

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-3
June 28, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Cristina Suarez

Chief Community and Engagement & Policy Advisor, Chelsea Granell

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item C-3 [Start: 11:38 a.m.]

Mayor's Comments

Mayor Lago: Item C-3, A presentation of the Mayor's Strategic Priorities Plan and our accomplishments since April 30, 2021.

Ms. Granell: Good morning, Mayor, Vice Mayor and Commissioners, my name is Chelsea Granell and I'm the Chief Community Engagement and Policy Advisor to the Mayor. I'd like to start off by saying that this is an update for the first year in office for the Mayor's Strategic Priorities Plan and we initiated this plan starting May 1st of 2021. At that point, we launched a listening tour, and the listening tour was a time where the Mayor during his first days of office, first 100 days. Met with over 300 residents, city employees, neighborhood associations and members of the business community and civic organizations. This lasted until August 13th and during that time, we really used the information from the listening tour to fine tune our Mayor's Strategic Priorities Plan. And we were able to develop eight different priorities from the feedback that we gathered. Each one of these priorities are denoted, each one of these have a goal and each one of these goals have action

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items. The green check mark depicts items that have already been completed and the orange circle are items that are still in progress. Some major items are the trolley expansion to weekend service and longer operating hours and the acquisition of new parks and green space. And so, part of the way that we track the priorities plan, is actually a dual approach that we take. The first is, the creation of a Mayor's Citizen Council, which I'll get to a little bit later; and some of the members are here today. And so, this Mayor's Council is the accountability checkpoint for the Strategic Plan and in addition to that, the Mayor meets monthly with his team and the City Manager's office and their staff to go over each one of these items. So, I'm proud to say that 89 percent of the plan has actually been initiated, which is a really huge accomplishment in such a short period of time.

Mayor Lago: Chelsea, may I add something before we go to the next slide? So, the reason why we are doing this today and why this is important was because I'm not aware of any other office, county, or any other elected official, we should be very proud because this is our work, not just my work, this is our work. Most people when they get elected, they get elected with an idea of accomplishing something – I want to do x, y, and z, why does somebody run. What we've done is, we've set the bar and we have ratified via the Commission a Strategic Master Plan, which are this Commission's ideas, vision for the future of Coral Gables. Then what we did was, like Chelsea mentioned, we have the Mayor's Council which meets on a monthly basis, with the help of the Manager and our office and we are accountable for what this vision is. And what you see scrolling there is an example of when we meet with the Manager every month to make sure that our vision is carried out. So, this is not just about getting elected and saying we are going to do x, y, and z, this is about showing the proof that we are actually getting things done. This is the way that we do business in the private sector in my business, and this is the way that we should do business in the public sector. There will be accountability and when we fail on items we will come back, dust ourselves off and find a way to accomplish that goal. And the purpose of doing this today, is that this will be put on the Internet under the Mayor's page, and anyone can review it, and anyone can come to the Mayor's Council meetings, give their ideas, speak to the representatives, which are seven on that board, and have their influence be heard and hopefully the vision of the city to push forward. So, this is something that I am very, very proud of and Chelsea deserves a lot of the credit and the Manager's office, and obviously the Mayor's Council for bringing this to life and really pushing forward this vision. Thank you.

Ms. Granell: Thank you Mr. Mayor. To add to that, the document that is actually rolling is our spreadsheet that we go through each and every single item with the City Manager and his staff. And as the Mayor said, we are uploading, working to upload that on the web page. And the Strategic Plan is presently there. So, the first item on the Strategic Plan is Transparency; and everything that we do transparency is really paramount. It is the focal point of everything that encompasses the Mayor's vision. We host open door office hours every Friday from 2 to 5 p.m. and been doing so for about 8 years. We are very active on social media, and we have monthly newsletters that are disseminated to thousands, over 20,000 contacts that we have in our list. And

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so, the photo that you see there is an example of a memo that we do every year that outlines the financial expenditures for the Mayor's office. Every year we are allotted a \$5,000 and the other Commissioners as well, \$5,000 discretionary fund. And at the end of every fiscal year, we write a memo outlining each one of our expenses, and we also post that on the city web page under the Mayor's page as well. The second item on the plan is Accountability. As I mentioned before, we had – one of the first things that we did was the creation of the Mayor's Council. They meet once a month and sometimes a few times a month to discuss the priorities and to hold the plan accountable. The Mayor worked on an ordinance recently revising lobbyist protocol, which says that all people or all lobbyists or anybody tied to a certain project must be on the Commission agenda; and we are working to hold people accountable to their development agreements. And the third item is Community Outreach. The Mayor attends city advisory board meetings on a regular basis to hear feedback from the boards and any input that they may have. He meets with business leaders and homeowners' associations. He conducts site visits and hosts ongoing meetings with residents, bi-annual Town Hall meetings. This year we hosted one on September and another in October, April and we are going to be having another in October. We disseminate a newsletter and are very active on social media. And as I mentioned, we have over 21,000 people in our constant contact e-mail list. Our fourth priority is Community Engagement and Enrichment. The Mayor has met with a variety of, I mean dozens if not all of the Council Generals in the City of Coral Gables and outside. He's met with elected officials at the state and local levels and was able to secure \$2.5 million dollars in appropriations and grants through these meetings. I believe that's the most funding we've ever received. And he's also part of one of his initiatives is to deliver on five high-quality cultural events in the City of Coral Gables. This year we had the opportunity to support two, Columbia and Mexico. These were pretty outstanding events. And the purpose of these is to enrich our community with culture, so that they are able to learn a little bit more about different cultures. And we are also embarking on a landscape beautification plan in our downtown area. The Mayor mentioned before that the deadline is June 30th for businesses to pressure clean their sidewalks and keep their facades up to date. And this side here – some of the ideas that we've collected throughout the process of meeting with different individuals, community stakeholders and whatnot, these are some of the ideas that we've received. And the green highlighted bubbles are items that have been completed. Some really cool ones that we were able to see through the process were the trolley, pedestrian safety throughout the city with streetlights, and sidewalk connectivity at the Granada Golf Course. And as many of you know, sustainability is very important to Mayor Lago. He drives a small electric vehicle and has solar panels that power his home. So, having said that, we are part of the Keep Coral Gables Beautiful Program, and we conduct recycling drive-through events twice a year, its household hazardous waste event. Our staff does a wonderful job, and we also do downtown cleanups. We recently did an ordinance, the Commission passed an ordinance to require EV charging stations development projects. Mayor Lago recently, well last year, became appointed to the Biscayne Bay Watershed Advisory Board and this is a group of leaders that meet to discuss water quality issues in the Biscayne Bay. And

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we are also trying to remove invasive species in both the downtown and citywide areas. The sixth priority is Preserving our Historic Integrity of our City, which is the cultural fabric of who we are. And with that also comes beautification. We are working on undergrounding the utility lines. We have, Commissioner Anderson had sponsored along with the Mayor, the revalidation of the Mediterranean Bonus which was a taskforce that worked on reevaluating what that means. The Landmark Advisory Board was also a co-sponsored resolution that established a structure for residents to review the condition of the historic entryways and landmarks. And a really cool one that came to our attention earlier was a resident who had somehow acquired historic white-way arcadian lights that were originally installed in front of the Coral Gables Country Club. So, we worked, or the Mayor worked to secure funding for that, to restore the lights and to have them in the original location, which the photo in the slide is an image of a 1920's, it's a 1920's photo of the original lights and their place there today because of that effort. We are also working on completing the restoration of the Fink, or we have completed the restoration of the Fink Studio and the Merrick House coral rock wall. And earlier today, we celebrated Founders Day, so it's a new tradition that honors our city's founder, George Merrick. The seventh priority is a Safe and Healthy City. This is very important and during the height of Covid 19, our Police and Fire, our First Responders did a really good job at homebound testing and vaccination for our seniors and compromised population. And for the first time in 30 years, our Police, Fire and Communications Departments are fully staffed. And a really, really important milestone and piece of legislation that the Mayor had sponsored several years was also being piggybacked by Miami-Dade County neighboring municipalities and he's going to get into that a little bit more, but this is a very huge accomplishment because this Bill, or this piece of legislation worked to divert hourly rentals and to curb human trafficking, anti-human trafficking efforts.

Mayor Lago: So, if I may add, because we are coming to the end of the presentation, and I think its important just to talk about that here. So, yesterday this has been a very important issue for this Commission, was brought to my attention by a few residents in the North Gables that they would see the prostitution on 8th Street, and I lead with the efforts of my colleague, the Vice Mayor, to proffer legislation which is a joint enforcement taskforce legislation agreement between the City of Miami and the City of Coral Gables and our Police Department deserves all the credit under Ed, the Chief, and the Manager, to really make this work, allowing the City of Coral Gables to be able to arrest someone 100 feet into the City of Miami and the City of Miami to do the same thing on ours. That type of cross pollination is just another layer to secure our borders, number one, which is critically important, but we also outlawed hourly motels. We tried to do that in multiple different municipalities. As you can see, this is the meeting that I went to in the City of Miami with Oscar LaRosa, who was the Vice Mayor for Hialeah, he recently retired to pursue private practice, and we failed, we failed here in the City of Miami. After a few hours of back and forth explaining why this is an important piece of legislation. We intended to do the same thing in Hialeah. We had support, but we never brought it past first reading, but I'm proud to say that as of yesterday, after

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a lot of reangling and a lot of discussions with the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, our Senators, and our State Representative, SB-898, which is called, Miah's Law, after five, six years of trying its finally law. So, you will no longer be allowed in the entire State of Florida to rent a room in a hotel per the hour; and that is something that is a big win, a big win for everyone in this community, especially women who are the majority of the individuals that are human trafficked that are enslaved by pimps, drug dealers. I've seen them with my own eyes. I've gone over a dozen and-a-half times with law enforcement, with the Chief, with the Chief in the City of Miami, the Chiefs in Hialeah, to see the poor state that a lot of these women are treated and it's a big win for this community, and as the father of two young girls this is something that this Commission has been fighting for a long time and I want to commend the courage of the Governor, and the Lieutenant Governor, Avilla, our State Representative Cabrera who led the charge and made sure that SB-898 became law yesterday, June 27, 2022. So, I just want to make sure that I thank all the State Legislators who really supported us in this effort, and my colleagues on the Commission, the City Manager, the Police Chief, our City Attorney, for finally bringing this to fruition, not only in Miami-Dade County, but through the entire State of Florida. We had no other choice, but we had to use preemption law, but at the end of the day, this is one of the cases where preemption law makes sense.

Ms. Granell: And so, our eighth priority is Customer Focus Service. Later today, Martha Pantin, the Communications Director and Raimundo Rodulfo, are going to be presenting the new interface for our city website. We are planning to launch that soon, but we really value the feedback that we received from our residents and users. And part of another customer service, customer focus service initiative was the launching of our e-permitting services, which was launched last August, I believe, and so, the goal of this is to really streamline the permitting process electronically and making it efficient for everyone. And the ninth and final priority is the newest priority which the Mayor's Council worked really hard to add to the Strategic Plan. One of the items that the Mayor's Council worked on and came before the Commission recently was securing funding for the mobile app. They were able to expedite \$150,000 of funding which would be necessary to deliver on a state-of-the-art mobile app, which will really help get more information across to residents in the community in a very quick manner. The time that they are expecting to deliver this is the beginning of, this year, later this year. Another thing...

Mayor Lago: If I may just add something, I'm sorry to interrupt you. I want to thank the City Clerk, City Manager and the Mayor's Council. This came from you finding the money for Raimundo to expedite this. We were budgeting for this, but obviously there are always budget constraints. This is critically important for the Commission, and I want to thank the Clerk, the Clerk made it happen with the City Manager. So, you are both to be commended for finding a way to get this funded. Thank you so much.

Ms. Granell: And so, our tech department is doing a lot of great things and one of the things that were able to do was the installation of the Smart City Pole, which is an AI powered smart pole that includes free Wi Fi, CCTV, traffic and safety sensors, environmental sensors, and we also have public Wi Fi in certain locations throughout the city. And here are some other accomplishments that we've managed to fulfill; the trolley hours are a huge one that I mentioned earlier.

Mayor Lago: These are just some of the highlights that we wanted to make sure that we've memorialized. We are proud to have worked hand-in-hand with city staff and a lot of the residents who brought us ideas to bring a lot of these accomplishments to the table and get them actually done after years of effort.

Ms. Granell: And the second Farmers Market in the North Ponce community was another resident driven idea. We are still continuing to look for purchasing new parks and open space, even though we have done so already over the last year, we are still always looking for that to improve and enhance the quality of life for residents. And these are some community interactions that have happened over the course of the year. The Mayor met with city boards, the Disability Advisory Board, the city employees, the cleanups, I mean its hard to really to capture all the things that we've done. So, every month it was very hard to select the photo for that month because we had about 30 of them. The Crystal Academy interaction was really special. Its always great to go out there. The Mayor also really likes to mentor youth and so, you see that with the establishment of the Page Program and going out to schools and speaking about the importance of being an elected official and government and policy. And most recently in June, we had the opportunity to go to DC to discuss funding opportunities for our projects as well. And on a final note, I think its very important to mention that our door at the Mayor's office is always open. Every Friday from 2 to 5 p.m. we are there, sometimes till 6 or 7 p.m., but we are there, and we are very active on social media. We have Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. If you aren't following us, we really encourage you to do so. You can always give us a call. Our door is always open, and I wish you could go back to that slide because it was a very special photo that I've chosen to...

Mayor Lago: I think that that last photo we can get it up there, really is the culmination of our entire year of effort. This is probably the most special moment that I've had in public office. While SB-898 is critically important and it's been years and projects like the Underline and buying parks and all those things are great and having some of the lowest crime rates in the city's history and bringing great Fire Stations, doing all kinds of things that we are doing for the environment, we as a Commission got to share this moment with Crystal Academy and this young lady who was Mayor for a Day.

Ms. Granell: Sienna.

Mayor Lago: Sienna – and this really drives home the fact that we are so blessed to sit up here, and I just want to say thank you for allowing me the privilege to sit in this seat over the last year and having faith and trust in my office.

Ms. Granell: And I also wanted to take a moment to see if CGTV, Martha Pantin and Michael Rocha were able to put together a very lovely video production in a very short period of time and so we would like to que that.

[Video Presentation]

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. You didn't have to do that. That was very nice of you. Thank you to Michael Rocha.

Ms. Granell: I had to fit those photos in there somewhere.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Ms. Granell: But I really wanted to give credit to the Communications Department for doing that, Michael Rocha, Martha Pantin, but also the PowerPoint presentation couldn't have been possible without giving credit to Patricia Herrera and Gabriella Quintana in our office who did a wonderful job.

Mayor Lago: You guys do a wonderful job. Thank you and I look forward to doing this again in one year. Thank you for this. Chelsea great work.

Vice Mayor Mena: Congratulations.

[Applause]