

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-3
March 14, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Deputy City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item E-3 [10:59:05 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, establishing a voluntary Private Security Camera Registry and providing incentive program for voluntary security camera installation, providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Mayor Cason)

Mayor Cason: We are going to do one more before we go to the time certain, we are going to try to get E-3 out of the way, which is an Ordinance on First Reading.

City Attorney Leen: Item E-3 is An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, establishing a voluntary Private Security Camera Registry and providing incentive program for voluntary security camera installation, providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date. This ordinance is sponsored by Mayor Cason, this is his last ordinance that he is sponsoring as the Mayor of the City of Coral Gables. Mr. Mayor would you like to speak. I have the Deputy City Attorney is here, she has worked with you on this ordinance and she's prepared to speak.

Mayor Cason: Well, I'll let you explain the background. We've talked so much about, we've done so much in the way of technology and geo-fencing and it's a multiplier for the efforts of the police, more eyes and I think that this is an attempt to go even farther and get more eyes on the street and I'll let you discuss.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Absolutely sir, my pleasure.

Commissioner Lago: Mayor, I just want to say one thing, because we were talking about it real quickly and he mentioned more eyes on the street. Over the last four years you've seen a precipitous drop in crime, the numbers don't lie, and a lot of it has to do with the Mayor's leadership over the last four years, you know the institution. You know the idea of a geo-fence, the idea of neighborhood safety aides, a lot of them came from Cathy's staff that have been brought in, but you have to give the Mayor a lot of credit, and it's been truly an honor and a pleasure to work with you and ideas like this are what make Coral Gables special. So I just want to make sure that I gave him his credit because he's always done a very good job and he's always put the residents first.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Absolutely. Good morning. The idea of this ordinance is for it to accent what's already happening with CCTV, which as you know is a fantastic program, it's creating a geo-fence around the City and basically giving us eyes and ears in all public areas of the City. The idea here is that for property owners who either already have a camera, a security camera system installed or interested in having one, they would point at least one of their cameras to the public right-of-way; and this is an entirely voluntary program. The idea is that we would create a registry of where these cameras are located. Now that registry, we believe very strongly would be protected under the public records laws and we would vigorously defend it as an exemption. The idea being that if a crime is committed in an area where one of our CCTV cameras does not have access to view that the police officer could say, Oh wow, this house is on the registry and has a camera pointed at the right-of-way we may be able to capture the crime and the individual who committed the crime. They would then go knock on the person's door. Again, its voluntary whether they want to give us access to their surveillance or not, but if its pointed at the right-of-way I feel pretty confident that most people would if it helps to solve a crime, and so it just creates another tool for our police when they are trying to solve a crime. The way that we would incentivize this is by giving people waiving their permit fee for installing the actual camera, if they don't already have it, and also giving them two additional false alarms throughout the year. The ordinance also asks that a City staff enter negotiations with some of the alarm companies that are out there to try to offer citywide discounts for people who take part in

this program. So it's a very common sense initiative, absolutely helps again, in getting us one step further to fight crime and makes our City a very safe place to live.

Mayor Cason: Is there any other City that has this that you know?

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: I've never heard of another city that has this.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So interestingly enough, I got a call from the Police Department a few days ago, one of my neighbors was robbed and I have cameras in my house and it just so happens that two of my cameras you can see the street.

Mayor Cason: Great.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So today after this meeting they are coming to my house to download the hard-drive to see if they can catch anyone.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Perfect example.

Mayor Cason: Great. This is a public hearing; do we have any speaker cards?

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: No Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Cason: We have one e-mail that came in from Ron Anderson, "This proposal is a terrific way to encourage residents to install cameras to help the police to solve crimes without imposing increased infrastructure cost upon the City. Thank you." So that's equivalent of speaker cards, so we'll close the public hearing.

Commissioner Lago: Is there any way that we can, in the near future Madam City Manager maybe place this on E-NEWS, just kind of get the word out there, to welcome the residents, to provide like for example, I have cameras and I have two that face the street, so I'm going to sign up for this program.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: This is First Reading, we are hopeful that you'll pass Second Reading, then we'll be happy to promote it. We have seen a tremendous amount of willingness of our residents to partner with us and to make those kinds of opportunities available, so there is strong support; we just need to get through the ordinance that allows it.

Commissioner Lago: I think Assistant City Manager Fernandez was working with a resident in South Gables, Frank Veloso, who has a camera that faces down Old Cutler and he was

immediately outraged and listen I'll put it on so you can have a good view of what's going on Old Cutler and in that area.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And again, this is not in the backyard, this is the public street.

Commissioner Keon: When people come in to apply for the permit for cameras you make this available to them or you notify them?

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Yes we would and I think it would be send that piece when we put it out, we send the registration link, so once they are registered and part of the registry they will show that and have their permit waived, or they would be able to show that in order to get the alarm.

Commissioner Keon: But they can be informed when they come in for a permit that this is available to them.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Sure, of course, absolutely.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Commissioner Slesnick: Just a note about cameras. I'm very appreciative that so many people do have cameras aimed toward their front yards and the street, because we've had, not just me, but a number of candidates have had their signs taken down and the owners are sending us photos of, not the actual process, but we do have photographs of people removing signs from the front yards. So I just want everybody to be aware.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Actually a candidate was robbed, I won't mention the name, but a candidate was robbed over the weekend, I think there might be a camera that may have caught the individual who...

Mayor Cason: Do we have a motion on E-3?

Commissioner Keon: I'll move it.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon makes the motion.

Commissioner Slesnick: Second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Slesnick seconds – City Clerk.

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 11:05:38 a.m.]