City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item D-1
February 5, 2013
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission
Mayor Jim Cason
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff
City Manager, Patrick Salerno
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)
Mark Trowbridge, President of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

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D-1 [Start: 9:28:32 a.m.]

A presentation by Mark Trowbridge, President of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, discussing Shop Miami Month, recapping the Holiday Light and Storefront Display Awards and launching the Storefront Display Contest for Valentine's Day.

Mayor Cason: Now we will move on to Personal Appearances, is Mark Trowbridge here? Mark Trowbridge, President of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce wants to discus "Shop Miami Month" and recap the Holiday Light and Storefront Display Awards and the launch of the Storefront Display Contest for Valentine's Day. Welcome Mark.

Mr. Trowbridge: Good morning Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioner Anderson, Commissioner Cabrera, Commissioner Quesada, Mr. Manager, Mr. Clerk, Mr. City Attorney, thank you all for the invitation to be with you this morning to make a personal appearance on behalf of our Chamber, but also our partners in both "Shop Miami Month" and our Window Display Awards; and first I'd just like to bring you greetings from all of our partners and again to

thank you for the opportunity to give you an update into what was our first foray into the Holiday Lighting and Storefront Display program that debuted at the end of 2012. We are excited to share with you the results of that program and I hoped that all of you noticed the energy and enthusiasm that surrounded the program in its inaugural year. This year the first year of the program, we had close to 100 businesses participate and we had an opportunity then to judge their efforts, both in the lighting and in the storefront display opportunities, and we think this is a great sign that our businesses and retailers are very engaged and excited by the program. The program awards and brings awareness to local businesses and motivates others to get involved. Some of you may remember when we brought this item before you to get approval and with the great support of all of you and Commissioner Quesada, that we talked about the City of St. Augustine. They only had a few businesses that started in their first year 12 years ago, and now almost every business participates in their program unprompted because it is a tradition, and that's really what we hope to build and they now are one of the top 10 cities globally, St. Augustine one of the top 10 cities globally to do this type of program, so that is our aspiration and where we are headed. This year this effort was partnered through the City, the Chamber, the Business Improvement District, the Village of Merrick Park, our friends at Nordstrom, and of course the state-wide organization the Florida Retail Federation, and they recently hired a fulltime person to work the Miami market and we'll be meeting with her later today to make sure that Coral Gables is front and center in their program of work ongoing. At our Chamber breakfast in December with about 180 guests in attendance, we presented the six winners of the Lighting and Storefront Display Awards with customized award plaques, some incentives, a Florida Retail Federation conference pass and annual membership, retail merchandise and consultation and tremendous PR exposure, and I want to thank the Vice Mayor, he was there to help us present the inaugural awards that morning on December 20th. And the winners just so they get a little extra recognition in addition to what they had from the City, the Gables HomePage and others: most creative, this was in the window displays went to Rene Ruiz; most innovative went to Reminiscence; most engaging to Victoria's Armoire; and in the lighting category for the outstanding office lighting the Westin Colonnade; for restaurant Sushi Macci; and for retail store and lighting Tapadino. Many articles were picked up on the story and we are really grateful to our partners in the community newspaper and Herald Neighbors as well as Coral Gables Television. So long term we want to make sure that residents and business professionals get more involved that there is a buzz that is created around the window displays each year during the holiday season. We now have a dedicated landing page on the City's website where anyone can upload a photo of a great storefront that they see and continue that year-round; and speaking of that, the next opportunity is going to be Valentine's Day, so right now our stores are very busy updating their windows to fit with the theme and we decided to help them a little bit based on some of the feedback that we got from our partners back in December and gave them a theme to work around. So since it is February the theme is *"Love is in the Air"*, I love it, it's kind of what emanates here from the dais, it's nothing but love and we

want to see that continue across the City, and it could be any type of love; it could be romantic love, platonic love, whatever it may be, but that is our theme; and so we look forward to seeing the results of that; and mirrored with that is a program that we have advocated for with our Chamber partners across the County with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and I want to thank them today for putting together one of their niche months around retail, and so you've probably seen some of the advertising and certainly the street banners around the community talking about "Shop Miami Month." So you can go to ShopMiamiMonth.com and you can learn more about the participating retail stores. We have a very large number of participants, including the Village of Merrick Park that are right here in Coral Gables, and it really incentivizes both visitors and locals to spend, and if they spend during the month about $500, they can get an incentive rewards card in return that we hope will come back and again spend it; and we are further incentivizing that in Coral Gables by participating as the Chamber in the program and working with the City and other partners to create kind of a packages for the top spenders, top winners to come and shop and dine in Coral Gables post the program. So that will run February 1st through February 28th. Some of the things that we want to continue to do with this as we build these types of programs both with the Convention and Visitors Bureau as our partner, but also with the Florida Retail Federation and our window display program is that we want to really define what that shopping in Coral Gables brand looks like. We want to get every retailer engaged around peak seasons and build incentives and do like St. Augustine did. They started with just a handful of stores that participated, it is now a tradition there and we want to create that so as all of you walk the various districts within the City you'll see that energy and you'll see it on display. By doing that we think that we'll continue to drive greater awareness of all the wonderful retail stores that we have and people will come and shop and then they will stay and dine once they have completed their shopping. So that's a little background on the program. I want to again on behalf of the business community thank all of you because you were great advocates when we brought this slight change to the ordinance to allow some greater lighting on the storefronts and the encouragement and I couldn't be more proud to work with Cindy Birdsill, Michelle Cash and her staff, along with all of our other partners to put together a really great program that we think will just continue to grow into the future starting right now with Valentine's Day. So, I'd love to take any questions and again thank you all for your wonderful support and inviting me to give you a presentation today on how we are doing.

Commissioner Quesada: Let me just say. Thank you for the great job the Chamber has done with this project. You mentioned over 100 businesses, I thought we were closer to – we were in the 40 to 50 range was the participation for the holiday lighting, so the…

Mr. Trowbridge: That was both programs, the Holiday Lighting and Storefront, that's a good clarification.

Commissioner Quesada:…Oh, OK. But that's great, that's a tremendous turnout. I know we see more lighting on the street, we get more foot traffic and I think it creates more of a family atmosphere, which I think is what we love, but thank you for your great work that you are doing at the Chamber and that goes to the entire Board. So thank you so much.

Mr. Trowbridge: I'll pass that along as well.

Mayor Cason: Thank you Mark.

Mr. Trowbridge: Thank you all very much and just if I can have one moment of personal privilege. I know that this will probably be the last time that in my role of Chamber President with some of our Commissioners here, although others are seeking other opportunities, but I would be remiss if I didn't have the chance to say thank you to Commissioner Anderson and Commissioner Cabrera in their roles as Commissioners for their great support of the Chamber. Both at varying times have served on our Board and have been great support to the business community and really truly understand the needs that we have, and the legacy I think would be what we are able to do long term in redeveloping the Mile and many other projects, but thank you both for your 12 years of service on behalf of the Chamber and our leadership and unto bigger and better things for you both. Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

[End: 9:37:03 a.m.]