

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-1
October 9, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro

Public Speaker(s)

Betsy Tillman
Audrey Ross

Agenda Item 2-1 [11:00:50 a.m.]

A Resolution to name the City owned property located at 2665 De Soto Boulevard, Coral Gables, Florida 33134, with the name “The Lamar Louise Curry Park.”

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have item 2-1, which should have come up at 10 a.m. – a resolution to name the City owned property located at 2665 De Soto Boulevard, Coral Gables, Florida with the name “The Lamar Louise Curry Park.”

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: Thank you Mr. Mayor. The item before you today is a resolution for the naming of a City owned property that is going to be converted into a park space; 2665 De Soto Boulevard, it is a triangular lot that is just north of the Venetian Pool. The Coral Gables Garden Club, a member of the Club, Ms. Lamar Louise Curry, she bequeathed \$200,000 to the Coral Gables Garden Club to be used for future landscaping projects. Together

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with the Landscape Advisory Board, the Garden Club identified this space as a space that would be suitable for this donation; and they had gone about making a concept plan for this park. I will caution the Commission, it is just a conceptual plan, we still have not gone out to the community, we still have not done value-engineering, but it was just a plan. We already had some internal discussions, so we've already looked at some items that they'll be adjusted with that plan, but this was a concept and we went through the process. There is a process for the naming of the park. It came to the Parks and Recreational Advisory Board. We looked at the considerable contributions of Ms. Lamar Louise Curry. We have a lot of members of the Garden Club, we have Betsy here from the Garden Club and she'll be able to speak a little more in detail about the contributions of Ms. Lamar Louise Curry. So, the Parks and Recreational Advisory Board accepted it. We went through the process, so we are recommending that this parcel be named "The Lamar Louise Curry Park."

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I do have Betsy here.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Name and address.

Ms. Betsy Tillman: Betsy Tillman, I live at 918 South Greenway Drive.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you. The floor is yours.

Ms. Tillman: Thank you. Good morning Mr. Mayor and Honorable members of our Commission. I'm Betsy Tillman, President of the Coral Gables Garden Club. We come before you today seeking to create a park in partnership with the City on the triangular of land in front of Venetian Pool, namely at the intersections of De Soto Boulevard, Almeria Avenue and Toledo Avenue. Along with this creation, we are asking for a resolution to name the park "The Lamar Louise Curry Park." We have several members of our Garden Club here today, one of whom will be speaking with you about the \$200,000 endowment that Ms. Lamar Louise Curry left to the Garden Club to create an area of flowering lasting beauty for our City. Over the last couple of years, our Garden Club has worked with the Parks and Rec Director, Fred, our former City Manager and other key landscape and park staff to identify this parcel of land that's an appropriate place for a passive park. The City has now indicated we have passed the various department's approval policies and we are ready to formally request the Commission to allow us to move forward with this partnership for The Lamar Louise Curry Park. Please allow me to introduce Audrey Ross, Ms. Curry's friend and Trustee of her estate. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, thank you very much. Audrey good morning.

Ms. Ross: Good morning. I'm Audrey Ross. I live at 120 Leucaderdra Drive. Mr. Mayor, Honorable Commissioners and guests, its indeed my pleasure to stand before you this morning as the Trustee for the estate of Ms. Lamar Louise Curry and encourage you, as our Garden Club President has requested, to join in partnership with the Coral Gables Garden Club to create a park honoring the legacy of Lamar Louise Curry, known to thousands of Dade Countians who graduated from Miami High as their American History teacher; and notable among those are our former Mayor, the Honorable Donald Slesnick, our former Governor and U.S. Senator, the Honorable Robert Graham, and not to be forgotten for his fame on the "I Love Lucy Show" Desi Arnez, just to name three of those thousands. But to me, Ms. Curry was not only my neighbor here in Coral Gables, but she was my adopted grandmother and a mentor on many levels with one of the most outstanding being of course, our love of Coral Gables and Coral Gables Garden Club and its many activities to create a more beautiful "City Beautiful." Upon her death in 2012, she was just shy of 106 years old, and Ms. Curry left a significant request to the Garden Club's specifically stating that it was for the purpose of placing flowers planted in a very public place to enrich the lives of all the residents of Coral Gables; and on behalf of our Coral Gables Garden Club members, but especially our dearly departed Ms. Curry, I request that you accept the recommendation from the staff to form a park at 2665 De Soto Boulevard to honor the name and memorial legacy of Ms. Lamar Louise Curry. Thank you so much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Audrey, thank you very much. I have a question. What's happening with parking around the Venetian Pool, would there be intrusion into this park by people trying to park or whatever?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Part of the concept design would be that we have inhibitors and landscaping and a few other landmarks, stone and stuff that we are looking at, different things to kind of deter that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

Commissioner Keon: I'll move it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Commissioner Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 4-0)
(Commissioner Mena: Absent)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much and congratulations and I apologize for the delay in the time certain. Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you so much.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I love the Garden Club so much. It's such a great organization, such great people are part of it. It's been around for such a long time doing such great things. Thank you so much for all of you who were her friends and her colleagues for being here today and supporting her. So thank you so much. We look forward to having a great party once we open it up.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Perfect.

Commissioner Lago: For your efforts. You are a big part of Coral Gables and we are grateful for all your efforts and your commitment to the City. So thank you.

[End: 11:07:45 a.m.]