

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item L – Discussion Items
May 10, 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, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item L – Discussion Items

Commissioner Fors: One pocket item. I'd like to move to have the Mayor replace me on the Miami-Dade League of Cities. He has some things, some specific things he's trying to accomplish here.

Mayor Lago: Thank you sir. I appreciate your service. We need a motion.

City Clerk Urquia: Is there a second?

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

City Clerk Urquia: All in favor.

All: Aye.

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City Clerk Urquia: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Anything else?

Commissioner Menendez: I do. Is my image ready, my movie image? There you go. Sunday, June 5th, Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds." You get used to seeing that movie, the birds are tiny. Big screen they look like Sesame Street Big Birds on too much caffeine. So, it's a great movie. You are going to get thrilled, excited and free popcorn, free soda, I think even free beer, believe it or not. So, please come, enjoy Alfred Hitchcock's classic movie. I will remind everybody next Commission meeting, but that's pretty much it.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll be quick. I just want to – I was going to call for a motion for it and we can do that if you guys like, in fact, maybe I will. I wanted to call for a motion on a vote of confidence for our City Manager.

Commissioner Menendez: 100 percent.

Mayor Lago: You can't call for a motion then I can't give you the gavel.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, listen, not only our City Manager, our City Attorney, our Police Chief and all the other directors, there has been a lot of noise around the city for the last few months, a lot of things have been going on, other things have been said. I have full faith and confidence, not only in your abilities, but in your integrity, more importantly, and to the extent that anybody ever questions it, I want you to know that I have your back 100 percent. I have full faith in, again in each of you as people, and as good people and that's important. I have the utmost respect for you guys. I've seen reports of screaming matches with Commissioners. I've never had one in my entire tenure on this Commission. If anybody up here has, I welcome them to bring it up. If anybody up here has a problem with our City Manager or any of our directors, I welcome the conversation, we should talk about it. But anonymous reports and comments from supposedly from Commissioners, I don't know the nexus of those things. I want to be clear where I stand, which is, I stand behind our Manager. I stand behind the directors of the various departments in the city. I feel really blessed to work here. Nobody's perfect. We can always "Monday morning quarterback" any decision and this is a hard job that all of you have, but I know that you all do it with integrity and with the best interest of the city. So, I just wanted to say that. It frustrates me to see people's integrity maligned in public. It makes me very upset, frankly. You don't deserve that; your families don't deserve that. I know that's hard on families; and so, I just want to say in the sincerest way possible, I'm sorry that you have to deal with that. I have your back, as long as I'm here, I'll have your back, and I'd like to make a motion that the

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entire Commission vote a vote of confidence for the City Manager, his staff and his administration.

Commissioner Anderson: Second it.

Commissioner Fors: I wholeheartedly agree. The City Manager is the epidemic of integrity. I've spoken to many people who have decades of experience in the city, both on the dais and employment, who have told me that in their opinion our current City Manager is the best City Manager they have ever experienced here at the city. So, I echo everything that Commissioner Mena said, and 100 percent give my vote of confidence to Peter Iglesias, and also would not mind a clip being made of this and being disseminated on E-NEWS so everybody knows at the end of the meeting that we feel the way we do.

Commissioner Menendez: I want to add, I've been involved with local government for now, I think 15 years, and this is the finest group of people, professionals I have ever worked with in my lifetime. And it's a sad state of affairs that simply because someone in the community disagrees with someone, the first thing that comes to their mind is off with their heads. Have we lowered our standards as a city, as a community, that we can't have civil discourse, that we can't have a conversation amongst ourselves? We are here to make everyone's life better, and these people sacrifice their time away from their family. They take so much, sometimes abuse from some people in our community that I am of the opinion really aren't out for the greater good of the community, but the greater good of themselves. And like the Vice Mayor said, it goes beyond these amazing people. It affects and hits their families, their children, their wives, their spouses, their parents, they read what is written, they hear what is said. No one deserves that, and in Coral Gables we are better than that. So, I completely support this motion.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Commissioner. I just want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues on the Commission and I'm happy that the Vice Mayor brought this up. I've had many conversations with the Manager, as the Manager can attest, where I have told him point blank that I support him more today than I support him yesterday, no matter what the case. In disagreement, there is one thing that I will tell you, the Manager has unquestionable integrity, intelligence, and commitment to the City of Coral Gables. You have the support of the entire Commission, you have the support of this entire city, and I don't want you to ever forget that, and I've told you that, how many times have I told you that?

City Manager Iglesias: Multiple times Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Put it on the record. How many times have I told you that?
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City Manager Iglesias: Multiple times.

Mayor Lago: So, you know it, this is not an easy job, being the Mayor is not an easy job, the Vice Mayor, the Commissioners, the City Attorney, City Clerk, City Manager, Public Works Director, ACM, Police Chief, Assistant City Attorney, all the Building Department, Code Enforcement, I'm just naming the people who are here today. These are not easy jobs. This is why we are in the limelight. We are targets, but I can tell you one thing, we work, we wake up every single day and we try to do the best for this community. We support you unequivocally, we support the staff, and I will never get tired of saying thank you. We are better than that. We are the epidemic, like Commissioner Menendez said, of class and dignity and collegiality of all 34 municipalities in Miami-Dade County, and that's why I take such pride serving on this Commission. So, with that we have a motion, we have a second, I don't know who said it.

Commissioner Fors: Second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you very much. Much appreciated. Thank you.

[Applause]