

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-4
May 12, 2009
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner Wayne "Chip" Withers

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno
City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
City Clerk Staff, Billy Urquia
Assistant City Manager, Maria Jimenez
Alberto Delgado, Public Works Director

Public Speaker(s)

H-4 [Start: 9:50:05 a.m.]

Mayor Slesnick: Item H-4 Mr. Manager.

City Manager Salerno: H-4 is a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a Joint Participation Agreement between the Florida Department of Transportation and the City of Coral Gables for financial assistance in the amount of \$92,500.00 for service development in the expansion of the Coral Gables Trolley Route on Ponce de Leon Boulevard from S.W. 8th Street to West Flagler Street. Albert.

Public Works Director Delgado: This is the proposed route expansion to the Flagler section [inaudible] the proposed extension is the Flagler extension, which is the one that will pick up the trolley at Eighth Street instead making a left turn it will make a right turn and go all the way up to Douglas Road go around Flagler then come back again to stay on Ponce de Leon.

Commissioner Anderson: Would that route run all of the time or would it run just certain amounts?

Public Works Director Delgado: The idea is that initially that route will only operate at the peak hours.

Commissioner Anderson: Which are?

Public Works Director Delgado: Which are in the morning the first two hours in the morning from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. or 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and also in the afternoon hours which would go from more or less from 4 o'clock to 6 o'clock or 4:30 to 6:30.

Commissioner Cabrera: But that is over 3 hours.

Public Works Director Delgado: It is about 4 hours, 4 hours a day.

Commissioner Cabrera: When I was briefed on this I was under the impression that this was 3 hours.

Public Works Director Delgado: It is a little bit more than 3 hours initially because at the time that you interrupt the trolley and bring it back to the route there is like a half hour gap, but the hours of operation in reality is an hour and-a-half and half an hour for reintegration into the route of the trolley.

Commissioner Cabrera: Ms. Anderson, you don't mind if I ask him a couple of questions do you?

Commissioner Anderson: No, go ahead.

Commissioner Cabrera: That means then, the three hours, it is a little extended and let's just say for the sake of this discussion it is four hours.

Public Works Director Delgado: Four hours, to be safe, four hours due to the overlapping.

Commissioner Cabrera: And is the cost then \$42,000?

Public Works Director Delgado: The cost of operating those four hours is in the range of \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Commissioner Cabrera: OK. You know what my problem is that when I was briefed on this, I was told that it was three hours at a cost of \$42,000. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Salerno: Yes, I was trying to get the Mayor's attention to recognize me, the briefing that I had prior to our discussion was from Alberto was that the system would run one hour in the morning, one hour during the midday and one hour in the evening.

Commissioner Cabrera: Right.

City Manager Salerno: As you know when we left our meeting last night, Albert was waiting with Mr. Cox and as a result of that meeting Mr. Cox changed the program to being two hours in the morning to two hours in the evening. Now, what that did is instead of being three hours, as you have indicated, it is four hours, and the cost associated with three hours is approximately \$42,000.

Commissioner Cabrera: That is correct.

City Manager Salerno: The cost of four hours will be approximately \$63,000 to run that schedule, so basically the initial, let's call it a pilot program will be two hours in the morning, two hours in the evening at a cost of about \$63,000, so you have at that level approximately a year and-a-half of a test or the ability to expand the service during that first year a little bit until the ninety two; so maximum time period for that pilot project, and I think it is appropriate to call it a pilot project, to see whether it is worthy of keeping beyond the grant period, as I am told there is no requirement that we continue the service after those funds expire; and I am certain that we will have the opportunity to apply for additional funds, but there is no guarantee that we will get those. So a minimum of a year funding, if the service level is increased from the initial program to a year and-a-half if the initial pilot program is kept for the maximum period of time; the information that I had when I gave your 3 hours that changed last night at about 6 o'clock.

Commissioner Cabrera: I appreciate the clarification. Thank you sir.

Public Works Director Delgado: According to Mr. Cox the dynamics of the operations of the trolley have changed since this report. This report was done two years ago and the recommendation of that report was to operate the trolley in that basis of those three big periods. He feels that the two big periods, the one in the morning and the one in the afternoon are the ones that will better serve that particular area for people really being able to come back and forth from their work early in the morning and late in the afternoon.

Commissioner Anderson: I am absolutely supportive of that happening, but my concern is, is Miami-Dade County ever going to pony up on any monies.

Public Works Director Delgado: We are working on that.

Commissioner Anderson: Because they took out a route and put a lot more stress on the trolley.

Public Works Director Delgado: Now that we are hitting, I would say, the most used route in the entire Dade County, which is Route 11, the one going on Flagler Street, and that route operates at a headway of 8 minutes similar to our trolley which is 8 minutes, so these buses run every 8 minutes.

Commissioner Anderson: What I am talking about is money, what I am talking about is dollars.

Public Works Director Delgado: Yes, we are going to approach them, because we are now actually benefiting their operation. So there is an impact there.

Commissioner Cabrera: And what you are saying is, because I don't think people may know.

Commissioner Anderson: What started out when the trolley started out, there was a route and shortly thereafter, I forget exactly, that Miami-Dade County retired a route that put more stress on the trolley. So what I am trying to figure out is, how Miami-Dade County put that stress

around us, they should really help us continue to fund this particular project. I don't know about you all, what you all think?

Public Works Director Delgado: We are going to look into that, remember if this thing is put in operation, it is probably going to be in about a year.

Commissioner Anderson: No I understand that, and I am supportive, what I am looking for is longevity, and I am not a big fan of what they did and they put a lot more stressors on it and they expect us to pick up, we should really try to find out how much there are monies to be had there, because...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: You know Commissioner, we met with Carlos Gimenez and the head of their department, and we had that discussion with them and they listened and then they did not execute, and I don't blame Carlos Gimenez by any reason whatsoever. I see his main man sitting here in the audience, but certainly their department of transportation was not overcoming with trying to help their sister, they initially said yeah, they'll look at it, they'll look at it and then of course that is what we have been hearing for the last 6 months, so we can revisit the issue should we go north there and revisit it again.

Commissioner Withers: Maybe we can set some type of criteria on the model on the pilot program, because you know the trolley has been an overwhelming success whether it is most of the time, hopefully zero revenue balance, but the philosophy originally was that the trolley was to move people within Coral Gables at lunch time or another, that was our whole original... we then became a connector for Dade County from the Metro rail and we all sucked down a lot of air and swallowed and said that is OK, we will move for it, we are now completing an entire Metro Dade link from Flagler to the Metro rail, at our expense. So philosophically is that something that this City wants to do, is be a connector for Metro-Dade County, I agree with Commissioner Anderson that you know, that is an approach that we have to decide philosophically if as a Commission we want to do that, if we do, and I don't know if I will be in the Commission in two years or whenever the final study is done, but I would encourage that we look at, I don't think there is going to be a lot of Coral Gables residents riding that trolley from Flagler into Coral Gables. We had the McFarlane Homestead folks that wanted us to extend which would have met the need of Coral Gables residents which we didn't agree to do but here we are extending it north, not for Coral Gables residents, but to be a link to Metro-Dade County. I don't know how the rest of you all feel about that, but that is how I see this thing shaping up, and I know Bill has been the heart and soul of this thing and fighting for it; and I am going to kind of throw it on his shoulders to push us forward with this, because you know what is our philosophy on extending this trolley is it for the residents or is it to accommodate Metro Dade County.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll tell you just from my point of view and I don't have any hard statistical facts, when I was walking there during the campaign, some of the residents some of the seniors would like to take the trolley now what the real numbers are, I don't know maybe I just hit a patch, but I suspect from the meeting that we had there just recently that there are people who would take that trolley. Do I have hard numbers?- No. And they would be Coral Gables residents.

Commissioner Withers: Running it from 8 to 9, 12 to 1, and 5 to 6 or whatever the hours are going to be.

Commissioner Anderson: Would that serve.

Commissioner Withers: If you were running it every 15 minutes in the off hours and maybe...

Commissioner Cabrera: It will serve them if they know their schedules, and then they will have to work around those schedules, and I think staff had indicated that ridership is projected at 300, that is the number. I would be willing to say 290 of those are going to be non-Gables residents and 10 of them would be Gables residents.

Commissioner Withers: And the point is, if we are going to spend \$180,000 to do this we could setup a Jitney program to move residents to and from that area and pick them up and deliver them to where they want to go, and then take them back for less than we could operate this trolley, if our intention was to meet the needs of the residents in that part of North Gables.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I just want to bring two things up, first of all let me get back to Commissioner Gimenez, since the McFarlane subdivision was mentioned let me just go ahead and mention that also. Commissioner Gimenez got a bus that is servicing the McFarlane Subdivision now.

Commissioner Anderson: The circulator.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: The circulator that has taken care of that issue.

Commissioner Withers: OK. good.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That issue is really of the board there.

Mayor Slesnick: Takes them to the Metro Rail.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Exactly what they wanted.

Commissioner Withers: I was not aware of that.

Commissioner Anderson: We are talking peak hours for this extension route, is there a better alternative to accommodate the residents of that area? I know that there could be the morning peak hours any other configuration of hours because a lot of their folks there are seniors, and I am not trying to..., I am just asking.

Public Works Director Delgado: Actually, you know this would be a pilot project and we would give folks sufficient times.

Commissioner Anderson: To study it a little bit.

Public Works Director Delgado: To study and right now we have a lot of things to that is coming on, we have for example the advertising which is going to start in June. Advertising is already according to the company, ready to start June 1st, they are asking for an additional period of time to be able to start producing the revenues so this is a funding source that we are looking into that to see how...

Commissioner Anderson: Until that happens, I will wait.

Public Works Director Delgado: In addition to that we will be looking at the Dade County participation because...

Commissioner Cabrera: Is that June 1st, start point?- is that the starting point for the advertising or is that the time that the LCD screens will be installed and then..., is this the starting point, that is the time that advertising will actually occur. June 1, 2009.

Public Works Director Delgado: Actually occur, yes. That is the date that they told us, exactly that. That is what they have already promised us and we are making sure.

Commissioner Withers: Hold on a second there Albert.

Commissioner Cabrera: No, because I am going to Venetian Pool on May 15th, I am swimming on Venetian Pool on May 15th.

[Laughter]

Assistant City Manager Jimenez: We have a letter from the vendor stating that the monitors will be installed March 31st, but I hesitate to commit to you all that the programming will be in place until such time, but the monitors...

Commissioner Cabrera: I was going to advertise, I erased my advertising schedule, I am not going to do that.

Public Works Director Delgado: But that is the information that again you know he has had a lot of problems with vandalism and things like that and he had to do some protection to the screens, so he has had a lot of difficulties in the installation which actually...

Mayor Slesnick: While we are there let me say this and the other Commissioners may have heard from the City Manager and I think that the citizenry should understand this too because I think it is a societal problem that we are facing and that is that I was shocked to hear the figures of how much vandalism is done in our trolleys, it is suggested I don't have any hard evidence, but it is suggested that it is done mostly by school age children who ride the trolleys at various times of the day and that is just sad to me to know that we have people who just disrespect public property that much and that take the kinds of things they do and ruin the windows and so forth for the citizens to understand is that we have had a program that it has been very expensive of putting monitors in the trolleys which we shouldn't have to do, but we have done and now the

manager tells me that he and the trolley management team are moving towards a set of cameras and surveillance that discourages it and everyone should now that we are going to face these problems it is not all milk and honey in Coral Gables sometimes and that is a problem we are facing, so that is an extra expense that I had not calculated you know I knew that there would be some small vandalism, but I had no idea that it amounted to the \$50,000 is that a year, or a month, how much is that?

Public Works Director Delgado: More than \$50,000 a year, to fix and to clean the trolleys and to do whatever is needed.

Mayor Slesnick: Well I hope that the new efforts save us at least that much money and stop the useless vandalism, I just wanted to share that because I think it is important for people to know.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: You know Albert, I wanted to tell you that I had some trepidations on expanding the route too, if it wasn't for a grant that we were getting \$92,000 and were going to lose those \$92,000 I don't know if I could support moving it up there knowing the economic reality of what is going on in this City and so I do know that it will service the residents, as you point out Commissioner Anderson, but there are also a couple of other office buildings up there that it will service too and hopefully will be used as a shuttle there I think the key is as we have found here before that once you start a program it is always tough to take it away too, so there needs to be a perfect understanding that we need to assess this from a very consistent standpoint when we have the final data in and when the time comes around, so the \$92,000 I hate to disregard it and not use it but there is some trepidation from my part in moving forward in this route here.

Commissioner Cabrera: Two points I would like to comment, one is when did the advertising relationship begin with this firm and the City of Coral Gables?

Public Works Director Delgado: The bid was awarded in August of last year.

Commissioner Cabrera: So in August of 2008, we are almost, well we are not quite in August of 2009.

Public Works Director Delgado: Almost a year.

Commissioner Cabrera: We still don't seem to be up and running. I mean and I appreciate the Assistant City Manager coming up here and saving you from that June 1st, start point, but the reality is that we still don't have a thing going on and I don't understand why we can't seem to get off of the dime on this advertising program.

Public Works Director Delgado: It took over 6 months to sign the contract.

Commissioner Cabrera: Oh, OK.

Commissioner Anderson: There was no pen in the ink or something. Ink in the pen I mean.

Public Works Director Delgado: So the contract was actually signed in March.

Commissioner Cabrera: I think it was the City Attorney's fault.

City Attorney Hernandez: Of course.

[Laughter]

Public Works Director Delgado: It was unique, a complicated contract, we never had that type of contract and it took like 6 months, so they were actually given the go ahead by the end of February. March they started the process so they have been working actually in reality 3 months, less than 3 months in the installation of those devices and they encountered a major problem which is the vandalism. When they installed the things, kids were able to pull the screens out and it was really bad, so they had to put a protector cover, which they already designed, they already received and now they are in the process of installing, so the installation it is moving along, they are promising us June 1st as a start date, that is something that it doesn't depend on us, it is their schedule, but they are saying that they have some contracts executed that they have the advertising capabilities, they have the people already, the clients, and they are moving along, so hopefully they will be moving along during the summer months.

Commissioner Cabrera: This is directed at the Manager. When we spoke about this project yesterday one of the things that he was helpful in briefing me on was the fact that maintenance is up on the trolleys, sales is now lower, so the sales tax monies that come to Coral Gables are less than where we started in the program, because the reality is when we started the program in 2003 we had a surplus of funds to the tune of \$775,000; and last but certainly not least, it is we have gotten way over utilization on this project, and those three indicators maintenance, expenses, lowered sales tax and higher utilization point to the fact that at some point in time in the very, very near future this Commission is going to have to consider some sort of a fare, I mean I think that is the only way we are going to be able to balance out the expense, because however you want to look at this project and I am not going to support it because I don't know of the reoccurring revenue, I think Commissioner Kerdyk, made a good point when he said we don't know if we are going to be able to get those monies year in and year out. It is great that the FDOT is giving us \$92,500 this time around, but we don't know if next year they are going to be doing the same, so if that doesn't occur how would we fund this route and what impact would that have on the northern section of the City that now all of a sudden, we gave you this route for one year, and now we are going to take it away from you and this Commission doesn't do that. I have seen us find ways to continue to provide services to our citizens; and I think that it is going to put a big strain upon us, if we had the reoccurring revenue, if I knew for sure that we would get that \$92,500 every year from now to the next 5 years, 6 years, whatever that number is, I would feel a lot more comfortable; and if the trolley in my opinion could sustain itself I would say, OK. it is not a revenue generator, but as Commissioner Withers says it is a phenomenal success story, I mean we have slapped it on our budget reports four years ago. We put it on our annual reports we have gotten great press from local and national media over the trolley, but the reality is that we are operating this thing at a deficit and thank god we had the \$775,000 to start with otherwise the deficit would be much greater.

Commissioner Withers: This doesn't start for what 14 months, 12 months, how long did you say you were going to take to get the other trolleys?

Public Works Director Delgado: It takes about 12 to 14 months to get the new trolleys.

Commissioner Withers: And that is when this is starting?

Public Works Director Delgado: Yes.

Commissioner Withers: So it is not starting for a 1 year and 2 months, so maybe by that time we can see if we have that dedicated.

Commissioner Cabrera: I know, the thing is, I hear you and that is a good point that you bring up, it doesn't happen for a year, but I think we are not only going to have, a deficit that we have already talked about in the upcoming budget.

Commissioner Withers: Right.

Commissioner Cabrera: I believe we are going to have an additional deficit, the next fiscal schedule, and I have to say one more thing we have our District 7 Commissioner who went before his colleagues recently to ask that the County remove the half penny transportation sales tax. While he was unsuccessful in that endeavor, he is now very seriously contemplating a referendum, you know a referendum I think has a real strong probability of getting approval given the current economic status of our region and our country.

Commissioner Anderson: And also some of the mismanagement of the fund.

Commissioner Cabrera: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: I was talking with the Manager yesterday, and I think with the shortfall we were talking about we are going to have to reevaluate a lot of things and this is certainly one of them; and I was very sensitive talking to him about Bill, this being one of the things that you champion, so I am supportive of this now, but this is a vision, this is a policy decision that we are going to have to make as a whole along with other projects, so I will support now and we will wait and see and we will hopefully see where it goes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I appreciate that, I understand the situation, I understand too that the trolley does a lot of good like everybody pointed out here, it saves us over 750 parking spaces a day, it saves about 1.5 million miles of people trafficking up and down the streets of Coral Gables, but I also understand the need to get a dedicated funding source that will help augment the sales tax; and maybe what it is, is a special taxing district in the downtown areas, maybe it is something like that, I don't know, but I spoke to the Manager about that too yesterday and we talked about other revenue sources; I mean it is nice that we are renting out the trolleys and that we are probably going to get \$50,000 to \$100,000 in benefits for doing that per year, it is nice that if the program starts up for that advertising program starts up and if successful that is going to be good money, but the realistic fact is that we are living in a different environment throughout the world

and I want the City Manager to come up with some ideas and how we can look at long term the viability of this project continuing as strong as it is now.

Mayor Slesnick: While we have to face the environment we live in hopefully we are in the cusp of a turn to a better environment for the future and a better environment for the downtown business retail district, restaurant industry; and of course this is the kind of planning that you do now during the times of downturn to get ready for the better times ahead, but a couple of points on Commissioner Cabrera's plan about fares, as you all know, I was in support of a fare before so I am certainly not against looking at a possible fare for the future, secondly since it was brought up, my personal urgings to Commissioner Gimenez, that I appreciate the stand that he is taking to bring attention to the fact that some other people in the County other than himself have changed the rules, that the citizens may have voted on as far as the expenditure and dedication of the monies and how they are proportioned and so forth, I appreciate that very much, because I am as offended as he is at some of the things, but on the other hand I would hate to throw the baby out with the bath water and I urge him to consider the good things that some of the tax money is doing or that it is all doing, maybe not in the same proportion that it was intended when it was first offered, but we certainly are as citizens of Coral Gables getting a great deal of usage out of it and I would hate to see it go away. We need a motion on H-4. Mr. Manager do you want to?

City Manager Salerno: Yes.

Mayor Slesnick: OK. I am sorry.

City Manager Salerno: For the purpose of clarification and additional information there was a comment earlier about 350, or projected ridership is about 350, that was information that is dated I don't think we should rely on that information, that number is a couple of years old, the system was operating at a lower utilization at that time, but it is also an "apples and oranges" situation in that regard so I don't want anybody up here to think that, that is the benchmark, because I don't think that, that is a good number to use in this regard it is basically staff's judgment and the people that operate the system; and Alberto's that, that is the best next extension of the service and the best utilization that would occur of the alternate routes that were considered, but when the study was done, but things have changed somewhat, so you shouldn't rely on that 350.

Commissioner Cabrera: I don't, I think that 350 is underscored based upon Commissioner Withers comments about how it is really going to work more as a connector than a circulator I mean that is what this is becoming, a connector, a mass transit connector.

City Manager Salerno: If you could accept those numbers were based upon more utilization than 4 hours a day, so you have got increased utilization, but less hours involved in this pilot program, so it is an unknown.

Commissioner Cabrera: But you know it is interesting a mass transit connector is what we have developed, what this has turned into and it is a free mass transit connector, that is the worst part about it.

Commissioner Anderson: And I also support a fare at some point in some way, unfortunately we missed that opportunity.

Commissioner Cabrera: Why can't we then, if Ms. Anderson, if I hear Ms. Anderson correctly, if I hear Mr. Slesnick who was actually the person that originated the idea of a possible fare, why won't staff come back to us with a recommendation, not a recommendation, but a study of the fare. We talked about it yesterday, you and I, you made a very valid point and that was you said if we charged a fare that will change the dynamics of the times.

City Manager Salerno: The headways.

Public Works Director Delgado: The headways, the frequency.

Commissioner Cabrera: The headways, the frequency from say 8 minutes to possibly 12, 13 minutes, so it changes the whole dynamics of the system, that is an interesting, I never really thought about it before, so I thought that was very helpful that you gave me that information, at the same time we haven't looked at the finances, I mean maybe a 50 cents fare is appropriate with concessions for seniors and concessions for Coral Gables residents, you know if you are a Coral Gables resident it is still free, I mean because I would like to give something back to our citizens on this one.

City Manager Salerno: The other point of information I would like add is as you discussed Commissioner Cabrera the system is under some stress today because sales tax is down, and expenses are up, the expenses are up in part because the maintenance of the system, the additional cost to maintain those hybrid vehicles that Albert talked about replacing, those two that are in operation today cost \$45,000 a year in maintenance cost over the diesel units, so as soon as we get those diesel units in we can reduce maintenance cost by approximately \$45,000 and hopefully by the time in 14 months from now the economy would have recouped a bit and the sales tax revenues will be up. The other item that the Mayor mentioned is that last night we met they are incurring an excess of \$75,000 in costs to address some vandalism issues on the system; and we have devised a program that we expect will eliminate that \$75,000 which Alberto will be implementing here in the near future. So, we are doing some things that will positively impact the operation and reduce cost, it is appropriate to look at the revenue system I would only say that with the fiscal challenges that we have right now staff needs to..., would look toward addressing this particular issue once we address the overall City's current fiscal situation because this is, I look at this in two different fashions, the fiscal condition and sustainability let's say of the trolley system and this grant. This grant will have and because it needs to be viewed as a pilot project, in the new world order, or the new economic world order for cities. Cities as you know have traditionally started programs and whether they were marginally successful or not were very reticent toward eliminating them, even though they may not have made economic sense. Cities in this climate, cities today have to look at this differently, if this service is not warranted after the pilot program which I would say needs to run one year, a minimum of one year, we won't be reluctant to recommend discontinuing that service, this truly needs to be viewed a little bit different as we go forward as to whether or not we keep these projects so with the understanding that staff will look at the economic sustainability of the system, but I would just suggest from a timing perspective, we need to get our other house in order first and then we will

be glad to look at those options it is just a matter of available time and resources of staff to focus on different issues, and right now our priority is fully dedicated toward the more global situation that we have.

Commissioner Cabrera: And I very much respect that and I think you make a very good point, what I wanted just to come away with today is I don't want to put words in my colleagues mouths, but what I did hear from Mrs. Anderson was that she would be willing to look at it, I clearly heard from Ms. Slesnick, I would be willing to look at it.

City Manager Salerno: I understand.

Commissioner Cabrera: And the reality is that when yesterday I had asked Mr. Nelson to give me a rundown of the finances of the system with the exception of the audited 2003 year the system has run at a deficit and the reason why it didn't run at a deficit in 2003 is we didn't run it, we started running it in 2004; and so ever since then, thank God that we had that 2003 money to offset the losses from 2004 to 2008, otherwise we would be running this thing at a loss and the goal here is not to eliminate it like we eliminated in the 70's or bus system, because as you may or may not know, we had a bus system here in Coral Gables and we got rid of it because it was draining the City well. I don't want to see that happen to the trolley, so I am trying to look at it and I respect and support your efforts to look at it globally rather than to look at it from this microcosm standpoint of the trolley, but I urge you that as you look at the macro picture that you incorporate the possible introduction of a fare to the trolley, it would do a number of things, it will offset the cost of maintenance, it will offset the cost of over utilization, and it may in fact have a positive offset to the lower taxes that we are getting from the County regarding the transportation tax.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Let me just answer that because I am not going to argue the fact on the 50 cents or whatever charge that we are going to make, but I do want to make sure that you understand that there are several intangibles that are associated with the trolley including recruiting business to the City of Coral Gables, several business have come to the City of Coral Gables strictly for the fact that they are able to have that connectivity from the Metro rail down to their office and simply our commercial areas make up at least 45% of our Real Estate tax revenue, so it is giving something back to those commercial areas there that augment our budget big time and this is a nice gesture to help promote business in our commercial district, so I just want to make sure that, you look at that side of the picture too when you make the overall decision on how to proceed forward with the trolley.

Commissioner Cabrera: While that argument has merit, it doesn't mean that I am suggesting that we eliminate the trolley, what I am suggesting is that we..., you know by charging you create a value and that was an argument you had made early on, that it created a value.

Mayor Slesnick: Not very successfully.

Commissioner Cabrera: Well, but it did, but you know what, I was wrong.

Mayor Slesnick: He convinced himself to do it.

Commissioner Cabrera: No, but it creates a perceived value, and you know what you think about this discussion we are having about this \$75,000 in expenses in vandalism, if you charge a fare, I am willing to bet that vandalism would go down as well, who wants to ride a trolley and pay 50 cents or 25 cents or whatever the number is so they can manage the vehicle. I mean it is just a reality and there is a perceived value there I mean the real reality is, you take a bus for \$1.50 and you are getting a beautiful little trolley for nothing, I mean there is something wrong with that picture and it is more reliable and it is easier to vandalize you know you get to ride up and down Ponce De Leon Boulevard, which is one of the prettiest streets in all of Miami-Dade County, so stands to reason in spite of what traffic consultants tell you and folks like that it stands to reason, that this needs to have a perceived value and it doesn't have one today.

Commissioner Anderson: I don't disagree I guess that will come up at some point, I hope so too. And I understand that we have to do the larger picture right now, but when that comes up we really need to evaluate all of that.

Mayor Slesnick: I am not going to take a lot of time, but just for the record, I want to express my concerns that I expressed in briefings before, this is the same trolley that will go up into the north area there is not an additional trolley that will circulate the north area and drop people off to the main line, this is the same trolley that starts at the Metro rail station and will proceed to Douglas Entrance and on up, I am concerned and I have expressed it and as we go through this year if we approve it today I just have to tell you I am very concerned that you are going to do that northern leg and keep your headway time, I have looked at the route, I have heard studies, I have looked at the photograph, the aerial photograph, which was taken on a non peak hour and if, I don't know Alberto how many times you go to the corner of Douglas Road and Flagler on peak hours, but you cannot even make the left turn from Ponce onto Douglas Road in one light, impossible, that backs up from Flagler all the way down there is a complete full two lanes of traffic, you have to wait until it clears and you catch it just right to get back into the traffic I am just saying that is concern I have no solution and I can't even pretend that I am right, I am just telling you that, that is my concern.

Public Works Director Delgado: Keep in mind that, that is why we need an additional trolley.

Mayor Slesnick: Alberto, I was told how much time you all predicted it would take to do this northern leg, I am telling you I think it is impossible to do it in the time you predicted, that is all. I mean it is just, I wanted to put it on the record as a concern, I think it is right for this debate to have the concerns expressed that is all. Do I have a motion, did we get that? Mr. Clerk did we have a motion?

City Clerk Foeman: No Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Slesnick: OK. Mr. Kerdyk, do you move it?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'll make a motion to approve.

Commissioner Withers: I'll second it.

Mayor Slesnick: Mr. Kerdyk moves and Mr. Withers seconds H-4. Any further discussion? Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Foeman: Commissioner Withers?

Commissioner Withers: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Commissioner Anderson?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Commissioner Cabrera?

Commissioner Cabrera: No.

City Clerk Foeman: Vice Mayor Kerdyk?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: Mayor Slesnick?

Mayor Slesnick: Yes.

[End: 10:28:31 a.m.]