

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-1
April 12, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick**

City Staff

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro
Public Works Department Civil Engineer, David Galeano**

Public Speaker(s)

**Maggie Mandrada, Coral Gables Resident
Javier Torres, M.C. Harry and Associates**

Agenda Item H-1 [Start: 2:18:45 p.m.]

A Presentation on the War Memorial Youth Center facility improvements

Mayor Cason: Let's move to H-1. H-1 is the War Memorial Youth Center facility improvements.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And we are going to ask Fred Couceyro to come forward and make a presentation.

Mr. Couceyro: Good afternoon. During the City's 2015-2016 Budget Planning Cycle, and in particular the City Commission's Budget Workshop, improvements to the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center facility was deemed to be a priority in the funding of the Capital Improvements program. For this Youth Center Improvement Project, the City procured the

services of a design consultant, and through the collaborative efforts of Parks and Recreation staff, Public Works staff, and a design consultant, a scope of the different improvements needed was created. I would like to introduce David Galeano from the City's Public Works Department; he is the project manager for this project, and will detail the process.

Mr. Galeano: Good afternoon Mayor, members of the Commission, my name is David Galeano, and I work for the Public Works Department; I'm a Civil Engineer/Project Manager. We are going to be talking about, as you might have guessed, the War Memorial Youth Center building repairs. As you may be aware the Youth Center received a major overall in 1997, which as stated on the Youth Centers website one of the most outstanding Youth Centers in the nation. Unfortunately, that was 19 years ago, and now we want to do a most needed facelift, that not only improves the public's health and safety of the facility, but also prolongs the life of that facility's infrastructure and capital assets. Then we wanted to approach this project, as shown on this slide, is divided into different components in order to have a specialty contractors bid out their particular aspects of this undertaking. The goal is to have items one through six completed by the end of this year. As you can see we have several alternatives on the bottom, item seven through ten, which could be accomplished next year if funds become available. Now, I'm going to leave you with...from M.C. Harry, our consultant for the site, who is naming more details about the different points. Thank you.

Mr. Javier Torres: Good afternoon esteemed Board, Mayor, my name is Javier Torres, I'm with M.C. Harry and Associates, I'm the consultant that was hired to assist you guys in the renovation of the Youth Center. What I want to do is basically, I'm going to go through all the scope items of the six different projects that have been listed on this slide here and also touch a little bit on the other items for further discussion. OK. This first slide here essentially shows all the areas of work that are involved in this project, jump right into site repairs related to the replacement of the 8-foot high and 12-foot high chain link fence mesh only surrounding the playgrounds and the basketball courts. It also includes the batting cages. We are not going to be replacing the vertical structural members of the fence, just the horizontals and the mesh and the gates throughout the facility, throughout the fence. You can see some of these pictures show the deterioration.

Mayor Cason: Are you going to regalanize the...

Mr. Torres: Yes. They are going to be refinished; they are going to be sandblasted and refinished. We are also going to be doing the work on the basketball courts. We are going to be repairing the surface of it. As you can see in some of these pictures its holding a little bit of water, so we are going to level all those out, there are some cracks that we are going to fix; and we are also going to replace the basketball backboards, the rims and the nets. Moving along to the dugouts, we are going to be repairing not just the dugouts, but the entire facility. All the

metal picket fencing, all the ornamental picket fencing on the property is going to be repaired. Some of them are going to be sandblasted, primed, repainted; some of it needs to be replaced altogether. This is all for the dugouts, the entrance features and the bleacher areas as well. In the bleachers we are going to be replacing all the aluminum bleacher seating. Some of them are actually being held right now by pieces of wood. So, we are going to be replacing all those, also fixing the steps that are broken, removing some step lights that no longer work and are not needed. And, as you can see the door is here, the storage doors also, and the railings near the dugouts. Also there is a lot of stucco restoration and repairs that needs to happen. A lot of delaminated stucco that's all going to be cracked back, you know exposed and repaired, and this happens at the entrance features, happens at the dugouts and in the bleachers structures. We are also going to be replacing the metal curved roof panels that are in the dugouts right now, as you can see in those pictures, they are pretty rotted away. They are actually steel, so we are going to go with aluminum, which will last a lot longer than the steel panels. And at the shelters we are going to be, the shelters in the courtyard, we are going to be reroofing as well, but we are also going to be replacing the existing lightening protection that's on the shelters, there is none in the dugouts and it's not needed. Another item on the site repairs is replacing all the deteriorated metal grillage around the project. There are some around the playground, there are some in the building, and some other fencing around the property, so all of those are going to be also – the ones that can be repaired will be repaired, the ones that are just gone beyond repair will be replaced. We are going to be replacing all of them with aluminum as well. And finally, on this spot of the project, we are going to be replacing or installing, I should say, missing ceiling joints surrounding the bleachers and some other areas. You can see that there is a gap here, and vegetation has to grow and all kinds of goodies. So that's the project that we are referring to as site repairs, which is the number one on that budget list. The second project is the play field improvements; we are going to be regrading and resodding the sports playing field with "Bermuda Celebration", we are going to be regrading it, changing the sand and soil mix and also upgrading the baseball equipment. In terms of drainage – right now the way that the drainage for the ballfield works is, essentially a bowl, all the water collects to that, to the center drain, and then underground it connects to the other catch basins that are outside the property. We are going to invert that in this scheme, essentially, we are going to be covering, we are not going to remove it, but we are going to cover the center drain, and we are going to grade it in such a way that the water goes to the perimeter drains. We are also going to be replacing all the grates, which are very rustic. And finally, we will be providing a new irrigation system connected to the existing municipal water meter. The water pump is also to remain. Moving onto the playground. There is an outdoor playground here and then there is an indoor self-contained, kind of like the ones that they have at McDonalds or Burger King. So we are going to be replacing, in the outdoor playground we are going to be replacing the new equipment with new playground equipment. We are also going to be removing the existing artificial turf and padding that's there now; we are going to be replacing it with new. And we are going to be addressing the roots; there are some

three large oak trees that the roots they need to be pruned and the canopies need to be pruned as well; and we are going to put back a new two inches padding instead of one inch padding that's there now, and a new artificial turf topping as well.

Commissioner Lago: Can I ask you a quick question since you are talking about a playground?

Mr. Torres: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: I had a call and I imagine some of my colleagues probably also reached out in reference to the swing sets that are there, that are used so frequently by residents.

Mr. Torres: I'll show you in the following slides, the new designs does not have swing sets, at least I should say the proposed design right now that we have on the table, doesn't have swing sets because we were trying to maximize the activity level, while yes, the swing sets are favorite, by putting them there they take a lot of space, so we would have to go with a smaller playground unit, which is totally doable, but that's the reason why we are not doing it over here.

Commissioner Lago: I don't want to be selfish, but I take my daughters to the Library all the time and we use the swing sets whenever we can.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Most popular item.

Commissioner Lago: I don't know...

Mr. Torres: It can be done. It's really just strictly just an exercise of maximizing other opportunities.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask Maggie who wants to make a case for swings, I think.

Vice Mayor Quesada: How about if we, and I spoke to Fred about this earlier, I didn't see you, you are hiding there. I understand we want to maximize as much play area as possible and have as many amenities as possible, but I've seen two different types of swing sets in the past. I've seen the large ones that have got the connection, I don't know, 12 feet, 10 feet up in the air, I've actually seen smaller ones also that I would imagine take less space and then more tailored toward the toddlers and infants, and the younger crowd, and they actually do take a lot less space.

Commissioner Lago: Which is beneficial because it also controls the crowd to a certain extent.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm there three, four, five times a week with my kids, and there is always a line to get on the swing set, you are waiting until that parent leaves to like run over and get the swing, and it's always typically on the seat that is for the toddler, not the standard...

Commissioner Keon: The bucket seat.

Mr. Torres: The bucket seat which is the toddler swing.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, which is the toddler swing, so what if we did a smaller swing set to accommodate that and takes up less space or look into it.

Mr. Couceyro: Well we can. The swing set that's there is not a large one, it's one of the smaller ones in terms of the framework. The reason why the initial design didn't have it as Javier started to express, right now because of the amount of space that a swing takes, because a swing takes a lot more of what they call a youth zone, the safety zone that you need. The play structure that we have there now is more of a toddler age, it's smaller. The grade school age, children a little older don't have the kind of play value. With one of the designs that were proposed, it added that play value for the grade school children as well. Now, I understand the swings are popular and we can, as Javier said, we can go back out and ask for a bid from the manufacturers, the playground manufacturers to include a swing in the scope and see what they come up with. Maybe they can come up with something, maybe go up higher to get that play value, but that's why we looked at we wanted to maximize; and from a safety standpoint, one of the things when that Youth Center was built, when I actually started there right when it was built, there was always a safety concern because when you have swings and a play structure in the same enclosed pod, and there is no separation, the original design if you recall, had the gate, the entrance gate on the east side, which when we got there we changed, so you could access away from the swing set, you don't want kids running back and forth in front of the swing set, that's also a safety concern. But we can look at a different design, we are not tied to anything in particular, we are just trying to get the most play value and the biggest bang for the space that you can get with the limited space that you have.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I understand.

Commissioner Lago: I appreciate that. The Mayor is going to introduce somebody who wants to speak about swings, but I've got a handful of people...

Ms. Mandrada: I'm the swing lady. Good afternoon, my name is Maggie Mandrada, I live at 511 Seville Avenue and I appreciate the concern expressed by a lot of you. The Youth Center has had those swings for a long time, and as you have said it, many of us have enjoyed – there are only

two small ones, but like Commissioner Quesada said, a lot of people use it, and it's something that we can use for the small babies and toddlers. If you look at the total population, and total equipment, and total facilities that we have at the Youth Center, we have a lot for the older kids, but the swings are basically, I'm here representing the constituency of the toddlers in Coral Gables, because that's basically something that they could use. The other equipment that is there is a little bit more advanced that a baby and a toddler might have some difficulty. So I appreciate you considering giving back the swings, because it's very important to all of us. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: I also think that with the swings, so many you have children of different ages, and you take your children, and there is a four year old that can go run and play on the equipment, and you have a little one that can't, and so you entertain that little one on the swing while the older one goes and plays, rather than just holding a baby in your lap or whatever, so I think it's a good...

Mr. Couceyro: When we had our meeting, the public did come up with a suggestion that we hadn't considered that might be something to look at, it would be more funds to expend is to maybe expand the size of the playground and see if – they suggested going to the batting cage, and that was something we said well...

Mayor Cason: See what you can do with your redesign, your bids from the provider, and see what...

Mr. Couceyro: We can look and see what they can come back with, with swings absolutely.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Fred, just for clarity. The Commission is not authorizing you to spend any money at this point. You are presenting what the status is, what the intention is to move forward. We would have to come back to you for authorization and I'm certain it will include swings when it comes back to you.

Commissioner Keon: It's really just the bucket swings too, it's not even the straps, it's really for little ones. The baby swings keep the kids contained so that you can pay attention to other children in the park. There aren't many things that will keep a toddler in one area.

Mr. Couceyro: I have the direction. It's not a problem.

Mayor Cason: Why don't you follow up with four, five and six?

Mr. Couceyro: Yes. We don't have an issue.

Commissioner Keon: I also think that maybe you kind of need to decide who you are going to serve in that playground, it is a very limited space, it's a small playground, and there really aren't any other activities so much at the Youth Center now for children under five.

Mr. Couceyro: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: So, everything else is oriented to children over five, so you know this may be the little space that is really dedicated to small children, because trying to put children of a lot of different ages into such a small space is sometimes problematic. I know everybody would love a huge playground, but considering the space you have, you don't want to lose the batting cages, you don't want to lose the field capability, you don't want to lose all those other things that this just happens to be a space that is for, you can decide, but if you do decide that, that's where you meet the needs of that population that's where you meet the needs of.

Mr. Couceyro: We can move forward with that direction. Not a problem.

Mr. Torres: So this is one of the concepts that we have on the table right now showing to the community. This is obviously a rocket themed playground and this is the other option, which is for smaller kids or younger kids, I should say, and it has more colorful things, but it's not as involved as the other one. We're also, as part of this project, we are replacing the shade canopy that's on there, that you can see on that rendering. And the indoor playground, the soft contained concept; we are going to be replacing what's there, and we are also replacing the cord in place rubberized flooring.

Mayor Cason: Have you already looked, do you already have some providers in mind? I think I mentioned a year or so ago, the incredible playground equipment they have in San Diego, some really, really good stuff. I just wonder if you'll take a look at that as you move forward and see if that fits in with your plans.

Mr. Torres: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: You know on the indoor playground space that you have there, now are the balls and all that stuff, you know there are lights up there; the lights are never on, its dark in that space. You are going to redo the lighting?

Mr. Couceyro: Yes, we are going to look at that. And one of the things is to make sure we construct it, so you can get access to the light, which is also an issue.

Commissioner Keon: Is a problem, right.

Mr. Couceyro: Yes – absolutely.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mr. Torres: This would be, I guess number 4 on the list. This is improvement to the courtyard and to the dance floor, dance room and theater auditorium. We are going to be replacing, removing 18 large Royal Palms and replacing them with “Cabbage” Palms, basically they are tearing up the concrete. We are also going to be removing the concrete that’s cracked and raised and we are going to be replacing those areas with pavers, new planted areas. We are going to be installing a trench drain in front of the front entrance of the gym area, which is along this face of the wall, because the area is flooding, essentially everything is flooding to that area. Instead of fight it, which is going to allow the water to come in and drain through a trench drain connected to the other underground structures.

Mayor Cason: Would we be able to save those trees and plant them elsewhere?

Mr. Torres: The 18 Palm trees – I believe the plan is to replace them on other park properties.

Commissioner Keon: They are beautiful.

Commissioner Slesnick: Are you going to have any shade there once you take the palms out, because it’s a very open, wide, sunny area?

Mr. Torres: Well, I mean the palms don’t really grow much right now, but we are going to have “Cabbage” Palms, which are a lot smaller and the shade is...

Commissioner Slesnick: You are putting “Cabbage” Palms in there?

Mr. Torres: Yes. So to answer your question in terms of shade, it’s not a whole lot right now.

Mr. Couceyro: We have begun installing some picnic tables and umbrellas, and will continue as we go through some budget cycles, we are going to continue to add and have more umbrella shaded areas there, in addition to the pavilions that are there right now.

Commissioner Slesnick: The covered area is staying there right?

Mr. Couceyro: Sure, the pavilions are staying.

Mr. Torres: There was the question, Fred maybe you can talk about this right now. The idea of replacing, removing the concrete that's in the courtyard and replacing it with artificial turf.

Mr. Couceyro: This was an idea. If you look at the middle of the courtyard, just the concrete is to maybe have a synthetic artificial grass surface; kind of you can actually make it an active site. It will become a better event area or play area, more than it's used now. We do have the ability to use that, and we thought it would be an aesthetic improvement; you can really engage that plaza and make it an activity space, so that's something to consider. It wasn't in the original scope; it would require additional funds, but something we wanted to share to see as a possibility.

Commissioner Keon: That's the interior courtyard.

Mr. Couceyro: Yes, the interior courtyard. If you would leave where the trees are now as the concrete barrier, that would be the barrier and everything inside would be like a turf, so you can do movies on the quad, you can do activities, you can have small size games with the smaller children. They would actually really engage that plaza space, which right now, we use it for some court sports, but that's about it. There is a ping-pong table, some tethered ball, but you can maybe engage and have more activity.

Commissioner Slesnick: Did you say there is drainage in the middle of that area?

Mr. Couceyro: Yes. You could still just like any other; you'd have to do the drainage like you would any field.

Commissioner Slesnick: That's a great idea, because right now nobody seems to use it. It's open and it's hot and reflects the heat, and it's not very appealing.

Mr. Torres: Moving along to the repairs at the auditorium. We are going to be replacing the wood flooring and the stage; there is also some carpet, all the carpet in the space is going to be replaced. We are changing out the audio-visual and sound and lighting equipment, we are essentially designing a whole new system, and we are also adding a projection or control booth at the end of the room, so that we can get rid of what you see here, this sort of makeshift temporary stuff and cables all over the place. On the dance floor and the dance classroom, we are going to be putting a new vinyl dance flooring material and specially designed to – its non-slip and it's great for dances, it's kind of like the top of the line product out there.

Commissioner Keon: Is that the gymnastics room?

Mr. Couceyro: No. That is right next to the fitness center, it's that fitness room that exercise room. We had flooring, we just pulled it up, it's the vinyl flooring, it was 19 years old so we need to replace it.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Commissioner the picture is mirrored so it gives this impression that it's really a huge room, but you are seeing the reflection of the mirror.

Commissioner Keon: That's what I was saying, what room is that?

Commissioner Slesnick: This is upstairs, right?

Mr. Couceyro: This is upstairs right next to the fitness center.

Mr. Torres: Numbers five and six are roofing repairs. What we are doing in this phase, essentially we are going to be removing and replacing all the flashings and all the flat belt roofing systems on the building, the main building, and replacing them with new. We are going to be addressing some parapet wall leaks, and we are also going to be replacing the Styrofoam...you can see a picture of it here. This is basically just Styrofoam with some stucco on it...they call it. It's going to be replaced with cast stone, which should last, and we are also going to be replacing the lighting protection system that right now it's missing air terminal in there, and this is pretty typical up there. There are more pictures of the current state of the cornis; you can see that birds love it. OK. So that was for the flat roof areas, and then the other project, the final one, number six, is for the clay tile roofs in the main building. Same deal here. There are a lot of broken tiles. We are not going to be reroofing all the roof tile area, because a lot of them are OK, they just need to be repaired, so it would be spot repairs. Some leaks that had been reported previously had already been fixed by City forces, so really this is more of an aesthetic fix. This is another item for consideration. We did not include it in the reroofing of the clay tile roofs, the reroofing of the clay tile roof at the concessions or at the fieldhouse, and the little storage room over here. We are proposing to replace the toilet accessories, the faucets, the countertops, a lot of rust going on there, and of course the doors. What's going on there, these doors are just rolled down and grills, so it's open to the environment inside, and water, and wind-driven rain comes in and who knows what critters might come in as well, so we are proposing to replace those with solid doors to help that out.

Commissioner Lago: What type of lighting do you have in those bathrooms right now?

Mr. Torres: I'm sorry.

Commissioner Lago: What type of lighting do you have in those bathrooms right now?

Mr. Torres: It's not very good right now. There is a lot of indirect lighting, you can see it here, but it's all yellowed out. It needs a little facelift.

Commissioner Lago: So you are keeping that lighting system in place or you are going to be...

Mr. Torres: We are probably going to be replacing the light fixtures.

Commissioner Lago: With what type of fixtures? LED?

Mr. Torres: Perhaps. We push for LED.

Commissioner Keon: The right answer is LED. (Laughter)

Commissioner Lago: The right answer is LED.

Mr. Torres: The answer is yes.

[Laughter]

Mr. Couceyro: One thing to consider, there is a project that was funded in the next budget year for some Youth Center improvement items that are outside of this scope, and the main portion of that is the gymnastic equipment. Once we fix the roof of that area, we are going to replace quite a bit of the gymnastic equipment, including the spring four, and the carpet, and the mats, and the equipment.

Commissioner Lago: Is that bathroom ADA (Americans for Disability Act) compliant?

Mr. Couceyro: I think it is. It was when we constructed it.

Commissioner Lago: Just make sure because if you are going to start doing some touchups to the bathroom you may exceed the threshold and you may be forced to comply with the latest codes.

Mr. Couceyro: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: They were at the time.

Mr. Couceyro: They were at the time, in 1997.

Commissioner Keon: When they were built they were ADA. I don't know if it's changed.

Mr. Couceyro: Well it was actually in 1995. The field was built a couple of years before the building, so '95 it was compliant.

Commissioner Keon: So when is the gymnastics equipment, when is that budgeted for?

Mr. Couceyro: The budgeting in the CIP (Capital Improvement) program was for the 2016-2017 year, so the funds are available in October. We don't want to replace the equipment until the roof has been replaced.

Commissioner Keon: OK. You need to redo the roof.

Mr. Couceyro: Correct.

Mayor Cason: When will all this be done that you just described?

Mr. Torres: Numbers one through six, I believe David, that's all this summer?

Mr. Galeano: We have until December to finish one through six.

Mayor Cason: By December.

Mr. Torres: Yes – December, one through six, that's correct.

Mr. Couceyro: Now there could be a delay in some of that with the change in the playground specifications. That might take a little extra time, it might not. I don't want to say December when we haven't gotten new designs yet.

Commissioner Keon: OK. Why do you use steel? I noticed all of the, a lot of the railings and everything was steel and they rusted, as opposed to raw aluminum?

Mr. Torres: So your question is why...

Commissioner Keon: Why was – are we replacing steel out there that's all rusted with aluminum, so that it doesn't rust?

Mr. Torres: There have been some grills that have already been replaced in aluminum, so we are following suit on that.

Commissioner Keon: So you are going to replace them with aluminum?

Mr. Torres: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, OK.

Mr. Couceyro: We are going to get rid of the wrought iron and go with aluminum.

Commissioner Keon: Yes, and go with aluminum. They look terrible.

Mayor Cason: Great. Thank you. That was great.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you very, very much. There was a discussion at some point about the ability to be able to sign up for classes, and sign up for everything online, when do we think that we'll be able to do all that too with recreation?

Mr. Couceyro: Online for our classes? We have online capabilities now.

Commissioner Keon: But we don't use them.

Mr. Couceyro: No, we do.

Commissioner Lago: I think what you are talking about is...

Commissioner Keon: To register.

Commissioner Lago: Were you visited by a young gentleman who, I think he talked to you about potentially incorporating the app system for tennis.

Mr. Couceyro: That's for tennis.

Commissioner Keon: Well that's for tennis, no, I know that. But, I know for a lot of the programs, parents are online, they are signing up children for programs, because you can't do it online. For gymnastics you can't go online and sign up children for gymnastics.

Mr. Couceyro: We have certain programs because there are certain requirements. Like for gymnastics there has to be, there are different levels, so you have to get the approval of the contractor. For some of them there are some age requirements, so we need the proof. Once the age proof is established, we do have online capabilities.

Commissioner Keon: I only know that being there, I take my granddaughter...

Mr. Couceyro: Sure.

Commissioner Keon: So, the first time you gave them the certificate, the birth certificate and whatever else, but you still every time you have to go to the desk to register for the next class, and I'd how come we can't do this online, and they told me its not available online. Maybe you'll check on that.

Mr. Couceyro: I will check on that, and I will get back to you on that.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mr. Couceyro: Sure.

[End: 2:49:45 p.m.]