

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item E-2**  
**September 10, 2024**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson**

**Commissioner Melissa Castro**

**Commissioner Ariel Fernandez**

**Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez**

**City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Assistant City Attorney, Clifford Friedman**

**Public Speaker(s)**

---

Agenda Item E-2 [9:52 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission amending the Code of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, Chapter 2, Entitled “Administration,” Article III “Boards, Commissions, Committees,” Division 1 “Generally” by amending Section 2-52 “Qualification and Appointment of Members” in order to offer members of city boards reduced fitness membership fees at the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Commissioner Menendez)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto item E-2.

City Attorney Suarez: E-2 is an Ordinance of the City Commission amending the Code of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, Chapter 2, Entitled “Administration,” Article III “Boards, Commissions, Committees,” Division 1 “Generally” by amending Section 2-52 “Qualification and Appointment of Members” in order to offer members of city boards reduced fitness membership fees at the Coral

*City Commission Meeting*

---

[Date]

1

*September 10, 2024*

*Agenda Item E-2 – Ordinance amending the Code of the City of Coral Gables*

*Chapter 2, entitled “Administration” Article III, “Boards, Commissions, Committees*

Gables War Memorial Youth Center; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. This is a public hearing item. Mayor and Commissioners, it's my pleasure to formally introduce to everyone our new Assistant City Attorney, you've all met him, Clifford Friedman. We are very happy and thrilled that he's a part of our team. He brings a wealth of experience and he'll be presenting the next three items.

Assistant City Attorney Friedman: Thank you Madam City Attorney. The item before you today is an amendment to the city's code regarding past policies sponsored by Commissioner Menendez, which as the City Attorney stated would expand the past policy to offer a reduced rate on fitness memberships at the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center.

Commissioner Menendez: This item came about because of several, actually over several years residents who have served on the city boards have said, they are not necessarily golfers and they don't necessarily play tennis, especially those that are a little bit older, I guess like me, but they were interested in maintaining their health and staying in shape, and they asked if there was a way for the city to look into the possibility of giving them a discount so that they can participate at the Youth Center and maintain their health through the fitness center. So, we had a meeting with the administration, Fred was brought in, they did the analysis, and this is something that the administration in my understanding is very comfortable with, and I think it's something that will go a long way to thanking those folks that serve on city boards and helping our community stay healthy at the same time.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Mayor, I agree that staying active is something that we should try to promote everyone to do, and this membership would be a great way to entice folks that are needing to work out in air conditioning to be able to do so in our great facilities and bring in other family members as well at the same time. I'm in favor of it as well. You moved it.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes. I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll second.

Commissioner Menendez: I think our colleagues want to say something.

Commissioner Fernandez: One thing I wanted to add. Both of you spearheaded a project prior to my being on the Commission. We had a Sunshine meeting regarding the potential of offering board members the option of choosing the benefits that were currently offered or the parking option, in order to entice our board members to frequent our Central Business District and the businesses in our CBD. I know that that never reached the level of the Commission. I have asked staff to start looking into that possibility, if there is an appetite to consider that, to bring it up possibly at the next Commission meeting so that board members have the three different options so they can choose from. You don't choose all three, you would choose one of the three, just to ensure that if that is something that will entice our board members to come and frequent our downtown area. There would be street parking and one of the concerns had been brought up by the Parking Director at that meeting was, overnight parking. What I've asked staff is to consider the option of only

*City Commission Meeting*

daytime parking, no overnight parking privilege. So, if there is an appetite for that, I'd like to bring that back at the next Commission meeting.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'd like to talk with staff about the cost of that. I mean I think what Commissioner Menendez has proposed here is consistent with the spirit of everything else that we've tried to promote our residents to engage in, and that is staying active whether it be golf or swimming at the Venetian Pool, etc. We have to look at that and the other aspect of street parking is that's the most expensive parking out there. So, parking in the garage is usually the least expensive of the two.

Commissioner Menendez: I think, if I'm not mistaken, some years ago before the Great Recession, board members had a plethora of benefits, ways of thanking them for serving on city boards, and as we went through economic downturns the city started cutting back on a lot of those benefits, obviously for economic reasons. So, I think now is the time little by little start exploring what it is that those folks that serve on city boards really find appealing, because I think as the Vice Mayor said, we want more people to serve on city boards. I served, obviously on the Parks and Rec for eight years, I think it was, and sometimes you have some of the same people do it, but it would be nice to reach into the community and get folks that are maybe not normally engaged, to be more engaged and serve. So, if we can find creative ways, obviously, the administration has to make an assessment, but let's look at things and if some options don't work at the time, so be it, but I think its good to be open to suggestions and ideas and delve deep into them.

Commissioner Castro: I'm on board with this discount. Just to be clear its 50 percent, right.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: And are we also going to consider, is this just for the appointee or is this for the family.

Commissioner Menendez: Currently its for the appointee, but I know there is legislation following that expands the benefit to from an individual to family members. I don't know if it ties into the fitness center, but I know the Mayor has an item as well.

Assistant City Attorney Friedman: This as currently written, this would allow the appointee to opt into one of the fitness memberships. So, whether it's a single senior, two person-two person senior or three person, they would receive the 50 percent discount.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. So, its included within the group. It's a group discount.

Assistant City Attorney Freeman: Correct, depending on what they opt into.

Commissioner Menendez: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: So just a quick point. I have no issues with this, as long as it's the board member. If it was to be a family, for example, you would have a family of five, they could all use the facility and the facility would become a little overcrowded, depending on, I think we have close to 300 or so individuals serving on different boards, which is amazing and I hope that more do serve, but I think the second part which, this is not my legislation, but I think the second part which is important is what the Vice Mayor mentioned, its about getting people engaged in health and wellness. Continued interest in getting people to get out there and get healthy in one form or another. In regard to the parking, I'm more than willing to study it. From the last time I checked, it was about a half-a-million-dollar cost to the city, which is a pretty significant number, from what I heard. I could be wrong. If you are going to offer anything it could be parking not on the street because it is the most expensive parking that we have here in the city. I look forward to having that conversation when it comes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)