

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-2
March 8, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Assistant City Attorney, Naomi Levi-Garcia

Public Speaker(s)

Sam Joseph

Agenda Item 2-2 [Start: 4:03 p.m.]

A Resolution of the School Community Relations Committee recommending the City Commission consider the “Advised” status of Coral Gables Preparatory Academy before the Attendance Boundary Committee and the potential impact of the forthcoming Madeira project on the school’s attendance boundaries.

Mayor Lago: Moving onto item 2-2.

City Attorney Ramos: 2-2 is a Resolution of the School Community Relations Committee recommending the City Commission consider the “Advised” status of Coral Gables Preparatory Academy before the Attendance Boundary Committee and the potential impact of the forthcoming Madeira project on the school’s attendance boundaries.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Good afternoon, Mayor and Commissioners. The 301 Madero Project went before the School Community Relations Committee a few weeks ago, as

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part of the courtesy notification that was approved by this Commission. They had some concerns about the potential for that project coming online and impacting nearby Coral Gables Preparatory Academy. From an enrollment perspective, population perspective, Vice Chair Sam Joseph, I believe is on Zoom, he'd like to expand on the board's concerns and just bring to your attention the fact that Coral Gables Preparatory Academy is on "Advised" status as part of the attendance boundary committee process.

Mr. Joseph: Thank you very much Naomi. Good afternoon, Mayor and Commissioners, it's great to be with you today. As Naomi mentioned, the SCRC had some concerns because Coral Gables Prep right now is already over 100 percent capacity; and with new projects coming into the area, it poses a problem, especially for Coral Gables Prep, because it's not a magnet school. And it being a home school, it means that the lines for the district would have to be adjusted in order to accommodate new families. As Naomi mentioned, Coral Gables Prep has been put on advisement, and next year will be evaluated as far as what actions the school district would need to take next in order to accommodate any new families or line changes as necessary. As I said that poses a problem for us because actually over 68 percent of the kids attending Coral Gables Prep are from the City of Coral Gables, and certainly we could have Coral Gables families impacted in that they would be redistricted to other schools outside of the city. So, it's something we want the Commission to pay attention to as you approve projects in and around the area, and hopefully we can speak with the school, our School Board Member and members and see what, if anything, we can do to alleviate the issues that will arise from any boundary change or not being able to access the school.

Mayor Lago: Naomi.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: So, you know you can take this resolution under consideration. You don't necessarily have to do anything. It was a resolution by the committee. I will say, we don't know for sure what's going to happen when a school is placed on advised status. According to the ABC process, it means that its being monitored, because the population is such that it could warrant later down the line boundary adjustments. That doesn't happen until the school is placed on targeted status. The ABC Committee process involves public hearings, it involves recommendations from staff, from the Superintendents, but it is something to be conscious of.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a question. I don't know about other schools in other parts of the county, but since Coral Gables, our Coral Gables school is on a major boulevard, historic boulevard in Coral Gables where there's been office buildings and everything built, apartment buildings over the decades. The issue now involves one particular project, I believe, but between now and the next five or ten or fifteen or twenty years, we are going to continue having apartments built in the area. So is this going to be an ongoing issue or is it a one-time deal, because the city continues to evolve, as does all of South Florida and are we going to continue to be chasing the School Board's decisions based on how we evolve as a community. At what point where does it end?

Mayor Lago: I understand what you're saying, you're making a very good point, it's a great point, but we have to see, like Naomi said, how this evolves and how this process evolves, and I

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Recommending the City Commission consider the "Advised" status of Coral Gables Prep Academy

appreciate the board's due diligence and hard work and their foresight. But I don't have a crystal ball right now. So, I think what Naomi mentioned is a path that I think I would like to take. Take it under advisement.

Commissioner Menendez: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: I would recommend that anyone on the Commission, I know you've done it already, continue to attend some of these meetings that they are engaged in. I've been to multiple of these meetings. They are doing a lot of good work on behalf of the city and on behalf of the parents and on behalf of the children. So, we'll take it under advisement, and we appreciate their hard work.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Sounds good.

Commissioner Menendez: Is there a way to come to me personally what formula they used to make these determinations that triggers the different statuses, because again, I want to make sure our residents are protected, the school is protected, so I figured the more we know about the process, the better we can anticipate future decisions or future moves.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Sure. I'd be happy to get back to you on that. And just generally speaking, the school district does perform a concurrency analysis, so when these larger developments come online, they need to, in some instances pay impact fees, but they are supposed to go through like a concurrency review by the school district board. They analyze the schools in and around the development and on a district-wide basis and figure out, okay, is there capacity to accommodate the new students based on their formula that are associated with the given developments. So, these things are not supposed to happen in a vacuum. We don't perform that analysis inhouse, but I'd be happy to find out more about what they look at and get back to you.

Commissioner Menendez: I appreciate it.