

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-13
July 11, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-13 [4:03 p.m.]

Discussion regarding pickleball expansion
(Sponsored by Commissioners Menendez, Fernandez and Castro)

Mayor Lago: F-13.

Commissioner Menendez: Fred, you're popular. I had a meeting, I spoke with Fred and with the representatives from the pickleball community, and there were discussions last time, we're dealing with so many projects that need funding, and I appreciate Fred sitting down with the residents and finding possible options that are more cost-friendly but that work; and I think if things work out, they'll be at least short-term solutions that open the opportunity for long-term solutions.

Parks and Recreation Director: We discussed it at the last Capital Workshop. There is a bigger plan that has the more permanent fixes which is, the standalone facilities, new court construction that kind of thing. I sat with the pickleball players, and we started looking at what we can do to have a short-term solution and provide more opportunities and get different opportunities to play at a much lower cost, with the understanding its not perfect. Its going to be blended courts, its not going to be standalone courts. So, the first thing is, we're going to do is, I just got some estimates

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and quotes today, so I'm looking them over, to redo the Youth Center. We're going to have to redo the Youth Center court anyway. We have to resurface it every couple of years. So, we're going to resurface and we're going to add a fourth court. So instead of three courts, you'll have four courts there, so we're adding one there. We're looking at doing some resurfacing at Phillips. We've got to wait on those quotes to see if we have enough funding. We might have to wait till after October and add four courts there; and then what we have to do there is operations. We have to have signage as to when pickleball gets played versus tennis and we'll have to divide that, similar to what we do with the basketball courts at the Youth Center. Another possibility that's a long-term, it's not the short-term, that we looked at. Oh, I'm sorry, one more short-term is we're looking at whether we can do the same thing at Jaycee Park, because there's a standing tennis court there. We can maybe put some blended lines there. It's just how much I have in that account that's using some of my matrix money for court resurfacing. So, we'll see what we can do with those. There is an opportunity and we talked about it, and the City Manager has looked at it, and the Parking Director has looked at it. There is a parking lot, one right across from Publix, which has a roof and there is a possibility that you can do a pickleball facility up there. We looked at it, you can probably get anywhere from, depending on how you space it out, you might be able to go up to ten courts there. The only thing is, you've got to look at adding an elevator. I know that Mr. Kinney was looking at someone that would be able to do a study on what the feasibility and the cost of that; and then there's just putting the court down is not that expensive and that's what I have to talk to the pickleball people and explain to them, because it's \$10,000 a court, it's \$15,000 a court. Yes, but then there's all the other amenities that come with it. So, you've got to look at, are you going to put lights up there, you're going to be in a parking garage, you've got to have higher fences, you've got to have more netting, you've got to have areas with shade, so people can sit, you've got to have seating, bathrooms. There are all these other things. How are we going to be able to control the access. Are we going to have to have a staff quarters or officers. All these different things you have to consider for that project. It can be done. I think it's a great location and it would be really something unique for the city, but there are those things.

City Manager Iglesias: Interesting project because the original design doesn't have an elevator, so we would have an accessibility issue.

Parks and Recreation Director: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: And if you recall last year, I think it was last year, passed legislation allowing businesses and corporations to contribute to programs that the Community Recreation Department handle and if you're looking for probably one of the best corporate sponsors where else to look than where shopping is a pleasure. They have a big project coming across the street, pickleball is a pleasure too.

Parks and Recreation Director: Possibility. Yes. Possibility. And you get pickle in the name.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, go ahead.

Vice Mayor Anderson: A couple of comments. I did ask our esteemed City Attorney to do some research on the accessibility of requirements, if we have pickleball courts available in other sections of the city that are van accessible, ADA accessible, do we necessarily have to have a van accessible spot there or can we provide accessibility by you drive up to the roof. So, I'll ask the City Attorney to come back with an opinion on that whether it's a holistic ADA evaluation that we have to do or is it facility by facility that must be done.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes. So, we are going to be looking into that and we'll provide you an update.

Parks and Recreation Director: That's another long-term option. Work with the pickleball people, we're trying to hit both sides. You're going to get some short-term stuff, get some blended courts, get a few more opportunities to play, and then we start looking at the dedicated pickle facilities that are going to be a little bit more money, a little bit more time, but in the meantime, we can still get out there and play pickleball.

Parking Director Kinney: I just wanted to state that we have had initial look at the possibility of putting in an elevator at the Publix garage, and it is entirely feasible, but the idea would be to make that facility 100 percent accessible for all the uses in that facility.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I understand. Its just time we're talking about.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: I would just like to say, it's a very expensive pickleball court, that's all.

Parks and Recreation Director: Very exciting, very fun.

Commissioner Fernandez: This weekend the Marlins had pickleball day on Sunday and they actually had two different sets of courts with removable.

Parks and Recreation Director: I was there.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay, so you were there, so you saw the two different ones. One was a little bit thicker, one was thinner, and one was basically square feet basically, and the other one was square yards, and they are laid out.

Parks and Recreation Director: So, it's interesting that you say that because for that parking garage court, based on what I've talked to with the people that put courts together, they would not be comfortable in putting them straight on concrete. So, you would have to get a surface like that; and

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there's a bunch of different ones. There's sport court, versa court, pickle roll, there's all kinds, depends on how thick we want it, what colors, what size we have and the ability to do that, but yes. And you would have to use that kind of surfacing up there. They hadn't recommended, the people that we talk to said they wouldn't do it.

Commissioner Menendez: Earlier today, I got a text that there's something you roll out over concrete.

Parks and Recreation Director: It's called pickle roll.

Commissioner Menendez: Right. But the resident seems to have access to the suppliers, something to definitely pursue.

Parks and Recreation Director: There's a bunch of different ones. I've played on a few of them. A lot of them are recreation conferences when I've gone, they've always had demonstrations, so I've played on just about everyone of those surfaces to see which one works best, and they all have their restraints and their weaknesses, but we'd find one. Like I said, its not the court surface that's the money. Its all the other stuff that comes with the court surface.

Mayor Lago: Beautiful – pickleball. Let's move on.