

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-9
August 27, 2019
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 Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton
Parks and Recreation, Mitchell Zuriarrain

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-9 [2:47:40 p.m.]

A discussion regarding “Little Free Libraries” in Coral Gables
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: G-9 – Little Free Libraries.

Vice Mayor Lago: This is simple. This is a simple item. Commissioner Mena’s name should be on this also, he is co-sponsoring this with me. This is “Free Little Libraries.” I thought it would be a great idea, we have so many wonderful parks and there was an opportunity, they came to see me, after they came to see Commissioner Mena. I wanted to see if we, potentially offer two of these or three of these in two different parks. I wanted our City Attorney to come. We have a picture, Chelsea has it. These are just different examples, we can make it look like Coral Gables or not, and I wanted our Assistant City Attorney to kind of speak about it. That’s a different one. That’s the one I’m going to talk about later.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: So “Little Free Library” is a non-profit organization that’s nationwide and I believe that some residents are proponents of the organization. We met with some

of the Commissioners and suggested placing them around our Central Business District or in public pocket parks, things like that, change the neighborhood feel and sharing a book. My parents have one in California, they love it. They've met a million people that way. They would be, is my understanding from speaking with the Vice Mayor, they would be sponsored by the City in building them or putting them together.

Vice Mayor Lago: I was thinking about putting, you know, testing out two of them. I can get somebody from the private sector to put something together, maybe just donate them. Do something nice in the style of Coral Gables. But my whole idea with this, and after meeting with the residents, I know Commissioner Mena probably wants to talk about the same thing, this is about community. You could put something nice, you know tucked away in the park. They explained to us about how, for example, there was an elderly woman who basically her life revolved around this little library. How everyday she would go, and she would meet young kids and she would put in little library books for children and then she got in touch with a bunch of different kids and it just brought the community together on that block. So, it's not very invasive. It's something – again the books are free. People can bring books that they maybe want to trade or get rid of, and its 100 percent free, there is nothing for sale. I just wanted to bring it to your attention, Commissioner Mena and myself, because I just think its in the vain of what Coral Gables is all about.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: There is a small fee if you are an official "Little Free Library," you get a charter number, I think it's a few hundred dollars to onetime register and place on the global map.

Commissioner Keon: With the Free Little Library organization?

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Yes. Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Talking about the app.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: There is an app and a G.I.S. website where you can see in your neighborhood and the steward of each library, is what they are called, promotes it and shares information about it. My mother is retired, this is her fulltime job now.

Vice Mayor Lago: How much does she love it though?

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: She love it. She loves it.

Vice Mayor Lago: There are some positive attributes that...

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Well the organization has touted, and I know that, and my mother would say this as well, there is sort of a neighborhood community feeling. People come, they might knock on your door and ask, can we take these, are these really...neighbors like you said. Get to know the people who live in your neighborhood or share that same park or downtown area wherever they play.

Commissioner Keon: We have to have some sort of whatever the standard is for the Little Library House.

Unidentified Speaker: [Inaudible]

Commissioner Keon: I do too. You know what it is – its like the Boy Scouts; Eagle Scouts do a project, their community project. It would be a wonderful project like an Eagle Scout...As long as whatever it is approved, find somebody to build it.

Vice Mayor Lago: Want me to work on it.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Just put the direction, Commissioner Mena.

City Attorney Ramos: Just a resolution directing something.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Make a resolution.

Commissioner Mena: ...with a location...[inaudible]...and then come back to us with something that we can try out, a park to be determined. I don't know if it's better...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: He is, he's making it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

Commissioner Keon: I'll move it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

Commissioner Keon: Do we have a second?

Vice Mayor Lago: No.

Assistant City Manager Throckmorton: We had a motion, is there a second?

Vice Mayor Lago: Commissioner Keon seconds.

Mr. Zuriarrain: We do have a plan actually – Catalonia Park which is a new construction. We will start in January and that's going to be our first pilot site. So, we are going to steal that out, see how that does with that community and then implement it moving forward.

Commissioner Keon: OK. So, you'll figure it out...

Mr. Zuriarrain: They actually kind of look like that picture you can buy like what they call a starter kit, comes with that, comes with a few books already.

Commissioner Keon: You have to make sure with the Manager that its structurally sound.

Mr. Zuriarrain: Of course.

Vice Mayor Lago: And it has Coral Gables aesthetics. We don't want any signs or anything like that.

Mr. Zuriarrain: We'll do our best. You can order them custom and they are a little bit more.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Commissioner would you like to retract your motion then to add information.

City Clerk Urquia: The motion has been retracted.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Call the roll.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Mayor, I believe the motion was retracted given the information shared by Mitch.

Vice Mayor Lago: I just want to do a motion of support. Commissioner Mena made the motion, Commissioner Keon second the motion. Go ahead.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes
Commissioner Fors: Yes
Commissioner Keon: Yes
Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Thank you.

[End: 2:54:04 p.m.]