake.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: He loves to get up early.

Mayor Lago: I know you get up early too. So, let me ask you a question and this is going to be for the Vice Mayor also. Why are we still using these? – and I asked you this awhile ago, if you open them, they're empty, if you open them, they are just there. They are an ADA nightmare. They are a nuisance. When does this end. When can we get these boxes off the corner and open up our sidewalk and do something amazing.

Deputy City Manager Gomez: If it was up to me, tomorrow.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We can put a garbage can there, imagine that.

Commissioner Fernandez: Good idea.

City Attorney Suarez: So, they are actually constitutionally protected, but we can have rules, and we do have rules. We do have rules, however, and that's something that we, I think we exchanged emails about this. There are rules in our code that if they are empty for a period of time, I think it's like 48-hour period, after a certain issue has been issued, then they are deemed abandoned, that's why enforcement is important, because we can enforce our rules, our reasonable rules that have been upheld.

Mayor Lago: I don't have a problem with the publication at all, that's fine. What I'm saying is, if you look at them, sometimes you have a garbage can, a recycling bin, the New York Times, and you even have one of the control boxes from the intersection, you have literally four pieces, four items in the way. I've seen people in wheelchairs, elderly people that can't get around them.

City Attorney Suarez: We do need still to comply with the ADA rules and everything, but yes, if they're empty and they are not being used, they're abandoned, then we can take them out. So, we have to again, enforce and there are very specific rules in our code about what's deemed abandoned.

Mayor Lago: I just wanted to bring that to your attention because maybe now my colleagues, with a glove on, they can open up the New Times and they can take a look to see if there is anything there and we can potentially, maybe we can bring them together, maybe we can have two locations on Ponce, instead of having on the corner, maybe we can do something like that.

Commissioner Fernandez: Through the Mayor. When our Block-by-Block team is going around, maybe they can check the boxes, every time they walk by, if its empty and document it, take a

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photo showing that its empty, that way we can document it and if we do proceed with removing them, we have documentation to show them there was nothing there.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes – and the Deputy City Manager can go through the rules because there are specific requirements as to how long they have to be empty and how long after the publication is issued.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, but if we document...

City Attorney Suarez: Absolutely.

Commissioner Fernandez: Then nobody can say, hey, I put something in there last week and two days later it was still there.

City Attorney Suarez: Absolutely, we have to document. Yes.

Assistant Mobility Director Anderson: I was just going to add that the Block-by-Block team does point them out to me as I do their monthly walks with them around the areas that they usually are stickers, graffiti, that sort of thing.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, we end up cleaning it for them because we want to bring the standard up.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right. Through the Mayor. What I'm talking about is actually opening and seeing if there is anything inside.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Newspapers not garbage.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct – the actual newspapers.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, you have anything for the good of the order.

City Manager Iglesias: No Mayor. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Going to start something new. Madam City Attorney, anything for the good of the order.

City Attorney Suarez: No Mayor. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Clerk, anything for the good of the order.

Deputy City Clerk Davis: No sir.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Thank you very much. God bless and have a wonderful, wonderful day.

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