

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-1
March 28, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner James Cason

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item 2-1 [1:53 p.m.]

A Resolution of the Historic Preservation Board of Coral Gables, Florida, recommending opposition to Senate Bill 1346/House Bill 1317 as written and strongly encouraging the City to protect its existing historic fabric.

Mayor Lago: 2-1.

City Attorney Suarez: 2-1 is a Resolution of the Historic Preservation Board of Coral Gables, Florida, recommending opposition to Senate Bill 1346/House Bill 1317 as written and strongly encouraging the City to protect its existing historic fabric.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Mayor, Commissioners, good afternoon. This resolution is coming to you today from the Historic Preservation Board asking you all to oppose Senate Bill 1346/House Bill 1317, names local regulations of non-conforming of unsafe structures. As you all know, this is related to protection of historic properties and the ability for property owners to obtain building permits to demolish any non-conforming structures. There have been some amendments

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*Agenda Item 2-1 – Resolution of the Historic Preservation Board recommending opposition
To Senate Bill 1346/House Bill 1317*

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to those bills to exempt single-family residences and those on the National Register, but the city still has some concerns regarding the requirements for rebuilding other structures and the city's preempted in requiring those historic homes to be rebuilt. This obviously concerns our districts, historic districts which are not addressed here and just generally the city and the Historic Preservation Board have been concerned with this move from the Legislature and the Historic Preservation Board is asking you all to adopt a resolution opposing those bills as they are currently written.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Any other questions. Can I entertain a motion.

Commissioner Menendez: I just want to make a quick comment for those that are watching. Historic Preservation, obviously is dear to everyone and is a key component of what we do as a city and what our city is about, but folks, you have to understand that we battle battles in Tallahassee, in the county level, that little by little erode and take away our abilities to function. This is a perfect example. We need energy in the community to help us preserve our historic structures, but we need energy and help and support at other levels of government. You can't take the eye off the ball. A lot of good happens, but sometimes things that hurt happen in Tallahassee and at the county.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Commissioner, that's certainly not the only preemption bill that's in the Legislature this session.

Commissioner Anderson: We're travelling up to Tallahassee again. I think it's an important resolution and it helps protect the fabric of our community, because without the historic structures that we have and work so hard to preserve in our community, our city wouldn't be as special as it is.

Vice Mayor Mena: My recollection was when this topic first came up at some point that our sort of initial assessment was that there was very few properties that really were kind of in the crosshairs, if you will, that would be in the flood zone that qualified.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: So last year a bill was passed, the one that you're addressing had to do with the flood zones and we did look at...

Vice Mayor Mena: But this is not that.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: This is not that. This is a different bill, this goes a bit further and its sort of – there's a criteria that has to do with coastal high hazard areas that don't meet current building structures, but it also addresses the rebuilding of homes that may have been declared unsafe, perhaps by demolition by neglect, perhaps through no fault of the property owner, but that the cities can no longer require rebuilding of those structures, in accordance with the

historic elements of the home, etc. So it goes beyond what was previously adopted, which did address those flood hazard zones where we didn't have very many non-designated historic homes, that also had a grandfathering clause in for homes that had already been designated. This addresses homes past, future, present designation and properties, not homes, excuse me, structures, single-family residences are exempt from this bill, as amended.

Mayor Lago: Can I get a motion.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Menendez: Second.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Cason: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Thank you.