

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-4
July 26, 2016
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
Assistant Public Works Director, John Osgood**

Public Speaker(s)

Mr. Brado

Agenda Item H-4 [4:22:40 p.m.]

Discussion update on the trash collection in swales

Mayor Cason: Let's do H-4 now. Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: This is a long discussion.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Hopefully it won't be so long because we have to stop at 5.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Good afternoon Mayor, members of the City Commission and Madam Manager. John Osgood, Assistant Public Works Director of Field Services. We have a brief presentation to support your discussion and policy decision around the City's trash and uncontained bulk item collection service. When we last met on this issue the Commission asked staff to return with more in depth information or status reports on the following issues. Trash pit maintenance, comparison of other municipal trash and bulk collection service, programs in the region and collection and disposal data of our existing program. The first slide we'll run through we'll address those issues. Then we'll conclude with an outline for proposed next steps for your consideration, your discussion and direction with regard to community meetings and public involvement this fall; potential goal setting process in advance of the next City Budget process; and options and timeline related to any ordinance changes the Commission might want to consider or implement. So this slide is from our GIS mapping tool box and it basically conveys the prevalence of the trash pits. They are approximately 5,000 throughout the community. Currently we utilize a two-pronged approach to maintenance. First, as residents call in and our trash crews report them, we work off of less with an in-house team filling the holes; and second, the Commission has funded a residential yard waste pit restoration project in CIP for the last two years. That work has been going on for about two years and beginning this upcoming weekend Public Works is remobilizing our contractor to systematically address the largest pits beginning along the Granada corridor and then section by section throughout the City, but that's going to remobilize starting this weekend and then into August. This is a combination graph illustrates a five year trend in our trash tonnage and disposal expenditures. The key take away for this slide is over the past four years the tons and expenditures have been fairly steady and that we are seeing a projected uptick in tons and cost for the current fiscal year. At this point, it's hard to tell if it's an anomaly or if the increase will continue, but for this year the increase tons represents a projected increase of about 12 percent over previous years due to a combination of factors, perhaps including kind of large residential set-outs we've been seeing and the increased tree-trimming activity in the right-of-way, but we'll continue to monitor that and the tonnage and the expenditures through the remainder of the fiscal year. I think it is all on there, but it's a fairly busy slide that we can leave up have a chance to take a look at it. Including Miami-Dade County and the municipalities they serve, this matrix represents about 16 or 17 communities in South Florida. We looked at the frequency of collection, the volume allowed per collection and whether they had restrictions in terms of a timeframe for placement at the curb and private business disposal requirement. If they require landscape company or garden services to take the material with them after cutting. Just a few observations and comments. The asterisk after "yes" in the landscaper must dispose column for Pinecrest and Miami-Dade County, since they only receive two large bulky trash collections a year, landscapers essentially have to take the material with them on a weekly basis, weekly or monthly basis or whenever they have the property maintained, if it can't fit in their garbage cans, but for their two collections a year it would actually be alright for the landscaper to leave the

material generator from the property, but they only do it twice a year. In terms of frequency, there is diversity ranging from weekly, monthly, quarterly and twice a year. Similarly, there is quite a range of volume allowance even within the weekly frequencies up to twelve and-a-half cubic yards per week in South Miami, for example. So as a way to transition into a discussion of the next steps in the last few slides. This is sort of a graphic representation of the spectrum of issues, goals and objectives. We've been hearing from residents, from staff and the Commission in terms of where we should be going as a community with our trash and bulky item collection service with the solution somewhere along this continuum. If you consider the service matrix that we just discussed or you just looked at, the right pointing arrow would be closer to say the Miami Beach or Pinecrest model and the left pointing arrow along the lines of maybe a Key Biscayne or a City of Miami model to reference. And finally, as indicated in the memo in your packet and mentioned at the beginning of the presentation, staff is seeking Commission direction for next steps. More specifically for this slide, staff is proposing to convene one or two community meetings this fall in order to solicit resident input to incorporate into your policy decision-making process over the next months. As to the potential for establishing specific sort of trash pit and trash service goals or other steps or actions you'd like for staff to take, this is a good point for us to conclude this portion of the presentation. We'd just like to turn it over to you and listen to your thoughts and answer any questions you may have.

Commissioner Lago: Mayor if I may. I'll be brief; I know we have to get out of here by 5. This is a long time coming. I think that we need to move forward as quickly as possible with making sure that we get neighborhood input, resident input, we need to get input from the businesses. To me, I've always been dumbfounded by the fact that we call ourselves the City Beautiful but we have all these trash pits, over 5,000 in the City where, just for example, over the weekend you see the mountains and mountains of garbage that people leave out over the weekend; and again, Code Enforcement is doing their best, but people have yet to learn even though we have been more than accommodating. They need to stop throwing boxes in the trash pits. It is recyclable, it just takes two seconds, but to basically cut it up and put it in your recycling bin, and I don't understand why people continue to do that. I know it's just pure laziness that you can just throw it out there and you know someone is going to pick it up, but we need to get away from the trash pits. Again, I also want to reiterate for the residents who I've spoken to who has been concerned about the removal of the trash pits, even though everybody says that we have to do it. They are just concerned about are we going to have enough trash pickups, are we going to provide for the residents some sort of flexibility and I think that my colleagues agree that we are not just going to focus on two pickups a year, that is not, I think that's not what we need to do here in the City, but I think what we need to do is get away from the landscape companies that are coming into the City of Coral Gables and they are abusing on the City. What they are doing is, they are basically scheduling their clients in the City of Coral Gables in the afternoons, finishing in South Miami, West Miami, City of Miami, unincorporated Dade and dumping all that in the City of

Coral Gables and we've been talking about it for months; and I know that because I see it up and down my street, and the moment we get rid of the trash pits is the moment that, I think our bulk pickup that you said is going up, because again, it's going up, not because there is more garbage, it's going up because the trash dumps are charging us more. Am I right or wrong? The fees have gone up.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: The fees have gone up over the last four years, absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: The fees have gone up. The fees have gone up, and the tonnage is going up because as the fees go up the landscapers and companies that are doing work, they are realizing OK, why am I going to go and spend time and gas driving to the dump to get rid of this green waste when I can just go to the City of Coral Gables, cut Commissioner Slesnick's grass, she's not home, she is working, her husband's at a law firm, and I'll just dump what I just did in the three houses in South Miami, and guess what?- save a trip, save the gas, and save the fee when you go and dump it in the site. So again, we are going to save money.

Mayor Cason: If you look in our budget, we have zero for the value of recyclables because nobody pays for them anymore.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: And we are paying.

Mayor Cason: We are paying.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: We are actually paying now.

Commissioner Lago: So we need to refocus on recycling, we need to focus on like what Brook just presented and we passed concentrating on our swales, which is going to be another step in beautification and set the City a part and we need to take a final step and it's a tough one, just like Miracle Mile was a tough one for 30 years we talked about it. I know the parking garage is fixing the streets, fixing the sidewalks, buying more parks, but this is a major, major step, if we are really the City Beautiful we need to take the step, there is no other option.

Mayor Cason: Rodney would you like to say something?

Mr. Brado: Thank you Mr. Mayor. Rodney Brado 460 Marquesa Drive that's Cutler Bay. We are a community of 136 homes; we have 24 garbage piles left. We've taken our time, we've educated the residents and we pretty much eliminated them. One hundred percent of the residents don't do their lawn, so the people that take their trash away, but like Commissioner Lago said,

some of them are smart enough they go dump it in the other guys trash pile, but we would certainly volunteer as a homeowners association to be a test pilot or a...

Commissioner Lago: Guinea pig.

Mr. Brado: A guinea pig because we believe it's really just an education process. I've gone to several neighbors and said listen, after seven o'clock on a Sunday night if you put your garbage, your boxes and stuff in your driveway, Coral Gables will come by and get it Monday morning. So we've been doing something one way for 45 years doesn't mean it's the right way and it's really horrendous living south when you drive along beautiful Old Cutler Road or Granada and you have these trash piles full of garbage. I mean there are mattresses, it's ridiculous. It's not Coral Gables, it's not the image you want to – plus I think it's a real safety hazard. Some of those holes you can park a Volkswagen in them and you won't find it.

Commissioner Lago: Mr. Brado, I know of two instances, two instances, one was next to St. Teresa and the other one was on Alhambra where I dealt with two residents that their cars fell into the trash pits.

Mr. Brado: Right.

Commissioner Lago: And again, our staff is very diligent and they are out there like you said in the beginning of your presentation, they are out there fixing the holes, filling them in, but I think from the last time I checked in the budget, I think we are spending like \$150,000 a year, I think the number is around that, just in limestone.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Through the end of next fiscal year we have \$230,000 in the budget.

Commissioner Lago: \$230,000 – to me that – we are throwing great money. What we need to do is, we need to work on the swales and now we have the mechanism, now we have the mechanism.

Mr. Brado: I've been working with staff and communicating with them, but if I may and I will volunteer again, that our community would love to be a pilot program because we are so close. The majority do not have garbage piles, so they just have a small amount. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Just one last thing on that when Craig walked in. I don't know if this is possible, but I actually rode through your neighborhood this weekend in Old Cutler Bay and kind of saw what you were talking about. We don't need an answer on this now, but as we convene with the community during the fall, we were kind of just wondering popping into our heads, if a homeowners association situation they wanted to be say, more restrictive than the City, would they be able to pass within their community and say, we don't want these anymore, could they do that kind of thing in their own...?

City Attorney Leen: Well, what do you mean?- they don't want the...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: The trash pits. Just say that Rodney's area said, Old Cutler Bay enclosed gated community, if they said, we don't want the trash pits anymore and they agree through whatever By Laws they have or CCNR's or whatever that is, would they be able to say if you live in here you won't have a trash pit?

City Attorney Leen: I would just say that it would be ultimately, the right-of-way has been delegated to the City Manager by the Commission and then the Commission has oversight authority over it. So, I would think that the City should agree to that, but yes, I would think that they could do that if the City agrees.

Mayor Cason: But you have to also make sure that the group that says they are the homeowners association really is, they've been elected, because otherwise you could get who knows what. A gated community is different because it's different than just sort of some place elsewhere in the City.

Commissioner Lago: Just think about the manpower that we spend in reference to patrolling the neighborhoods to make sure people are not dumping on weekends or dumping a day too early, and not only that, I've encountered residents who called me and said look, there is a refrigerator, a house in Coco Plum, there is a refrigerator because they were cited for refrigerator in front of their house. Again, the lady said, it's not my refrigerator, but it was in front of your house. So now they have to dispose of that refrigerator, they have a fine or they were warned. The situation becomes adversarial between neighbors. Like I share a trash pile with three neighbors and that trash pile is adjacent to my property on Rabino, so I'm the one that sees the trash from the three neighbors, four neighbors, excuse me that use that trash pile. Again, and its predominantly green matter, which by the way can be dumped any day, so I have that pile there constantly, constantly day in and day out.

City Attorney Leen: Just a further thought. What you might do is if you want something like that and the Commission wants that you could work that into the amendment to the ordinance, but I

would still always recommend that there be an agreement with the City Manager, because you want to make sure they are getting adequate protection for the fee that they are paying, you know, because they are individual citizens there that might not agree. So, I would just say that I think it's a complicated – it certainly could be done.

Commissioner Keon: I think Mr. Brado said that they still have pickup for boxes and things like that, but instead of putting them in a pit it gets picked up. You just set them on your driveway and they just pick it up. So we pick it up by hand because...

Commissioner Lago: Just standard bulk pickup. Just standard bulk pickup. You haven't seen the County where basically people plan, they store it in their garage – what we've become accustomed to is, we have a lawn chair we just throw the lawn chair out there the day before. No. What normal people do in other municipalities is they store it in their garage and they schedule a bulk pickup and then they take everything out there the night before after they've stored it for three or four months, and they are very careful, they are very careful.

Mr. Brado: Commissioner you are going to have times when you are in between, let's say your yard service, and the big palm fauns come down. So the people set it on the side of the yard and what they do is, Sunday night they put it out on their driveway and the crews come by and pick it up and that's great. Guess what, as residents we have to look at it all week long.

Commissioner Keon: No. I think it's a great idea, because I do think they are unsightly, but I think it's going to take a tremendous amount of education to get this done in the neighborhoods outside of the gated communities.

Mr. Brado: We went to some of the neighbors and some of those people, you know the Klotz family, Terry Klotz, Terry – absolutely, and it just became an education process. So now Sunday night after 7 o'clock they put it out in their driveway and it's gone. We don't have to look at it all week. So once you educate the neighbors they are like totally in favor, well I didn't really lose anything, all I did was not looking at it all week, so that was the issue.

Mayor Cason: So what do you need from us in terms of guidance?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: We were just looking to see if you were supportive of the idea the community meetings this fall.

Commissioner Lago: So moved. I think one of your slides said September 2016. So moved.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yes, that would be good and we'll share with them some potential ordinance change...

Commissioner Lago: And make sure you explain to them and you pacify the issue of multiple pickups, multiple pickups, we are not the County; we are going to provide you with more than two pickups. We are going to be flexible, we are Coral Gables.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: As we delve into some of those, you might not have a second to look at it, but that matrix is full of models that....

Commissioner Lago: Are we the last City that uses this type of pickup?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Actually there are cities that have...

Commissioner Lago: Trash pits?- they have trash pits?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: They have large amounts every week and I haven't actually gone – but they do have trash pits.

Commissioner Lago: So out of 34 municipalities in the County how many are left?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: That has the trash pits?

Mayor Cason: That has claws that pick them up and all that, that make the holes.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: They all, not all; a lot of them use the claws but they don't necessarily use the claws every single week. They put out a sensible amount on one of the garbage days that may not even be able to fit in the bin, I mean the cart, but the garbage crews can pick it up and throw it in. But then the bulk pickup, a lot of them uses the claws but it's the frequency that generates the....

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

[End: 4:40:57 p.m.]