

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-3**  
**July 14, 2020**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria**  
**ACA/International Affairs, Naomi Levi Garcia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item G-3

A discussion regarding City's Park Naming Policy  
(Sponsored by Commissioner Keon)

City Clerk Urquia: You have a quorum Mr. Mayor, you can begin.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's begin. Let's go to item G-3, City's Park Naming Policy, Commissioner Keon.

Commissioner Keon: Attached to the item is the current policy for naming parks. You know the only time – this is in no way to disparage anyone who has had a park named after them. But I know that one of these requests sat on your desk for about two years to kind of figure out how to satisfy or how to respond to somebody asking that a park be named after them. You know, I guess I think it is naming of parks or plazas or anything, I would just like everyone to just take a look at the policy and the criteria and maybe at some point we can come back and have a discussion if it needs to be tightened. I really kind of think it does. I think it needs to be. You know the significance  
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of that person as opposed to any other person within the city you name a park after, I think needs to be extraordinary. It just needs to be – I know that Fewell Park is named after Robert Fewell because he dedicated the land and the space to the city for the park. You know, the Garden Club has been involved in some parks, but they have contributed greatly to the funding for parks. So, when you look at all the parks that are named after people, when I looked at this afterwards, I was kind of surprised because, you know, there's a number of people I don't remember and I'm sure in their day and when that park was...I'm sure they were probably a very significant people. But especially with regard to those of us that serve on the Commission. You know, we chose to serve, that is an honor in itself to be chosen by the people and the community to be part of a representative democracy. That alone is an honor and I don't think it's a reason in itself to name a park after anybody. So, I more wanted your feedback as to what you thought about the current policy and is it adequate, does it need to have something added to it? So, I really would like you to comment on it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Commissioner. I think that honoring the people that have done good for the city, I think is good. The fact that you or I or other may not have heard of the person, when the park is named this was a recognition of how good the person was for the city. I'm thinking of the Fred Hartnett Park, for instance.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And I think Commissioner Barker did wonderful things for the city and he was a very, very prominent person in our community, not only in Coral Gables, but the Orange Bowl, the Chamber of Commerce, the Chamber of Commerce here, Foundation, the Committee of 21. He was a very prominent person and the fact that you may not have been around when he served, I don't think disqualifies him. I agree that we should have policies to prevent our naming parks for unknown people or for cousins or for daughters-in-law and whatever, but I don't think we've ever done that. I agree that we should have specific criteria and I don't think that we should name parks or anything for people who are still alive. But apart from that, I think that we have been very responsible in our naming policies.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I guess some of my concern is, particularly for our neighborhood parks, some of the neighborhood parks are named after their locations, so they really honor a neighborhood, and I think before we change the name of a park in someone's neighborhood, it would be good to meet with the people that live in that neighborhood. We're the ones often as we are developing these neighborhood parks, they are the ones that are naming these parks, and most of them seemed to be named usually by location, but I don't think locale should rename the parks...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Any other comments?

Vice Mayor Lago: I have a comment for you, if I may?

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please.

Vice Mayor Lago: I agree with your comments Mayor, in regard to we need to find a criterion, and I think that's something that staff can work on. I took the initiative and reached out to Miami-Dade County, the master planner, the manager for Miami-Dade County Parks and Recs. And just a little bit of background information. They are also going through a process right now in regard to developing formal policies and procedures for naming new parks. The way they used to do it before, obviously they are in districts, thirteen, that was handled and approved by the County Commission in question. I also spoke to the Mayor of Miami and the Manager and found out that they do it very similar also. So, I think it's a good opportunity to formalize criteria, maybe staff can work on that and bring it back before us. We can see what other cities are doing, but just looking at the County and the City of Miami, they are working on their own criteria.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much Vice Mayor. Any other comments?

ACM Santamaria: If I may, Ed Santamaria, Assistant City Manager, Operations and Infrastructure. We do have a policy that was summarized and provided to all of you. If you'd like to review that policy, we are more than happy to take any input that you might have into that process and happy to fine tune it, to improve it. At this time, that's the policy that guides us. Fred Couceyro is available to answer further questions and more detailed questions, Naomi Garcia Levi also worked on summarizing the existing policy; and so, we are happy to further this discussion. I will also add that at any given time in the process of naming a park, the Commission by its own will provide a name to a park, provided everyone on board is in agreement.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, I think you had a question.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Vice Mayor let me conduct the meeting please.

Vice Mayor Lago: She was asking me a question.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead. Fred you wanted to say something.

Parks and Rec Director Couceyro: The Assistant City Manager Ed Santamaria said it. We do have – the policy was set, it was through a resolution. We are welcome to change it up, look at the criteria and if we want to get a little bit more specific, I think some of the language there is open, so it gives us a wider birth of possible candidates for that, but if we want to make it a little bit more restrictive and look at guidelines that kind of shape it in a more definitive directions, we can do that as well.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Fred. Any other comments, questions.

Ms. Levi Garcia: Yes, if I may Mr. Mayor, its Naomi. The policy has been in place since 2002, it was established by resolution. It does require justification for the naming, so it could be someone who made a significant cultural contribution to the city, someone who made a significant donation. There is quite a list of different possibilities that would justify the naming of a park or a site. It does not include any community feedback, although every park naming does have to be approved by Commission, so ultimately the Commission gets the final say and can even by-pass the policy, if it so chooses. Out of the last ten park namings, seven followed the procedure set forth in that resolution and in the department, and three were just named directly by the Commission. So, if we want to refine these criteria a little more, we certainly can, we'll take feedback from the Commission. If you want to consider getting the neighborhood input element, we certainly can do that as well. We can make it a little bit more, make the bar a little higher, if that's the direction of the Commission. So, we are just open to your feedback and I'm happy to take any questions.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you, Naomi. Any other comments, Vice Mayor, any questions?

Commissioner Keon: [Inaudible]...particularly when a park is already named, we are renaming the park. I'd like to see some community reaction to the renaming of the park. I'd like to see the bar set relatively higher...and lots of opportunity.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I agree with you. I think it should be a high bar. I'm always going to be in favor of neighborhood input. I think its always a good thing to get the input of the neighbors on any issue like that. I looked at the policy. There are a lot of good things in there that I think are actually pretty relatively high bars, but there are some, to Fred's point, there are some grey areas that leaves some wiggle room there that we may want to look at and possibly make more clear. I'm with you as far as renaming, you know being an even higher standard potentially. If it's a new park and obviously, you are coming up with a name, that's a different thing, you are going to have to name it anyway. But in renaming a park, I would agree the discussion be the highest possible standard. I see on some of them – I know I saw something about a four-fifths vote, that's only when it's a living person, I guess is the standard, that says if it's a living person it should be four-fifths.

Ms. Levi Garcia: That's right.

Commissioner Mena: I would be open to the discussion of making it four-fifths regardless, frankly, if people are open to that discussion. All I'll say is, I'm generally agreeable to a very high standard

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on this, and then following whatever that process is, but I'm open to discussion with all of you, I'm flexible on how we approach it.

Commissioner Keon: Could we ask – who would do this Naomi? Are you the one that's working on this?

Ms. Levi Garcia: Sure. I can certainly work with the department, they are more intimately familiar with taking it to the boards, because as you've seen from the policy and the memo summarizing the policy, it goes to several departments and to several boards for input, so they kind of shepherd it through that process for feedback. So, I can get with them and get back to you.

Commissioner Keon: I think that once that process starts and you have a name, you know, by the time it comes to the Commission its like, you know, families are involved, and other people are involved and you are at a point where its very hard to say no, its very hard. And so, I'd rather have it be...

Ms. Levi Garcia: Harder to initiate the process maybe.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. I would rather have the initiation of the process and all of the requirements to be relatively high before it even starts its journey through all of these committees, because at that point its hurtful to whoever it is and its probably a family member that is looking to rename a park and honor...But if you could speak with each of the Commissioners maybe, and talk to them about what they see, so you can add something to that, that would be great.

Ms. Levi Garcia: Sure. We can come back to you.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.