

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item C – Public Comments**  
**March 23, 2021**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**  
**Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Maria Cruz**  
**Mark Trowbridge**  
**Chad Freedman**  
**Jackson Rip Holmes**

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Agenda Item C – Public Comments [Start: 11:00 a.m.]

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Public comments.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay Mr. Mayor, we'll go ahead and get started with the public comments. Right now, we only have two speakers queued into to participate today. For those by phone, please remember to hit star 9 if you wish to raise your hand to participate during the public comment section. The first speaker today, Mr. Mayor is Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is who?

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Cruz.

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Ms. Cruz: Good morning. I thought I was going to hear my ray of sunshine nickname, but I'm sorry I didn't hear it. Okay, here we go, Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I'm sorry to rain on your parade Mayor, but I have something to say. Not long ago, Gables Insider published a press release from the City from the Sanitation Department thanking the residents for their understanding for the trash pick-up delays, quote, "the last couple of weeks." This was another smoking mirror attempt. It hasn't been a couple of weeks. You all have been receiving my e-mails, my text messages, my phone calls, this has been a long ordeal still happening today. This is the reality and I need the city officials to pay attention, because this is important. At this point, there are five Operator 1 openings. What are Operator 1's? – the ones that drive the dump trucks. They are the ones that follow the crane and put the stuff in the truck. Okay. How do I know? – because one was fired, one was retired, one resigned, one was promoted to Operator II, and one promoted to Supervisor. So, you have five dump truck operators that are not, positions that are not filled. We used to have six routes. Now we have five routes. When somebody is out, if you have five drivers out, when one of them is out, or like, we were told that Covid, God forbid, all five of them get Covid, guess what, they fall behind. Okay. The rumor, there is a rumor going on in the Sanitation Department and this is the rumor. The rumor is Mr. Zamora is waiting until after the election to make his move, and how do the people that work there feel? – they don't feel very well, because guess what, he has been heard threatening them that he, he, almighty Zamora is going to privatize the department. I thought we had elected officials, as a matter of fact, I know we have elected officials. Only one person has bothered to answer every time I've complained and I'm making this public today again, so you know that you've been deceived, that people have been lying to you, that it has nothing to do with people getting sick with Covid, that's only a minor part. The reason is they do not fill the positions, we have five operator positions open, and he has not tried to – I guess he's going to say he couldn't find the people. I don't believe it, but that could be a good answer, but the good answer is after the elections, he is going to decide how we are going to collect the trash and how the Sanitation Department is going to work.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Maria. Thank you for your comments.

Ms. Cruz: I would love to hear from the elected officials please.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Next, Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker, Mr. Mayor is Mark Trowbridge.

Mr. Trowbridge: Good morning everybody, Mark Trowbridge, Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, good morning Mr. Mayor, located at 201 Alhambra Circle. Mr. Mayor, I just want to join the chorus of well-wishes today on behalf of the Coral Gables Chamber and thank you for your dedicated legacy of service and leadership to our City Beautiful. It has been an honor on  
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behalf of the business community to work with you over these many years, and I am so grateful that upon your return to office four years ago, we had the chance to work more closely together. And there were many, many highlights, especially your leadership over the past year as we have worked very hard to survive and thrive during Covid-19. This legacy allowed you also to present every year at our September breakfast, where you would give the State of the City Beautiful Address, and at this past September, I want to make sure everybody is aware, we as a Chamber bestowed upon you a lifetime membership, something we have never done before for a sitting Mayor, and so, that is not only an honor of that partnership and that coming together and working together, but also for the fact that you truly care about our businesses, have their best at your heart and continue to support them even as we recover from a global pandemic. So, Mr. Mayor, on behalf of our board, our membership, and all of the businesses here in Coral Gables that we help represent, thank you for your service, we wish you well. We know you will continue to be engaged and we are appreciative of that. Thank you, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Mark. And it is a privilege and an honor to be a lifetime member of the Chamber and you can count on my cooperation and participation from now on. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next speaker is Chad Freedman.

Mr. Freedman: Good morning Mayor, members of the Commission, my name is Chad Freedman, I live at 5905 S.W. 117<sup>th</sup> Street. Its great to see you this morning. I'm here to speak in support of Item I-8 on the agenda today, which is a resolution approving the petition language for the Pine Bay Estates Security District. I live in that development and we are seeking an amendment to our district to allow for our landscaping and maintenance services to put onto our tax rolls as part of the taxing district. We think that this would be great for the city and our community, since our community currently has a voluntary HOA and we've been collecting dues to pay for such maintenance; and we also think that as a result of the professional staff and consultant that the city has used to manage the taxing district that this would really help to beautify our neighborhood and the community. Once again, I'm here for that support of item I-8. Thank you so much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you sir. Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: And lastly, Mr. Mayor, we have Mr. Jackson Rip Holmes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes. Thank you very much. I've been concerned about, what I consider to be, misstatements of fact, rampant misstatements of fact by city officials, both elected and on the staff, in particular, Mr. Trias, concerning the Zoning Code rewrite, and I would like to propose that city  
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officials on development issues, this can be tweaked by the City Attorney, because I'm not sure how it fits into existing law, but I propose that when it comes to development issues, city officials be, make their statements under penalties for perjury, as is often required of the public on certain items, and I want to give a short list of what I consider to be dishonest statements relating to the zoning code rewrite. The Mayor said that notice was giving over the past three years, but we all know that any genuine effort to give notice would have been included in the E-NEWS and it wasn't. The City Commission promised then to give E-NEWS notice going forward. However, when the Chamber of Commerce brought the City Manager, the City Zoning Director, and other staff to a public meeting with the Business Improvement District, obviously a major city presentation, there was no E-NEWS notice given. So, the city broke its promise. Then, Mr. Trias said on video that the zoning code changes did not affect the residential, but they do. There is relaxation of FAR requirements for houses, for apartment buildings and for multi-family. The city promised Sue Kawalerski and Leon Kellner it would explain zoning code residential changes, a) in plain English, b) itemized the changes, and FAR changes, and c) give an example of why each of the changes would help the city residents. The city broke that promise. It never delivered. Made the promise, broke it. There are a couple of items relating to Miracle Mile, so I won't go into the details, because I don't want to be excluded from commenting on Miracle Mile issues, but there were, what I call, several big lies, which I can prove, and I've commented on elsewhere. I'm not going to go into those details, because I don't want it to be a pretext to my being excluded from commenting on the Miracle Mile items coming up.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please finish up, Mr. Holmes, your three minutes are up. Please finish up.

Mr. Holmes: The Mayor stated that the public had been fully informed, but in fact the residents were never informed of what the actual changes would be in the residential, how much bigger can the houses be? – how much bigger can the apartment buildings be? – how much bigger can the multi-family buildings be? – it wasn't informed.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: If you'll allow me one more thing.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: One more thing and please finish up.

Mr. Holmes: With remote parking, I asked several times for a public meeting, a public workshop on this and the city has not disclosed what its talking about with the remote parking. Thank you for listening.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you sir. Thank you.

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