

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-1
February 9, 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)

Greg Hamra
Michelle Drucker
Rhonda Anderson

Agenda Item 2-1 Start: 4:40 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City of Coral Gables Sustainability Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission consider adopting a Resolution in support of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2019, H.R. 763.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: 2-1. 2.1, Mr. City Manager – Sustainability Advisory Board request that the City Commission consider adopting a resolution in support of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. The presenter is Mr. Greg Hamra, is he on?

Mr. Hamra: Yes, they've unmuted the mic, thank you so much. Are you able to hear me okay everybody?

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Mr. Hamra: Oh, boy, I think I need a drink, but I'll have to wait for later. Thank you everybody for – that's a hard act to follow, I got to say. So, Mr. Mayor, how long do I have, we've been working on this for a couple of years to get this on the agenda for an opening statement. Before I go to Q&A, can I have 5-6 minutes to share something.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead, go ahead.

Mr. Hamra: Thank you so much, I appreciate it. So, my name is Greg Hamra and I live in Coral Gables, born and raised in Miami, by the way, and I'm on the Sustainability Advisory Board, appointed by Commissioner Mike Mena. I will be sharing a relevant link in the chat for everyone, which I'll be referencing in a moment, and so I will begin with this. I'm an unpaid volunteer who devotes his life to this cause, because without a working planet no other cause matter. That's why I'm asking the City of Coral Gables to join 130 other local governments around the nation, from the Capital City of Washington State all the way to the City of Miami, and the Village of Key Biscayne, to endorse a cash back carbon pricing plan called the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. Over 100 cities support this, in fact, we are scratching at 130 and that's the link I sent you where a couple of cities, including South Miami is featured. They were the first to endorse this. We need to listen to the experts. This presentation is not about adaptation and resiliency and this presentation is not about footprint reduction. Going Amish is not how we solve a systemic global climate crisis. Listen to the experts. Yesterday a glacier broke a part, exploded in northern India, in the winter. Experts say it was a direct result of a warming world. It took out a couple of hydro-electric projects and a couple of hundred people likely perished. The North Pole is now the north pool, and as we in South Florida know very well, what happens in the North Pole doesn't stay in the North Pole. Miami has been dubbed ground zero for the economic impacts of climate change, more specifically, we have the distinction of being number one, number one, ground zero for economic impacts of sea level rise. We have the greatest value of assets at risk in the world, New York City is number three. Over the weekend, let me just say that climate impacts are always felt locally, but the actions and the solutions have got to be global. Over the weekend, Secretary George Shultz died. He was an American icon. He died at age 100. Our nation lost an icon and a non-profit that I represent lost one of our most prominent advisory board members. Secretary Shultz, we have him to thank for playing a key role in two monumental environmental successes. Putting an end to acid rain and helping to save life on our planet from a depleting ozone layer. The elimination of acid rain and the healing of our ozone were achieved with the help of market-based incentives to induce industries responsible to clean up their act. They were given the incentives and the adapted. And that's what the experts have said we must do regarding human cause climate instability. That a price on carbon must be a centerpiece of any meaningful policy campaign to

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address human induced climate instability. Different global warming gases require different policy, CO2 being the most prevalent; agreement for carbon price is unanimous amongst the experts. Who are the experts? – top climate scientists, thousands of economists from across the political spectrum, over 3,500, including a couple from the University of Miami, who agree with the intergovernmental panel on climate change, that the most efficient policy response to deal with CO2 emissions is to make it more expensive. So how do we do this and not hurt the economy? – return the money, and that’s what I mean by cash back carbon price. Regulations don’t cross borders, prices do. We need to keep our global lens on when dealing with this, which is why over 100 cities have endorsed this, thousands of companies, and not just the IPCC, and thousands of economists from across the pool of the spectrum, but in fact in a surprising turn of events, the business community. Prominent business groups, including the Business Roundtable, the IMF, the World Bank, and most surprisingly, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and by the way, I should have mentioned as far as local successes, the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce over a year ago passed a resolution supporting the Bill, the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce. But now the U.S. Chamber of Commerce having witnessed catastrophic events last year globally, and in the U.S., costing the U.S. billions of dollars. They came out with a statement saying, inaction is not an option. Well, ladies and gentlemen, recently they’ve upped their message. They have come out recently with a climate statement specifying a market-based approach which suggest a price on carbon and every piece of criteria in their statement is met by this plan. So, it is called the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. It’s a revenue neutral price on carbon, where fee is levied on the extraction of oil, coal and gas; the money is returned to every American household in equal proportions and there is a border carbon adjustment to level the playing field to protect from unfair, let’s just say a market disadvantage from imports from countries that do not have a commensurate price. So, I know that the Commissioners have looked at this. I’ve talked to each of the Commissioners over the years, I sent you all e-mails with details on this. I’m going to be here to answer some questions, and inaction is not an option. What are we going to do? Wait for mandates, which have proven their disfunction at being expensive and ineffective or markets – mandates, markets or do nothing. I don’t want to hear about sea walls and adaptation, embracing for impact, that’s something we are working on. This is about getting to the root problem of what we are bracing for. So, I’m here to take questions.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mr. Harma, if I may, through the Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Vice Mayor Lago: First, I commend you for putting this, for getting this on the agenda, we’ve been talking about it, like you said for several years. I think its about time that this move forward of this city, the leadership of the Mayor and this Commission has led the way on solar. As a matter of

fact, Vice Mayor Quesada and myself were some of the first in this community to have solar on our home. We have an incredible fleet of electric cars. I think right now it's the largest in the State of Florida for a municipality of our size. We are leading on the LED front. We are leading on open space. We are leading on resiliency. We are leading on many fronts. So, to me, I don't think there is much discussion that needs to be had in regard to this matter. For those of us who are aware of the importance of this matter and transitioning from fossil fuels to renewables, it's a no-brainer.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you want to make a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: I proudly make a motion on this issue.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Vice Mayor Lago: By the way, I want to commend Commissioner Mena on this, because he has, and I mentioned to him, I leaned over if anybody saw me, what I told Commissioner Mena that Greg is an exceptional, exceptional person who is working diligently on behalf of our environment and is a steward, and is a person who is, how do you say, unwavering, never gets tired.

Commissioner Fors: Tireless.

Vice Mayor Lago: Tireless, excuse me, and I want to commend Commissioner Mena on his appointment because he's great.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. It's been moved.

Commissioner Mena: I'll second the motion.

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

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before you vote, we do have two members of the public who would like to comment on it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

City Clerk Urquia: Michelle Drucker.

Ms. Drucker: Hi. Thank you, Commissioners, thank you Mr. Mayor. I am here in complete support of Greg's...[inaudible]...I have been a Coral Gables resident since I attended law school at the

University of Miami. So, I have unstable internet here in Coral Gables, unfortunately, but hopefully you can hear me. I'm an attorney with the Department of Homeland Security and a three-time DHS Sustainability Award Winner. Greg was instrumental in helping us put on a sustainability expo. Some...Susan Kawalerski with Bike 305, so some familiar faces...Judge...I recognized from our facility. I just want to say that I am also deeply committed to this issue. I am a liaison for Senator Rubio's office on this issue. I have the honor to proceed with families from MAST Academy and my own children, we regularly write letters to the editor. We try to speak with our Congress members and most recently I'm the Environmental Chair for the Miami-Dade County Council PTA and most recently a membership board passed a resolution that also endorses this type of policy that will accelerate the reduction of emissions by 40 percent in 12 years and is absolutely what we need in order to stabilize our climate. Thank you very much for bringing this. Thank you also Commissioner Mena for being supportive of this...

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

City Clerk Urquia: Rhonda Anderson would like to speak on this Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ms. Anderson briefly.

Ms. Anderson: Very briefly – one minute. As some of you may know, I represent some folks that produce products and some of them get some SIN taxes on them and I find this to be a very, very comprehensive and logical solution to the problem. The innovative spirit of producers of goods will drive them to do cleaner goods and this has been long overdue, and I'm glad that this Commission is taking positive steps forward. So, thank you for the moment, the minute.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Alright, the motion has been made and seconded. Will you call the roll please?

Commissioner Keon: Yes
Vice Mayor Lago: Yes
Commissioner Mena: Yes
Commissioner Fors: Yes
Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

