

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item L
September 13, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez (On Zoom)

City Staff

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Police Chief, Ed Hudak

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item L [1:40 p.m.]

Discussion Items

Mayor Lago: Moving on. I don't have any Mayor's Comments, I'm just going to address one comment that I have as an update request from staff. I've gotten several phone calls in regard to Burger Bob's. Where are we right now in regard to Burger Bob's in the planning phase and what do we see as the future so that we can have a clear, concise answer to tell the residents. I know that we are in the process, but I want to get a little bit more.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, the design is almost completed. We are looking at a diner concept for Burger Bob's. We just had a look at the interiors last week in selection of materials and I believe that we can show you where we're at.

Public Works Director Diaz: Billy, the photos please.

Mayor Lago: I didn't ask for this today guys.

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Public Works Director Diaz: We have it.

Mayor Lago: I know that my colleagues have been asked too...

City Manager Iglesias: I think its good to show where we are today.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, I know that we are going to go to the community to show the community.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Mayor Lago: To get their input.

City Clerk Urquia: I'm sharing my screen on Zoom, there you go.

City Manager Iglesias: That's the interiors.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Very nice, very spacious.

Commissioner Anderson: Very clean.

Mayor Lago: Simple.

City Manager Iglesias: So, we've gone with the diner concept, as the Commission suggested.

Mayor Lago: That's Commissioner Menendez. That's Commissioner Menendez, that's not the diner.

City Manager Iglesias: These perspectives were done and we had a meeting last week and we like the material selection; tables are just there as far as reference, but it would be something similar; and we are working out certain technical details with the air conditioning and some other things like that, but as you can see, we have a new bathroom; the two areas have been disconnected so they can work on their own. So, I think we are moving along quite well, and we are very close to wrapping up the drawings.

Mayor Lago: So, what I'm looking forward to is, we'll wrap up the drawings, you think what, maybe in a few weeks?

Public Works Director Diaz: We should be fully permitted October.

Mayor Lago: Okay. I need to go to the public to show the public.

Public Works Director Diaz: Okay.

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Mayor Lago: I want the public input, even if they want to discuss the countertop or lighting, I just want to have a conversation to make sure that we can show the public that we went to them and we took their input and we made the changes, as they desired.

City Manager Iglesias: We are planning on doing that, but since you brought this up, we just wanted to show you how far along.

Mayor Lago: Happy to hear.

Commissioner Anderson: Can you circulate the drawings to us?

City Manager Iglesias: We certainly can.

Commissioner Anderson: I might have two cents here and there.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Does anybody else have any other comments before we adjourn.

Vice Mayor Mena: I had – what happened?

Commissioner Menendez: Go ahead Mike.

Mayor Lago: I think Commissioner Menendez has something he wanted to talk to the Chief about.

Commissioner Anderson: Lunch – my comment.

Mayor Lago: Go ahead Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: My question is addressed to Chief Hudak. I've been receiving communications from several residents along the waterway. There is a lot of concern about safety on the waterway; boats are speeding, regarding signage, and especially residents along the waterway near the Cocoplum circle. And in fact...more than a month ago, they were involved in the tragic boating accident that occurred a week ago. So, I promised them that I would follow up and I'd like to see if you can address what we're doing or what we can do to make our waterways a little bit safer, because boats are, I guess disregarding safety of others in the way they manage their boats.

Chief Hudak: Yes sir. Just preparing from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekend, which we consider our summer on the waters. Our officers on the marine patrol had over 701 contacts or directed patrols. We wrote about 31 citations. We've had ten life-saving opportunities throughout the...so it's a little bit different than just our waterways. We actually assist because its not as geographically bound as land where we've had collisions, over serious operator over on Nixon Beach that kind of flows over to us. The signage, we work with Public Works and Maritime, FWC, to make sure that some of those wake zones are also evaluated on a regular basis. Most of the interaction that the officers have advised me is, we turn away a lot of 16–17-year-old people on

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boats that don't have the appropriate life vest. And one of our cases, the officers got two people that had fallen off of their boat and drift away in the current, had no life jackets on. We were able to reconnect them to the boat. So, on very rare occasions, we take them off the water, if its an emergency on land. However, most of the time, through the summer, at least we found we had 21 incidents in crash reports that our officers responded to over the summer, and again, Memorial Day to Labor Day. As far as staffing issues and stuff like that, we've been talking with the Manager's office about addressing some of those issues. Previous Commission meetings, I know Vice Mayor Mena brought it up. We are working on acquiring another boat; we had to decommission one of them, so we are working on that. Like everything else, coming out of Covid, we know what we want, we know how much we need to raise, but getting that is – they are so backed up on getting boats, but we are working on it. That doesn't mean we don't get them back out on the water in a timely fashion. Most of the stuff on the waterways; three crimes during that time period; theft of lower units, other than that what we are seeing is, there is an indiscriminate boating issue where a person that's coming down the waterway wake zones, unlike traffic where its not so much speed, as it is congestion on the water, its speed wake zones and we have to deal with those as well. So, we kind of spread that out and we hit 41 miles of linear miles both sides of the canal all the way up and we are out there on a regular basis throughout. So, we do have boating safety issues. Our boating safety classes, that we will start putting together in the community and dealing with the Waterway Advisory Board, who also just reached out to us as far as looking for additional cameras. I don't have people on the water 24/7, however, we do have adjusted scheduling to get them on the water as much as we can. Again, as the Manager has talked to me about our additional staffing issues, if I can increase that size of it, that's something I would do.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Chief.

Commissioner Menendez: If I could circle back, perhaps members could meet or talk to the folks that reached out to me, so that they know that we can hear their concerns, that's all, but I appreciate the report. I'll circle back with you.

Chief Hudak: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Commissioner. Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Mena: Billy, can you put up. On the topic of the waterways and boats. This is Gables Estates.

Mayor Lago: That is a lot of seagrass.

Vice Mayor Mena: In July – this is the worst I've ever seen it.

Mayor Lago: Explosion of nutrients.

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Commissioner Anderson: Wow.

Vice Mayor Mena: Look at this, unbelievable.

Commissioner Anderson: Awful.

Vice Mayor Mena: Then it smells worse than it looks. It's a bad situation. We have sea-witch that goes out regularly.

Mayor Lago: But this is beyond what the sea-witch can do.

Vice Mayor Mena: But this is more than the sea-witch can handle.

City Manager Iglesias: We've had some very hot weather, so the gas has been exceptional this year, and a lot of that area actually is a trap. Fortunately, and until the wind shifts, it becomes a problem because it truly can't clear every waterway there and it becomes a serious issue.

Vice Mayor Mena: Just FYI, there is a resident who lives on the waterway, I would like to connect him with you guys, because he was talking about maybe he could donate another vessel or maybe there is another type of vessel that could be used that has some sort of, what do you call it, like, I don't know, that something that grinds it up, I don't know, but I think its worth exploring options because, again, I know this is not every day. You guys can stop playing the video for now.

Mayor Lago: I got the same call as you did.

City Manager Iglesias: Vice Mayor, these sub-divisions were done some time ago, looking at how they are done now. They are done with kind of a flushing so that they can hydraulically flush themselves and things like this, by capturing water, expelling water and things like that, but these were done quite some time ago, and they don't really provide for that kind of new design.

Vice Mayor Mena: But I think its worth having a conversation with the neighborhood association and/or some of the residents there to see, again, maybe there are additional vessels that this one gentleman said he would be willing to possibly contribute one and work with the city on something to try to address it. I don't know how realistic that is or isn't, but I think its worth at least having a conversation.

City Manager Iglesias: We certainly will discuss it.

Commissioner Anderson: Thanks for bringing the pictures. That was Gables Estates.

Vice Mayor Mena: That was Gables Estates, yes. It's pretty bad.

Mayor Lago: Anything else for the Commission?

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Vice Mayor Mena: Its Gables Estates and Cutler Bay on the other side.

Mayor Lago: We're going to take a break for lunch.