

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-2
June 11, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Finance Director, Diana Gomez
Assistant Public Works Director for Sanitation, Al Zamora

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item I-2 [12:50:52 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, relating to the collection and disposal of solid waste in the City of Coral Gables, Florida, determining the solid waste cost and the solid waste service assessments for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2019; directing the preparation of an assessment roll; authorizing a public hearing, directing the provision of notice thereof, and providing for an effective date.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I-2.

City Attorney Ramos: I-2 is A Resolution of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, relating to the collection and disposal of solid waste in the City of Coral Gables, Florida, determining the solid waste cost and the solid waste service assessments for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2019; directing the preparation of an assessment roll; authorizing a public hearing, directing the provision of notice thereof, and providing for an effective date.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This has to be a cost increase.

Finance Director Gomez: There is a slight cost increase, its increasing by three percent on disposal costs for the upcoming year, so the rates for, if you pay early for the single family is going from \$756 a year to \$762, so a \$6 increase; and if you don't pay it early and it goes on the tax roll, it becomes \$886 to \$894. So, the early payment is available to residents as long as they pay on or before August 15, 2019.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK. Do I hear a motion?

Commissioner Keon: I'll move it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Vice Mayor Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Fors: No

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 4-1)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Maria, I'm sorry, you want to address the Commission?

Ms. Cruz: [Inaudible]...but I also see the problems that we are still not addressing. We keep adding trash to the landfill because we keep not recycling what we could recycle, OK. We've asked, we've begged, I've talked to 500 people, I mean that's just an exaggeration, about the fact that we need covered recycled bins so we can recycle paper and cardboard. Today is recycling day in my area. I was tempted to stop and take pictures of how many cardboard boxes were all over the place from Miller to here. You know, we are wasting money by not recycling, that recyclable material is going to the landfill. Of course, we are paying more for trash, because we are putting trash there that we shouldn't put.

Vice Mayor Lago: Maria if I may.

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Ms. Cruz: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: The purpose of the legislation that I sponsored about a year ago, and that now has been rolled out and we are going through an educational period, which hopefully will have enforcement soon enough, and I'll have a solid waste expert in the back come up and speak a little bit about it. The effort of that is to divert the cardboard from the trash pits into recycling, which will hopefully save us money and I would like to see that money passed onto the residents. So right now we are in an educational period, hopefully within the next 8 to 10 months that educational period will come to an end and we'll start enforcing the cardboard in the trash pits and we'll be picking up that cardboard in the recycling bins and you'll see a reduction in our tipping fees, and we can turn those tipping fees over to the residents. That's the goal. That was the goal that besides obviously recycling more.

Ms. Cruz: But as you know, unless the cardboard and the paper...

Vice Mayor Lago: Is dry.

Ms. Cruz:...go into a covered receptacle, its for nothing, because you know, it does rain in Coral Gables and then we put the trash, the paper and the cardboard out, we can't wait for the people to be there to give it to them, so we put it out, it rains, it gets wet, it gets trashed.

City Manager Iglesias: Recycling is a very complicated issue. The cities that have the covered containers, the contamination rate is about 40 percent, which cost over \$100 a ton to recycle.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That would really increase our cost and fees for our citizens.

Ms. Cruz: But then what you are trying is not going to work anyway.

Vice Mayor Lago: Why don't we hear from Al really quickly, one second, and he'll give us an idea of where we are in the process with the educational campaign and where we could be in the next six to eight months. At least we have to try, right, we've got to make an effort.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Good afternoon Mayor and Commission, Al Zamora, Assistant Public Works Director for Sanitation. And what we are discussing here today is basically – we have an interlocal agreement with the county where any trash that is collected must be taken to them. That way is tied into the CPI and that's what the protective rate for this year is, is three percent. Basically, what we are doing is, we are passing that onto the consumer, that's basically what it is.

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Commissioner Mena: Its an industry standard, I assume.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I'm sorry?

Commissioner Mena: Industry standard.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We have an interlocal agreement, so we are tied to taking whatever we collect as municipal solid waste to the county.

Vice Mayor Lago: So outside of that can you answer also Maria's question about where we are right now with cardboard and where do we want to be in the next year.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Right now, we did pass an ordinance about two months ago, where we are prohibiting cardboard in trash piles that will be a big savings once we get to that point. We have hired a field inspector, Public Works Inspector, that is out there right now. We are in an educational program, we are running one. We've got four hangers, we are knocking on doors, we are trying to get people to do the right thing, as far as cardboard in the trash piles.

Vice Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fors, I saw you voted no on that and I obviously know why you voted, you don't want to increase anything for the residents, and I appreciate that. But this is going to be an opportunity and I'm going to ask you for your support, we can talk about a year. When we go into a situation where it becomes no longer educational, it becomes the law, we are going to be getting a lot of calls, saying, hey listen, what's going on with cardboard?- what are we going to do?- you don't allow me to recycle cardboard, excuse me, you don't allow me to throw the cardboard into the trash anymore. They are going to have to put it next to the recycling bin. We need to make it as easy as possible for them. I want to take those savings or a portion of those savings give it back to the residents and reduce their garbage fees, so that we can say, listen, you are making this sacrifice and not throwing it just into the trash pit, you are breaking it down, or you are putting it next to your recycling bin, which may take a little bit of time. I think its actually going to be less and we've had that long discussion here. Its just going to be putting it next to your recycling bin, that's all; and Maria is right. When it rains it's a disaster, a disaster. I'm not even going to even contemplate giving you an excuse for that. But it doesn't rain everyday and it doesn't rain 90 percent of the year, when you pick up your recycling. So, I think we are going to get good traction and I'm not holding you to a number, OK, I'm not holding you, but this is important because Commissioner Fors voted no on this and I know his vision, why he voted no. I think it's the vision of everybody here. How can we take that money, whatever the money is, let's say its \$3-\$400,000 that we save and instead of going to tipping, it will go now into recycling, because we are recycling the cardboard? We as a Commission – I would love for those savings to be quantified, come to the Commission and the Commission say OK, give each resident a \$25

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reduction, a \$10 reduction, something is something, so we can offset that three percent that we are passing on.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: And the direction that the Manager is giving me is any savings that we are coming up with right now to reinvest and better equipment...

Vice Mayor Lago: OK. I hadn't seen it that way...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: And become more efficient where we will get to the point where we will realize the savings, but I think we are not there yet. I think there is a lot of things that haven't been mechanized yet that can be.

Vice Mayor Lago: Tough decisions that we are going to have to make.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And for the next Commission meeting I'm going to bring – I was in El Salvador last week, two weeks ago, and our Sister City of Santa Diglot is dealing with this issue in a very creative way and I will bring it up at the next Commission meeting for us to explore, for you to find out, to get more information because they have a wonderful idea about cutting the cost in half.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: This CPI is every year. This has nothing to do with anything, but interlocal agreement that we have with the county.

Commissioner Keon: They keep raising the cost of the collection.

City Manager Iglesias: The interlocal agreement is due to the bond issues that the county has, so we must use the county facilities.

Commissioner Keon: But don't we currently subsidize....

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We actually did a little bit better than our county residents. I think their rate went up about \$30, almost \$30, we actually absorbed some of that.

Commissioner Keon: Right. I think its important that the residents recognize that they are not being – the full cost of garbage pickup as the service is not being billed to them, that we subsidize.

City Manager Iglesias: Its 28.5 percent, Commissioner Keon, 28.5 percent is being subsidized by the...

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Commissioner Keon: So, there is a significant portion of the garbage bill that is not passed on to them. The only thing that's passed on to them is the increased cost that we get from the county. So, we are not increasing, we're not generating revenue as a result of the increase in cost.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

[End: 1:00:14 p.m.]