

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-1
August 28, 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, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Andres Murai, Chairman of the Code Enforcement Board

Agenda Item 2-1 [12:17:35 p.m.]

A Resolution of the Code Enforcement Board of the City of Coral Gables, requesting that the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida address staffing in the Code Enforcement Division. (Code Enforcement Board vote: 6-0).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The next time is a time certain at 11, and the time certain at 11 is Code Enforcement...

City Attorney Ramos: 2-1.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: It's under Minutes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh, I'm sorry, 2-1.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And, this was a resolution from the Code Enforcement Board requesting action from the City Commission and I believe Mr. Murai is here to speak on it. As he

proceeds to the microphone, please know that you all also allowed us already to put in two new part-time Code Enforcement Officers and I believe Assistant City Manager Iglesias has talked with you about organization shifts and changes that we wanted to make within the Division that you gave feedback on that, am I correct?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes sir – Mr. Murai.

Mr. Murai: Andres Murai, Chairman, Code Enforcement Board. Just to follow up on the resolution from the Code Enforcement Board regarding additional personnel. That came about from complaints by residents and others regarding the department and the enforcement of the Code. I met with the City Manager a couple of years ago, during the Christmas recess and then after that she ordered a complete review of the department and see exactly what needs to be improved. I believe that Assistant City Manager – do we have some PowerPoints to present regarding...OK. In any event, the review ordered by the City Manager has been completed. I have been briefed on it. I'm in full agreement and I think the Board will be in full agreement, because it will be a complete restructuring of that department and will bring it up to date as to response times, as to quality assurance, as to accountability, in addition to two officers; and I want to thank the City Manager for ordering this review and approving same and I think it's my understanding that we are going to go forward in the fourth quarter of this year to implement those items, is that correct?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Absolutely. In fact, in the October 1 Budget, there are two hearings in September, it includes the weekend officers, because your concern was also weekend coverage and so this adds additional weekend coverage, in addition to early morning hours. Those were two issues that we are also addressing.

Mr. Murai: I think the morning hours and the weekend coverage, but more than that, I think the restructuring of the department and bringing up to date technology, we will have faster response times, the residents will be better served, and I think that we are on our way to see the department I haven't seen in the last 20 years, a new phase. So, I don't want to take up all your time, you had a long discussion prior to me, so I'm just like an aftermath.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We are obviously in full support of their resolution and we will commit to implementing the concerns that they have raised.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: If I could just add one thing. Code enforcement is doing an exceptional job, now we have those weekend hours. One of the things that we run into and I want to make sure

that my colleagues are aware is, by state statute and our City Attorney can fill in the gaps, a resident can only, excuse me, gets one time a year where they get a freebie in reference to a Code Enforcement violation. Is there any way around that?- because we have certain people that are repeat offenders and what they do is, they know that that one year comes around and they basically just dump everything outside their house, they empty out their garage and it happens over and over and over again.

Mr. Murai: I think what you are talking about the freebie is that they get a warning.

City Attorney Ramos: Correct.

Mr. Murai: On the Board level I never heard that freebie being used, but they get a warning and after the first warning...

Commissioner Lago: It resets every year.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Commissioner that may be an internal policy and if they have a habit of doing this, I'm sure we could look at just lifting that.

Commissioner Lago: I heard its state statute, yes, that's why I mentioned.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark:....legislative agenda?

City Attorney Ramos: Maybe. It says you have to provide a warning unless it's a life safety issue or irreparable.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Every year?

Commissioner Lago: And by the way, when I mentioned the issue of freebie, the appropriate way of stating it is obviously a warning. For a person who moved into the City and they've been in the City two or three months and they are still trying to find their bearings, I understand that, I don't have any issues with that, but for someone who's been in the City five or ten years and basically uses this opportunity every single year to empty out their garage and I've seen it happen over and over and over in my neighborhood especially, because I speak with the Code Enforcement employees and they tell me there's nothing we can do, the clock has been reset, we've got to only give them a warning. That sits out there for 3-4 days until the pick-up day comes; and again, to me I don't live in an apartment, I live in a residential neighborhood and it's a problem.

Mr. Murai: I think that's a valid point, but I think that Madam City Manager, the plan that I've seen that have been drawn up addresses a lot of those issues about accountability and about repeat offenders, not offenders, but repeat violators and I think that that will be taken up with the new technology that will be implemented. Madam City Manager it is my understanding that the plan that I've seen the preliminary plan has been approved by you that we are going to go forward with that plan. I think we are OK.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you for working on behalf of the City. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much for your....

[End: 12:23:18 p.m.]