

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-4
May 8, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parking Director, Kevin Kinney

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-4 [0:00:00 p.m.]

A discussion regarding Antiquera Residential Parking Zone.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's go on to Antiquera, H-4. Commissioner Lago.

Commissioner Lago: Okay. I had the pleasure -- and I had some documents here, just some backup documents for you to review. Let me hand these out to you. The City Manager and I,

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along with some of our staff, we met with the residents from Antiquera. And the issue at hand was, obviously, you know how we switched now to the commercial -- and I'm not going to get into a long discussion. But what they're feeling now -- and I'd like to see if we could have Kevin come up also. He was at the meeting. So, we met with some of the residents, and obviously, they're -- we're getting a little bit of bite back in reference to the fact that a lot of individuals now who are going to either use the trolley or conduct business in the downtown are parking in the street. And I actually witnessed people that, instead of parking in the meters, which is 40 feet, 50 feet away, they're actually parking in the neighborhood, obviously, because they're doing it for 8, 9, 10 hours. A lot of the residents have stated that there is no parking available for any of their guests now on the street. There is no parking available for themselves, if they have two or three cars, so it's becoming more and more difficult. Kevin will give you a little bit of background in regards to the efforts that he's made to locate a surface parking lot which has more than sufficient parking. And what you have here is a petition -- and I appreciate the Manager for giving me the idea. We got a -- we have a petition here, which has garnered a lot of support from the residents in the neighborhood. And it clearly states that there's a significant need -- and you have everything here broken down by emails, phone numbers, stating that, you know, again, please do everything in your power to return the neighborhood to a quiet, quaint place. And if the residents -- excuse me, if the business community has a certain need to park, Kevin will give you a little bit of background in regards to the surface parking lot, which is less than a block away. There is more than ample space available for monthly parkers or for just transient parkers.

Commissioner Mena: And I reached out to a few of the business owners who, when this first came up, had approached us about this issue. And they seemed, you know, given the new surface lot, they seemed comfortable with that...

Commissioner Lago: But the issue here now...

Commissioner Mena: Added.

Commissioner Lago: Is obviously, you know, Kevin's going to explain it. You have seven -- it's a \$75 fee, which, by the way, is cheap.

Commissioner Keon: The permit.

Commissioner Lago: Permit.

Commissioner Keon: The permit parking.

Commissioner Lago: It's cheap.

Parking Director Kinney: Per month, per month.

Commissioner Lago: I mean, that's two and change a day. So, what they -- obviously, you don't want to -- they want to save as much money as they possibly can at the expense of the residential...

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Community. And again, that's something that I have a little bit of an issue, and I know that everybody on this Commission does. So, I want Kevin to give a little bit of a background of all the efforts that he's made and how we have more than ample space at this new surface parking lot.

Parking Director Kinney: Well, the marching orders I took from our October 24...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Parking Director Kinney: Meeting was to try and resolve some of the parking issues. So, with Economic Development, we approached several property owners. The one that we were most interested in is the property at the corner of Calabria and Ponce. It's currently 60 spaces. There actually is room to expand, but we negotiated with that property owner and, February, the Commission authorized us to enter into a contract. So, we opened up, towards the end of February, first of March. We've now been operating for two months. There are businesses in both the 814 Ponce building and the Mt. Sinai medical building that are buying monthly permits, and there are people parking there hourly. It's \$1.50 an hour, which is cheaper than our on-street rate. But even at that, currently, the maximum occupancy I've seen is 30 percent, so there's still 40 spaces left.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Parking Director Kinney: The folks in the residential areas on Antiquera -- there's 14 parking spaces adjacent to residential properties, and on Calabria, there are 21 spaces adjacent to residential properties, and some of those properties have no off-street parking. It's the typical condition in the North Ponce area. Both of those little streets, neighborhoods, in 2017, had petitioned. We only installed the one on Antiquera when the issues of parking supply came up. At this point, I believe the parking lot at Calabria and Ponce is more than sufficient to manage all of the parking for the commercial purposes along Ponce. And, as the Commissioner mentioned, both the residents from Antiquera and from Calabria have started to ask. We told them we wanted to get the parking lot open and up and running. But now that they see it's operational, they've started to ask when are we going to reinstall the residential zones.

Commissioner Lago: I also have just...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think it sounds like a good idea.

Commissioner Lago: Just I also have here -- just to be -- you know, I want to give both sides of the discussion, you know, equal opportunity. I have a gentleman by the name of Richard Aguilar, who's a CPA, at 814 Ponce Boulevard. He wrote an email. I don't know if you guys got this. It deals with the fact that -- that he states that they have been trying or making an effort for the last six months to have a follow-up meeting in regards to the parking situation. Obviously, we had just finalized the parking issue with the surface parking lot. As of this date, no one has been -- briefed me. I understand -- he says that the City has abandoned his request. Therefore, I have no other option but to go to the media and other neighbors to show how the City has not been reasonable with our request to have parking spaces during business hours. I think what you have done in regards to the surface parking lot, finding it, signing a contract, making sure it's available for the business community, is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's admirable.

Commissioner Lago: It's appropriate and it meets the needs. And I think what we need to do in this situation is protect the neighborhood because you're seeing a lot of individuals park in the neighborhood and grabbing the trolley, and going all the way outside of Coral Gables, so they can avoid having to pay any fees.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's right.

Commissioner Lago: And I think that, to me, is just, you know, not in the context of what we're trying to do in regards to a neighborhood -- into the neighborhood.

Parking Director Kinney: I am familiar with Mr. Aguilar. I don't believe I've seen an email from him until that one.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Parking Director Kinney: So, I will absolutely reach out to him. There are businesses in 814 that have begun to buy spaces in the lot, so I will talk to him.

Commissioner Mena: Are we...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Kevin.

Commissioner Mena: Are we -- so, just so I'm clear, then we're going to go back to basically the spaces on Antiquera and Calabria being residential all day long?

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Parking Director Kinney: Only the spaces that are adjacent to the residential properties, not the ones that are adjacent -- there will still be spaces available adjacent to the commercial properties, but once you get adjacent to the...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Parking Director Kinney: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: (INAUDIBLE).

Parking Director Kinney: They are metered.

Commissioner Keon: They're metered.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: So, you would know the difference between -- yeah.

Parking Director Kinney: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: If they're metered, they're open to the public.

Parking Director Kinney: They're...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Lago: You're talking about the meters on Antiquera.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, because that's what I was saying. So, it's interesting because several of the residents came to me and told me that all the parking on Antiquera will be taken, but all the metered parking will be available. Of course, because nobody wants to spend money.

Parking Director Kinney: Well, the metered parking does eventually get used, but it's the last spaces used.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, it's the last spaces used.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Thank you very much, Kevin.

Parking Director Kinney: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: So, what do we need to do in regards to the Commission? Do we need to...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You all passed a resolution suspending the residential parking zone, and I believe Kevin's suggestion would be to release that suspension.

Commissioner Lago: So, should I make that motion?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: So moved.

Commissioner Mena: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll, please?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.