

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-6
September 14, 2021
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

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Thomas Webber

Agenda Item I-6 [Start: 12:09 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission authorizing encroachments into the public right-of-way consisting of two (2) entry monuments at the end of the Isla Dorada Bridge, landscaping and future sidewalks; subject to requirements of the Public Works Department.

Mayor Lago: Agenda Item I-6, 11:30 time certain.

City Attorney Ramos: It's a Resolution of the City Commission authorizing encroachments into the public right-of-way consisting of two (2) entry monuments at the end of the Isla Dorada Bridge, landscaping and future sidewalks; subject to requirements of the Public Works Department.

Director Diaz: Again, Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director. This item was actually put at the request of the Tahiti Beach HOA, I believe Thomas Webber. He's the architect for the HOA. This

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is an encroachment agreement about some improvements that they want to do around the bridge area, and we put the item, but this is their request for them to put some improvements out there.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon, thank you for being here.

Mr. Webber: Thank you for having me.

Director Diaz: And I want to clarify, there is a scrivener's error, so I want to make sure it gets corrected on the item when it mentions two entry monuments at the end of Isla Dorada, its two entry monuments on each side, so that was missed when we put the item together, so I want to make sure that it's in the record.

Mr. Webber: Before the presentation comes up, I can start this, I think everybody knows the area. Coco Plum is a beautiful residential area. Tahiti Beach, my firm, along with Chris Collier Architects were hired by the HOA to do improvements on all of the central areas, the main street, all the community areas, the central park and certain things, the new guardhouse, things of this sort. And one of the things that really caught my attention, I never really knew it was back there, honestly, for years; and you start to go through Coco Plum and you turn around this circle and then you are going through and then the oak start, and then all of a sudden you get to that bridge, but its kind of non-descript sort of situation, that bridge, and then all of a sudden it vast out as you go through. So, this is kind of a blow up of the drawing of the bridge as you approach the bridge. I just kept thinking to myself, like you're in a special neighborhood and you go into another special neighborhood right within it, and that particular bridge and the particular history, once we found out about Tahiti Beach. Tahiti Beach was actually the beach access for the Biltmore, a lot of you guys know that. They would bring candelas to come down, that was the original idea of Tahiti Beach. So, I just felt as though, and I presented it to the community that wouldn't it be nice to have a bit more of a marker. They have nice signs in Coco Plum that come in, they are coral rock size, something very natural. They have words on them. I kind of want to take it back and not really have anything that says Tahiti Beach and kind of have more of a celebration of the entrance by the bridge as well too. So, you really know that you are arriving to something. So, we are presenting four obliques, they are roughly about 15 feet tall, they are 3 feet by 3 feet, in floor plan they are about 3 feet tall: and then a stucco obliques with a very elegant light on the top of it, simple, straightforward. There would be two markings on each side, because as soon as you get to that bridge everything opens up, because everything is very flat, the landscape in Coco Plum, and then all of a sudden it opens up and you see the vast corridor, and then its just a celebration on the way down. So, it was a simple request if we could mark the Tahiti Beach entrance. Thank you. I can answer any questions.

Mayor Lago: You have any concerns, Mr. Director?

Director Diaz: No. I just want to make sure that and it's written into the resolution that, obviously you need to go through structural approval, electrical approval and through our process.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

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Director Diaz: As long as those T's are crossed and I's are dotted, we don't have an objection.

City Manager Iglesias: And if any work is on the bridge, it's their responsibility to remove them.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Director Diaz: Correct. Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Is notice provided to the neighborhood?

Director Diaz: No –

Mr. Webber: What we did is we went to Coco Plum and their board signed off on it, so that was the neighborhood.

Director Diaz: Coco Plum II you mean.

Mr. Webber: Coco Plum II.

Vice Mayor Mena: The Islands of Coco Plum, I guess.

Mr. Webber: The Islands of Coco Plum, correct, and they had signed off on our...

Director Diaz: And that's the end, that's where the Islands of Coco Plum finish.

Mayor Lago: They are going to have to come to permit through the city anyways.

Director Diaz: What's that?

Mayor Lago: They are going to permit through the city.

Director Diaz: Yes. Yes.

Mayor Lago: And they are going to be paying for this work.

Director Diaz: Of course.

Mayor Lago: By the way, there is another area, since we are here, I think its Coco Plum Phase I, where I mentioned to you before where they have a bridge where there is no possible way, after the tennis courts, you are heading – there's a bridge where there is no sidewalk, and you see people running and you see nannies pushing strollers, and you see parents pushing strollers, and it's a nightmare, especially at night, because there is a lack of real lighting there. And we talked about

potentially adding a sidewalk, connecting a sidewalk that was just built-in front of the tennis courts all the way to the bridge. Have we looked into that at all, and see?

Director Diaz: We took a look. The bridge is a little farther away from that tennis court, but we did take a look at that area. Connectivity would be an issue and just make you aware, there are some residents in the area that were not too, at least they were not too thrilled about that. They saw my guys taking a survey, they were like, I don't want you building that here.

Mayor Lago: But no one came back to me and told me anything.

Director Diaz: Sorry?

Mayor Lago: No one came back to me and told me anything, so I want to understand.

Director Diaz: We can have some further conversation.

Mayor Lago: Can we have a sit-down discussion about that?

Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Because I understand the residents may be concerned.

Director Diaz: One resident.

Mayor Lago: One resident – okay, but how are you going to get from the bridge, from one side of the bridge to the other, unless you are walking on the street, where you can potentially be - by the way, there is no opportunity, if a car is coming, you have a hedge and a barrier, a steel barrier. So, either the person grabs the cart, grabs the stroller and throws it over the barrier, because there is no median, there is no grassy area where the person can just go out to the median. Can we sit down and talk about that, because I spoke to a lot of the residents there and they were all for it.

Director Diaz: Absolutely, we can do that.

Mayor Lago: Let's do that, please, okay. Let's talk about it this week.

Director Diaz: Sure.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Mr. Diaz.

Mr. Webber: And just to be clear, we have a sidewalk.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. You're blessed, you're blessed to have a sidewalk.

Mr. Webber: And I can see what you mean by that.

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Mayor Lago: And by the way, they put a new pump station, they put a new sidewalk, it looks incredible, and people are excited about the sidewalk because they are no longer having to take their children or walk in the middle of the street. Do we need a resolution?

Director Diaz: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Can I get a motion?

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll move it.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mr. Webber: Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: Congratulations. Thank you. Have a nice day.