

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-6
August 22, 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

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-6

Discussion regarding pickleball expansion
(Sponsored by Commissioner Fernandez)
(Co-sponsored by Commissioner Menendez)
(Co-sponsored by Commissioner Castro)

Mayor Lago: F-6.

Commissioner Fernandez: Pickleball. Wanted to get an update from staff on the potential of a pickleball facility at Parking Garage 4. I spoke to the Manager briefly.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, the garage can sustain a pickleball facility, here's the structural drawings. I reviewed the structural drawings, the loads, it can be done. We can also put an elevator facility there. It can be done, but it will be very expensive. I think maybe that facility we can look at as a temporary facility where maybe it can be used only during the day. We're looking at the ADA issues, because you can get a car to the third floor, but you can't get a handicap now. We're looking at that now.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: City Manager, we do have an update from the City Attorney, the research was done, and we can do this now, doesn't have to be that accessible.

City Attorney Suarez: So, my understanding is that the first floor of the garage is accessible, but generally as a general matter, we could proceed we should take some additional measures, Vice Mayor, to either post appropriate signage at that facility and perhaps accommodate someone has to use a van at other pickleball courts and whatnot, but we could probably find a way to do it. As a general matter, we could do it.

City Manager Iglesias: I think our Parking Director is having our parking consultant look at that facility on the roof for pickleball. I don't know if we should spend the amount of money required to put an elevator, its quite a bit of money. It can be done. No problem, but its going to be very expensive and very messy. We would also need lighting, extensive lighting, 25-foot canals, 50-foot canals, to create a pickleball facility at night. I think what we can look at is, if we are going to look at the Mobility Hub now is remove the stadium seating from the Mobility Hub, which will make it probably cheaper and incorporate some pickleball facilities on the west side.

Commissioner Fernandez: This was more for as a temporary solution. I don't think this is a permanent solution. That garage as it is, is close to 70 years old as well, correct.

City Manager Iglesias: That garage its not structurally deficient right now, but its obsolete.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: Its operationally obsolete.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct. The other thing that I had discussed with the Manager, and I know in the past the city hasn't really wanted to go in this direction is, in order to raise funds for this project and to pay for the expenses of the pickleball court, I discussed the potential of having advertising on the inner wall of that parking garage top floor. It is not visible from the street. It would not have an impact outside. It would really be for those who are using the facilities, but it could be a revenue generator and it would not have an adverse effect on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Mayor Lago: Do we have anything like that in the city anywhere, any advertising?

City Manager Iglesias: I'm not aware of anything.

Mayor Lago: Again, if the Commission wants to do it, they can move forward. I'll be a no vote on that. I just think that you're dipping your toe into something that changes the character of the city. If you look at, for example, we talked about it, I entertained it, let's put it inside trolleys, you can make more money, no ones going to see it. The only ones that see it is inside the trolleys. We said

no. Let's put it into the garages. When you drive into the garages, you'll see it. I brought some different individuals who were interested in providing revenue. At the end of the day, I decided not to do that because we're unlike any other city, and I think we should be true to ourselves and before you know it, you do that, and you end up with signage outside. Again, if that's the will of the Commission, if that's what you want to do, please feel free. I had another, since we're talking about pickleball, but I mentioned it before, Mr. Manager. We progressed with the parking garage on Andalusia, an opportunity that you and I talked about it. Strip some of the programming on the top of the parking garage.

City Manager Iglesias: Stadium seating.

Mayor Lago: Stadium seating which will save the city a lot of money, a lot of money, very expensive, stadium seating, and we could put pickleball courts up there for people to use. The question is, obviously not being a wind tunnel expert, what would be the effects of pickleball courts so high up there. I don't know.

City Manager Iglesias: Removal of one versus the other would be minimal.

Mayor Lago: Minimal. I expected you to say that, but you're the one that deals with wind tunnel before, but again, four, five courts, you save money on the project, bring down the price and you could put some pickleball courts up there. I think you'll get a lot of use from residents and people who are living in the downtown and I think it would be a great amenity.

City Manager Iglesias: Its quite interesting because we have a small cafeteria, a kid's park, and then pickleball facility. It would be very interesting.

Mayor Lago: It would be something very cool. And we don't need stadium seating up there for anything and we save the money. I think people would be very happy about that.

City Manager Iglesias: When we get back to that project, if it's the wish of the Commission, we will remove that, incorporate that with the new design with the new aesthetics, and that will save money, Mayor as you know, and I think it will allow more flexibility on the west side to incorporate pickleball.

Commissioner Fernandez: I guess the question is, would you be able to give us like a bare bones estimate of what doing something on this roof would be now that we know that the ADA issues can be worked through?

City Manager Iglesias: Our Parking Director is working on that now, so as soon as the consultant gets that ready, we will be presenting to the Commission.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I just wanted to clarify. You don't need to put the elevator in.

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City Manager Iglesias: No.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Because we have other facilities...

City Manager Iglesias: We are looking at no elevator and no lighting, using a day facility that will minimize cost and not put that into a garage that's obsolete.

Commissioner Menendez: That's what I was going to ask.

City Manager Iglesias: It would be a temporary facility.

Mayor Lago: Anything else.