

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-2
May 8, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
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 Safety Director, Frank Fernandez

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-2 [2:59:43 p.m.]

An update regarding the School Safety Task Force and security of private schools
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Quesada)

Vice Mayor Quesada: Mr. Mayor, I see ACM Fernandez here, if you can come back to H-2, if that's OK with you. This is my item. Thank you so much Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission. After the Parkland shooting we had discussed what we can do now with the public schools, but let's not forget about the private schools. Obviously, with the public schools we don't have jurisdiction for much if anything. I think Dona will disagree with that when you talk about windows, but that's another whole conversation. But, private schools we have a lot that we can do, so I had asked Miriam, I had asked Frank, I had asked everyone to put their heads together, see what we can do from a zoning, policing perspective with private schools, and I had asked staff to go around to each one of the private schools and look for opportunities to strengthen the schools for situations for active shooters and not to impede egress of a building in the case of an active shooter or a fire or other circumstances. So with that what have you got?

Public Safety Director Fernandez: Good afternoon everyone and thank you again for the opportunity. Pursuant to your request, we put together a task force. That task force looked at public schools and private schools both, to look at how we fortify the systems and security methods and the overall survey of the property, putting a buffer zone along the school as you mentioned. That task force included members from the Legal Office, Zoning and Building, Police, under the leadership of Sergeant Bruzo, who is the uniform Sergeant assigned to the school resource officer, we call them YRU officers. Additionally, we had Code Enforcement and other diverse members of that committee to look at it from different points of views. What we did come back with is a recommendation was to formalize it, is to come back to you with recommended best practices for overall security for these private schools. I will yield to the City Attorney in terms of whether that's something that you can impose through zoning. We would recommend that rather than imposing it that it's a recommendation that we provide to the schools, we believe that they will comply. We did have the team; the task force visited several of these schools. I believe at this point we have a meeting coming up, I think they have visited all the schools. The benchmark for those assessments, we took the public school safety strategies, national strategies and compared them to what those schools today have in place. The task of that committee -- the task force to come back and provide best practices in all aspects of school security.

Vice Mayor Quesada: [Inaudible]...to discuss what we can discuss to impose as requirements.

City Attorney Ramos: What I'd like to see is the list of recommendations and then we can determine if we need to impose them, if they are already doing them. I remember being involved at the beginning when there was like three schools visited or four and they were all doing all the things we thought they should be doing.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's good, but I don't want it ten years from now when there is a whole new Commission up here, it's a whole new group of people. We want to make sure that maybe there hasn't been a shooting in a long time, we don't want people to get lax over time, so that's why whatever we can implement in a code sense is something I would like to try to achieve.

City Attorney Ramos: So I think and ACM Fernandez, correct me if I'm wrong, the idea today was to let you know that the committee is working on it, that schools are being visited, to let you know where we are at. We'll come up with a list of things and then we can talk about up here how we want to implement those things. Do we want it to be a manual, do we want it to be zoning...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Before you do that, what I want to see is just a report with a recommendation what you would prefer that we do here. Look, the option for regulation “A” could be a code or a recommendation or whatever it is.

City Attorney Ramos: Sure, I can do that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Whatever it is. So, if you can just give it to us, make it a little easier for us.

City Attorney Ramos: OK.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That’s it.

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

Vice Mayor Quesada: Sounds great.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

[End: 3:03:48 p.m.]