

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-18
August 26, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez (Absent)

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Economic Development Director, Belkys Perez

Public Speaker(s)

Addis Carrillo, Chair of Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

Agenda Item F-29 [p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission formalizing a Permitting Assistance Program (PAP) to be administered by the Economic Development Department in coordination with the Development Services Department, providing for concierge permitting assistance, inter-departmental coordination, and technical support as an Economic Development incentive. (7/2/25 Economic Development Board recommended approval, 4-0) (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor? Yes. Would you mind doing F29, sir?

Mayor Lago: F-29, it is. Thank you, Belkys. Good morning, Madam Chair. Good afternoon. Excuse me, five o'clock. Wow.

City Attorney Suarez: Mayor, may I read it into the record?

Mayor Lago: Of course.

City Attorney Suarez: So F-29 is a resolution of the City Commission formalizing a permitting assistance program to be administered by the Economic Development Department in coordination

with the Development Services Department, providing for concierge permitting assistance, inter-departmental coordination and technical support as an economic development incentive.

Economic Development Director Perez: So thank you so much for taking us out of order, Mayor. I'm here with Addis Carrillo, who's the outgoing Chair of the Chamber of Commerce. And I'm not sure if maybe Thad Adams is on Zoom. He's the chair of our Economic Development Board, but he's also a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

City Clerk Urquia: He is not on Zoom. He stopped by here earlier.

Economic Development Director Perez: Okay. Thank you. So the permitting assistance program started in 2011 with the Chamber in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and with Development Services and the Economic Development Department as an economic development initiative to help businesses get timely permits. This is more than just a customer service tool. It's really a strategic economic development initiative that directly benefits both businesses, the business community, and also the residents. And the reason that it matters is because we all know that the faster that our businesses can open, the faster they can start making money and lower their costs. So, we want to streamline this for them. We've been doing this since 2011. It just never has been formalized. We want to continue our business-friendly reputation. We want to make sure that we are currently competing with other cities for new companies. And so, we want to make sure that our businesses know and that the city sends out a message that we want business here. And we also want multinationals, headquarters, professional services here. And also, again, we cut down on the wait times that they get with permitting. And also, because we're working with them from the beginning, what we've noticed is that we cut down their time that they're in permitting. So we have companies like Ryder and like Quest that have gone through the program and they've opened significant square footage and they've opened in three months, which is great. The reason that we should care about this as a resident is concerned is because permitting, this all generates fees. So, there's permitting fees associated with it. There's a business tax license revenue that we also collect from this. So, there are a lot of things that reduce the pressure on residents as well. So, I don't know if Addis wants to say anything.

Ms. Addis Carrillo: I'm just here in support. We love the program. I think it supports our businesses, and it encourages them to do business with us when we offer incentives such as this one. So as an advocate for, as Chairperson for the Coral Gables Chamber, we do support this program. I just wish we can offer it to everybody. But we can't. So, but those that we could, we supported a hundred percent. So, I'm here in support of Belkys. She does an amazing job with Economic Development and with this program and we're very supportive.

Mayor Lago: Madam chair, when is your last day?

Ms. Carrillo: I'm sorry, Addis Carrillo.

Mayor Lago: When is your last day?

Ms. Carrillo: Oh, my last day. I have five days. I'm sorry.

Mayor Lago: I thought it was in a month. So first and foremost, I want to say congratulations. You've done an amazing job in a very tough year.

Ms. Carrillo: Yes, thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: In a very tough year. And I laugh because if I don't laugh, I'm going to cry because then I think about this past year. You deserve to be commended. And I cannot believe that we did not do something appropriate for you today. So that's a shame.

Ms. Carrillo: It's okay. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: You need to do something in the next Commission meeting because you've done a great job leading this year in a very tough time. I want to also thank Belkys. Belkys brought this to my attention. This is another example of your diligence, hard work and leadership. I want to commend you and I told the Manager what a great job that you did on this. I'm proud to sponsor this and continue partnering with the Chamber. The lifeblood of the city is our residents. But you have to understand the business community plays such a major role in propping up this city on every front. If it wasn't for our downtown and if it wasn't for the Chamber, we'd be in some serious, serious trouble. So I want to congratulate the Chamber for the hard work they've been doing, your leadership.

Ms. Carrillo: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: And Belkys, thank you for bringing this forward and working with me to bring it to Commission today.

Ms. Carrillo: Thank you so much.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Mayor, again, I want to thank you both for doing this. I mean, we've done expediting services for residents. And we have mobile permitting for residents. It's time now that we take care of our business community that struggles with simple things such as signage. And I know that sometimes they reach out to the Mayor, sometimes they reach out to me, sometimes they reach out to the other Commissioners. And now it's nice to have it formalized. And the City Manager is doing a great job of enhancing our Building Services Department to make it much more friendly for everybody, both residents and businesses. So, thank you, Mr. Manager, as well. So, I'm happy to move this if somebody wants to second it.

Commissioner Lara: Second.

Ms. Carrillo: Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I have a member of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Mrs. Maria Cruz. (She declined to speak). That's all Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: All right. We have a motion and a second.

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Commissioner Fernandez: Absent)

(Vote: 4-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Moving on to F5.

Economic Development Director Perez: Thank you. Thank you to Development Services too.
We can't do it without them.

Mayor Lago: Yes.