

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
May 10, 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

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Assistant Public Works Director, Deena Bell-Llewellyn

Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-1 [2:41 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission providing direction to the City Manager on improvements to Salvadore Park to allow for a dedicated area for dogs and authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 amended budget to appropriate funds for said improvements.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Okay, moving on to G-1.

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Agenda Item G-1 - Resolution of the City Commission providing direction to the City Manager on improvements to Salvadore Park to allow for a dedicated area for dogs and authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 amended budget to appropriate funds for said improvements.

City Attorney Ramos: It's a resolution of the City Commission providing direction to the City Manager on the improvements to Salvadore Park to allow for a dedicated area for dogs and authorizing amendments to the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 amended budget to appropriate funds for said improvements.

Commissioner Anderson: I'm going to just start you off with some good news, folks. I knocked on every door across the street and showed them the draft of the proposed design. Not one resident across the street was objectionable to it, and they're going to welcome it with open arms. So, with that, I'll let you lead the presentation.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good afternoon. This is Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director. So, we're going to present some of the work we've done for the Salvadore dog run. This is overall layout of the park. Photos of existing conditions, more specifically, the location of the park on the bottom right corner of the -- Salvadore. And this is just one of the things they wanted to show. In order to make this happen, those trees need to go.

Unidentified Speaker: Four or five?

Public Works Director Diaz: Six, but the sixth one is very small, barely counts. And this is just to show some of the structure roots that in the way of the sidewalk. And there's going to be some (INAUDIBLE) excavation, so unfortunately, it is not possible to save those trees for the implementation.

Commissioner Anderson: I did discuss that issue with the residents as well.

Public Works Director Diaz: Okay.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. And I looked at the roots. And understand that the -- how severely they would have to be cut, and it would impair the stability of the trees.

City Manager Iglesias: And they are black olives, not oaks.

Mayor Lago: Right.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah, they're all black olives.

Public Works Director Diaz: The current layout -- and I'll let Deena run you through it -- of what is being proposed, at least from the landscaping perspective, you know, I could speak to existing drainage system needs to be replaced. There's some roots in them, and there's some silt from the -- over time is washed from tennis courts. The site will be regraded away towards the edging. And the existing structures, which are going to have to remain, we're probably thinking about burying them, put a solid cover on top. We can always clean that up if we ever need to -- when we need to remove them for cleaning. Deena can run you over the landscape design.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: Hey, good afternoon. I'm Deena Bell-Llewellyn, from Greenspace Management Division of Public Works. This is our second concept we've showed you. The first one had a different walkway layout. So, taking your comments from the first presentation, the sidewalk is moved out along the street edge with a curb. There is, on the eastern side in the lower right-hand corner of the drawing, will be the pedestrian access into the dog park area. This pedestrian access has ADA and a very safe and easy way for people to enter the park. There's going to be native shade trees -- these are satin leaf trees -- placed about 20 feet on center on the south portion of the park, just inside the fence. These trees are going to provide shade for users. Benches can be placed below the trees for sitting areas eventually. And the other

trees you're looking at are a combination of flowering trees to show some interest. The whole park is going to be fenced with a five-foot-tall metal black aluminum fence. The existing walkway that runs through the park right now will be removed so that the internal space of the park is open for a soft material for dogs. So, we're talking about -- you know, there's some decision.

Commissioner Anderson: Well, you also have a drawing on the board there that...

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: There's a drawing here on the easel. I can bring that around.

Vice Mayor Mena: We saw it. That's the same one you had up there, right?

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: It's the same.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: On the...

Commissioner Anderson: Except the...

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: Easel...

Commissioner Anderson: Except there's -- they're working on the ADA accessibility, a larger area where you can have a bench, additional shade tree.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: We made a small modification, I believe, that didn't get into the...

Public Works Director Diaz: It's up there now.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: It's up there now.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, we did a small modification to add some ADA area with a crushed stone.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: And a couple of hose bibs.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: There are areas for hose bibs, for you know, obviously cleaning of the area and watering plants. And the drainage structures will be reworked, as Hermes had mentioned, to provide proper drainage. And the interior material, which is colored a light green, is sand or crushed seashell material. But the drawing labels it a sod. Those are the two options up for discussion on the table.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. The current estimate, it's under \$200,000, and it's based on the use of sod. And one of the things we wanted to discuss is the material of the actual field. There's been some discussion about artificial turf. Canine turf is very common, but it's very expensive. You're looking at well over \$100,000 of additional cost to make that happen. Commissioner Anderson, you know, she would like to have sand. We're probably looking at about an extra, maybe 10, 15 grand to do sand.

Vice Mayor Mena: Sand meaning?

Commissioner Anderson: She's talking about like the crushed rock.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Like we have in the swales right now.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Commissioner Anderson: This was an issue I discussed with dog owners that are familiar with the Coconut Grove Park where, you know, you have the problem with the dogs getting their paws burned...

Vice Mayor Mena: Sure.

Commissioner Anderson: From friction and from heat. And I had no objections to using the sand type products because a lot of these dog owners have taken their dogs out to the beach, and they love to run on the beach sand.

Public Works Director Diaz: My apologies. You mentioned the crushed stone for a material for the park?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes. We can, you know, use the crushed shells, or you know...

Public Works Director Diaz: Okay.

Commissioner Anderson: Have sand, whatever is going to...

Public Works Director Diaz: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Anderson: Meet the needs the best.

Public Works Director Diaz: That we didn't price.

Unidentified Speaker: Yeah, that's different than sand.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: Sand...

Public Works Director Diaz: That's different, yes. That we did not price.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Well, we can go with either one as long as it's...

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Not going to interfere with other aspects of the park. The dogs won't care.

Vice Mayor Mena: I mean, is it -- are there -- do you have examples of other dog parks that they're using sand like that or...?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: No. The ones that we've seen, we're seeing gravel. There's a little bit -- and not really small pebbles, but thicker pebbles, those -- when you don't do something like a grass. I've never seen actual fine sand.

Vice Mayor Mena: That's sanitary?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Like really fine sand. What?

Vice Mayor Mena: Is that like...?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You know, I...

City Manager Iglesias: I think what you're seeing is concrete sand.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah. I haven't seen like that fine silica sand, but I've seen more of a gravel type, and it's more of a natural area, and it's a little darker.

City Manager Iglesias: I...

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Let me tell you what happens.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Anderson: Because I'm the one that has to repair the dog paws that get the rock in the middle and...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: That gets them.

Commissioner Anderson: It's severed. I mean, I'm there with the Betadine, and the spray, and cleaning out the wound on the poor animal because the rock has gotten stuck inside the paw.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Sure.

Commissioner Anderson: Rock is not going to work. That's the main reason why Tropical Park doesn't work.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay, and...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: No, I was just answering the things that have been used. I'm not -- I wasn't suggesting we use that.

Commissioner Anderson: No, no.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I was just answering the question.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner Anderson, I think that instead of using fine sand, we can probably use like a concrete sand, which is a coarser sand. It's not a gravel. It's a coarser sand, so you don't have the issues of the rock. At the same time, it's not that fine sand that will move quite a bit. So, I think it's something that we can work on and see if we can come up with that compromise so that -- so it's not...

Vice Mayor Mena: Just want to use something tried and tested. Like I don't want to experiment.

Commissioner Anderson: Well, it is tried and tested.

Vice Mayor Mena: No, no. That's -- and I don't know -- I'm not saying it isn't. I'm just...

Commissioner Anderson: I mean...

Vice Mayor Mena: That's my only ask, is that it be something that we're confident...

City Manager Iglesias: We will look into that, Vice Mayor...

Commissioner Anderson: One...

City Manager Iglesias: To make sure.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah, one that's not going to hurt the dogs.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Cleanup is easy because you could look at it as a large litter box. The sand comes up with it. But if you use grass and you use anything else, you have to be able to hose it down. But if you have the sand, the sand kind of comes with it, and you've completely cleaned the area then. It's really incumbent upon the users of the park to do the cleanup in any park. You know, we'll have, I'm sure, some complainers, but it's not hard to clean it up out of a dirt area. I mean, I purposely walk my dogs close to street many times so I can just pick up the leaves and everything, and it all gets cleaned up then, and there's no trace left behind.

Vice Mayor Mena: What are your thoughts, Fred?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I think the Commissioner's right. We do need something that's a little smaller. I don't know -- I would look at it -- I have personal experience with, you know, gravel that's really small pebbles. And my dog's a medium-sized dog and nothing gets stuck in his...

Commissioner Anderson: How much do they weigh?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: He weighs 35 so...

Commissioner Anderson: Thirty-five does not compare to eight-five pounds.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Well, there you go. Exactly. So, I know that that's effective. You know, I have a whole piece at my house like that, just gravel for them. So -- but my only concern with -- is kind of controlling the flow of sand, making sure we stay -- keep it away from drains and we do that.

Commissioner Anderson: Oh.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah. The one thing is, with dog waste, when it goes in the sand, it kind of congeals the area of the sand around it and...

Commissioner Anderson: You scoop it up.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You got to scoop it. But I mean, people have to clean it up. That's...

Commissioner Anderson: People -- yeah. And I know that Ms. Bell-Llewellyn has a lot of experience with plants that can impede the flow of sand going in particular directions. I know I've used them as well...

Vice Mayor Mena: But with that type...

Commissioner Anderson: To stop erosion.

Vice Mayor Mena: Again, with that type of material, if you're picking up -- I mean, over time, like how often are you looking at having to re-sand the thing?

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll probably have to re-sand it, but how often...

Vice Mayor Mena: How does that compare to resodding, I guess would be the question.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's going to be the same. I mean...

Vice Mayor Mena: Cost-wise and frequency-wise?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I don't know about cost-wise, but frequency-wise, you -- because you're going to have to resod because it's a small area, and grass -- the grass is going to...

Vice Mayor Mena: Wear right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I mean, it's going to wear out quicker.

Commissioner Anderson: I think you'll end up doing it twice a year, and that's going to be very expensive, and then it's muddy.

Vice Mayor Mena: Well, but I'm -- that's what I'm asking is how often are you going to have to re-sand it if you're routinely...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Don't know if you'd have to -- I don't think you'd have to re-sand the whole thing. You'd bring in, you know...

Vice Mayor Mena: As needed.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: A little bit at a time.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah, it's similar like what we do with mulch when we have to re-mulch. You know, but...

City Manager Iglesias: You re-sand it and regrade, Commissioner. You would bring in sand and regrade it. I'd like to point out...

Vice Mayor Mena: Is that a vendor? Is that a vendor that does that, or is that something that you would -- your staff would be able to do?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We would look at it and see if we could do it with our staff.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: In terms of adding the sand.

Vice Mayor Mena: So, that's...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah, for just, you know, a refurbishment, like I do with playground mulch and things, yeah, we do it. If it's a whole thing, and we need to do it laser grade or something, obviously, we'd use a vendor.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah. It doesn't have to be perfect. They don't mind going up and down the hills. I have taken them running across the golf course, and the hills are kind of fun for them.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Mayor Lago: So...

City Manager Iglesias: I believe what Fred's saying, we can certainly repair it and bring it. If we have to do a replacement eventually, then we would use a contractor for that if we'd have to replace it. But one thing I want to say is that we do have an encroachment in that plan, which is the black line below. It's the fence. It's behind the back of sidewalk, so we would have an encroachment agreement to put that fence behind the back of sidewalk so we could include the trees as part of the park.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Mayor Lago: So, to me, I'm happy that we put the sidewalk where it belongs.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: I think it's important. Obviously, we always try to save every single tree, and they're black olives. If they were oaks, I'd be in a very different position. My only concern -- and I think everything is great. I'm ready to move forward. My only concern is the issue of shade. Do we -- does anybody have a concern over shade at all?

Commissioner Anderson: I do. I talked to...

Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Anderson: Ms. Bell-Llewellyn about -- we call it tree shopping on some of these sites that are being developed and see if we can move in something that has some good shade element.

Mayor Lago: Maybe like a nice oak in the middle, or something in the middle that can give us a nice...

Commissioner Anderson: And near the bench area.

Mayor Lago: Something like that.

Commissioner Anderson: You know, we can find a nice specimen...

Mayor Lago: That's fine.

Commissioner Anderson: To bring in.

Vice Mayor Mena: I mean, as those trees mature, though, it's going to provide some...

Mayor Lago: Yeah. I'm just saying -- but you want to -- you want people to enjoy it now.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yeah, yeah. No, for sure.

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: At 12 o'clock, 11:30, 1 o'clock.

Vice Mayor Mena: No, actually...

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah, it's hot.

Vice Mayor Mena: I meant this earlier. I really...

Commissioner Anderson: Yeah, we were...

Vice Mayor Mena: I wanted to commend all of you because I think this really is what we asked for.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: You know.

Commissioner Anderson: It is. So, we were...

Vice Mayor Mena: And I know there was a lot of debate the last couple meetings, and there was kind of...

Mayor Lago: Hit it out of the park.

Vice Mayor Mena: And this is...

Mayor Lago: Hit it out of the park.

Vice Mayor Mena: Exactly what I think we were looking for.

Mayor Lago: Hit it out of the park.

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Vice Mayor Mena: Another question I had for Fred, the border on the tennis court.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Mena: I guess it's a combination question for both of you. That little hedge I see there, I'm assuming that's -- Is that something tall? Is that something short? What is -- what kind of hedge is that?

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: That's a crabwood hedge. It's a native hedge. It'll go in five feet tall. It'll grow to be maintained 10 or 12 feet tall, thick.

Vice Mayor Mena: Ten, twelve feet? Good, okay.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: My concern is the tennis players who are looking in that direction. You don't want...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We like to screen the park.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Mena: But...

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: It will screen.

Public Works Director Diaz: But it's probably going to take a little bit before they grow up.

Vice Mayor Mena: Is there currently a black mesh on that fence?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yes. We...

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Commissioner Anderson: There is.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: You always have to have windscreens on (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Because of -- just to play.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: The wind whips through the chains.

Vice Mayor Mena: That helps already some with the...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right, right. So, you already have that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: But then a hedge would make it a nicer (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Mena: Better, yeah, yeah.

Commissioner Anderson: It'll be better than the very short Podocarpus hedges there now.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: The residents were excited about the fact that these crabwoods were going to go in there, and you know, kind of soften the look there for the residential area.

Assistant Public Works Director Bell-Llewellyn: And it's a native plan. It's a really terrific performer and very drought tolerant too.

Commissioner Anderson: Less maintenance.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It could help with a little bit of sound absorption from the tennis players. They might not hear as many barks, just some more landscaping.

Vice Mayor Mena: Well, I'll move.

Commissioner Anderson: But we can hear the tennis balls going.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, I'm ready to vote.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Move it.

Mayor Lago: This is awesome. I commend you, and I commend the Vice Mayor on leading the charge four years ago. It took the teamwork to bring it in for a landing. You guys did a great job.

Commissioner Anderson: Teamwork's the best. I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Mena: Second.

Commissioner Anderson: Go.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Perfect.