

**City of Coral Gables City Commission
Agenda Item H-3
September 23, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Jim Cason
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Patricia Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada**

City Staff

**Acting Interim City Manager, Cynthia Birdsill
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Interim Police Chief, Ed Hudak**

H-3 [Start: 11:40:30 AM]

Update and action plan from the Interim Chief of Police

Mayor Cason: All right, we're going to recommence. We're going to move to item -- agenda item H-3, which is a report from our interim Police Chief, Ed Hudak, on strategy he's implementing and results and anything else you'd like to tell us about the crime situation in Coral Gables today. Chief.

Interim Chief Ed Hudak: Good morning, Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to address you. In talking with the City Manager's Office, we probably feel that, as your schedules on the agendas permit, we probably want to keep you ongoing. On the 12th day, which is my 12th day here, I think we've made some big progresses on what we're going to do as far as

changing the culture of the Police Department, not necessarily be the protectors of the community, but to become part of the community. I think the officers from that night on the 11th, in talking with them, we've moved forward. I think the team, my team, we're starting to move forward with some of the initiatives and the directives that come forward, that you mentioned. So attached to the agenda item is my report to the Interim City Manager. I believe you all were copied on it as part of the agenda package. And just some of the things that have come up in the last, I can go 24 hours; I can go 12 days. And I know last night, I notified you all. And this is just some of the success stories of us getting back out in the community. I know I sent you all, through the Manager's Office, one of our arrests, and this is kind of what we're seeing more frequently from the officers; the young lady that we talked about, that we arrested for two residential burglaries last night. What I didn't get to explain to you is that what's working within the community is somebody called us at about 10 o'clock in the morning that saw her being suspicious, which is what we're imploring the residents to do; call us and we will come. We stopped the lady. We got field interrogation card, which was just knowing that she's in the area. However, the officers, both unmarked and marked from all different facets of the Department, continued to follow her and watched her attempt to break into two homes. And when the "get-away driver" came up, they arrested both of them. The rest of it was actually in my briefing to you all through the Manager's Office as far as what transpired from there. We've arrested her for the two counts of burglary. The individual who came into the residence or that came in to pick her up also was arrested for outstanding felony warrants from other jurisdictions. So as I said, the night on the 11th is, we're going to continue to find a balance within the community and using the technology that we have. In working with the Manager's Office in some of the things that we have done, the Paz -- and we will come forward to you. This is something that we started in 2008, looking at it. -- Technology. We've got everybody on the same page. In working with management and procurement, we're about to streamline our scheduling, our paperwork and this is going to be across the board to help get us -- administer -- reduce our administrative time for our officers, so that's one of the software things that'll be in the near future. As I said in the memorandum, Friday afternoon, after taking over the position, Major Padroso and I met, along with the rest of the members of senior staff, and we permanently assigned officers on the day and afternoon shift into the neighborhoods to build that kind of

rapport with the neighbors to know what's going on in their neighborhoods. We're going to further expound on that. You know, I believe that we need to be out in the community. As I told you, we're going to be out in the community. I'm going to meet with as many groups as I can, going forward to preach our message, and so five or six or seven crime watch meetings-plus, and we're going to be accessible. We also believe that we're having accountability mechanisms put in place on area checks, so if somebody does claim that they haven't seen an officer, I'm going to be able to answer that "yes" or "no," not with an excuse, but using our technology on sound dispatch. If an officer is in an area and they check out on that, we're going to know where they're at by looking at the computer. And as we continue to do that, if there's a question, as has been raised in some of the community meetings, we're going to know who's there, we're going to be able to ask, you know, what was going on at that time to help us better deploy of what we need to do, depending on where the issues are. The other thing that we're doing is we're going -- we've had the Burglary Task Force continuing, as the interim Manager told you that night. We've been able to, and I think this is huge for us to move some of that vacant position salary into a line item overtime for the Burglary Task Force. I believe in the transparency of our financials is through the Manager's ideas. We're going to be able to put that money into an item that's only going to be approved for the Burglary Task Force. We've had a big number of people working day shift. We're eventually going to transition those back to the other shifts because, looking at our cost analysis, we can finally do a better job. We also have to juggle the traffic issues as far as what's going on. Some of the technology we have. I know we get a lot of traffic issues. We used to use the trailers, the big speed trailers. I wasn't born at night, so the reality is, I know people are going to slow down when they see those. However, we've purchased two of what we call the "Black Box Recorders" that are totally insignificant. They attach to trees. And now we can do a better job of getting a true issue of what's going on in people's neighborhoods, and that's been a big citizens' complaint on the traffic issues. You put the sign up; everybody's going to slow down, and I don't disagree with that. This technology that we've gotten in the last - - I would say the last two weeks, as the motorcycle and traffic officer gets changed, we're going to start to deploy those as well. The one thing that we started to talk about is our, and this is where you're probably going to realize when I said I was going to be the face that's ugly, is we are working with the Manager's Office with a strategic plan to get the information out, and I

believe we are going in the right direction to immediately release. We're trying to do it as fast as we can. Last night the press release that you had also had a YouTube clip. In working with Mrs. Higgins-Fallon through the Manager's Office, we're getting the information out faster. What we want to do and what my long-term plans are is to engage more of the community people that live here to put a recognizable face, both in Spanish and English, on Channel 77 on our website to continue to give these crime tips. Because I believe as people scan through our channel and as they're watching it, if you see someone of notoriety talking about whether they've been victimized or not to give that message out, I think that's going to get people alert. The other thing we are going to start doing, and I mentioned this before, is we're going to start doing regular PSAs (Public Service Announcements). So with that, I just would like to turn your attention to the monitors and hopefully I'm on the same page with them and you'll be able to watch one of our first PAs [sic]. Now, this is a rough, but it's going to go out so.

Note for the record: At this time, an audio visual presentation was had.

Interim Chief Hudak: Now, (UNINTELLIGIBLE) every kind of (UNINTELLIGIBLE) tips, so last night, as we put that out, we're working on doing another one right now as far as at home, locking your doors, because some of these residents were actually occupied when this lady was trying to get in, so there's other tips that we're going to put out. And I think we continue to put these out on a regular basis, and obviously, find somebody else to do the intros and exits that's probably a little bit more appeasing, physically. Just a few other things that we actually touched on is I'm going to recommend, through the Manager's Office, and we did have a conversation, because I know it was brought up, about the Blue Ribbon Committee. I don't believe that my office or I need a group to tell me how to do it. I think we need to do something from everything. I think the CWAC, which was the Citywide Anti-Crime Committee, was very important. I understand why it sunsetted. I believe that's way for you all to have input on how we're doing it. We can report back to your representatives. So I know the City Clerk has actually given me the documentation. I've talked with the City Manager's Office as well, as far as formalizing that back to you all and giving us some accountability there. Again, I can't stress enough, our biggest task right now, and probably my biggest priority administratively, is we

have to hire not just officers, because I believe the allocation that the Manager's Office has made to use that overtime until those positions are filled is one thing. Communications operators, the ones that answer the phones, and our record's clerks are something that we're working on together. Some of the issues in the last six days is I have met with the City Attorney's Office, our labor counsel, the City Manager's Office, to address some of the outstanding labor issues that have come up as far as the discipline. I believe, as the City Attorney will probably report to you and the Manager's Office, we will have a lot of those issues taken care of, I would say, within the next two or three weeks. The other issue we had, which was a great concern, is the MRAP. As I've told the Manager's Office, we're removing at this time the request for that FAF account. We're re-evaluating that. I met with the Fire Chief to look at how we're going to use that secondary -- that second MRAP to go forward. Again, I think there was some disinformation out there about what it's going to be used for on both sides. And as the clarification from yesterday, I actually did a story with one of the local reporters and gave them my views on, you know, for the money we spend, if we can save a life or rescue somebody in a hurricane-type situation; however, as I reiterated to him, you're not going to see an MRAP going down Miracle Mile if we have a civil disturbance. That's for something if somebody's taking fire, you know, and I just don't anticipate that. I think the reality of us using it for a hurricane is a lot more. I will tell you, I could not have imagined the response that I've gotten in the first few days of what the officers had done and my staff has done. I believe we're all getting right on board about pulling in the same direction. Another thing I'm humbled by is now being interim director is the help that I've gotten from the other departments and the Manager's Office has been overwhelming. I don't sleep much, but that's okay, because I think we need to get our message out. So with that I'll open...

Mayor Cason: Well, I think it's very refreshing to have you here. We hope you come back at least -- if you can, everybody meeting and give us an update, anything that you think we need to know so we can respond to the constituents. Don't forget the Smart Water in your briefs, because I think that's -- and put that material on your valuables so that people can -- you have a better chance of getting those things back.

Interim Chief Hudak: Right. I'm actually having meeting with the Smart Water people this week. It's on my calendar to meet with them as well. I wasn't part of those briefings early on, so I expect to get up to speed on that, and if we're going to continue along those lines, because we have seen an uptick in a request for Smart Water over the last two weeks.

Mayor Cason: Great. And also, to the extent that you can get people out of the car and so maybe even some of the gated neighborhoods and ride around on a bike and maybe knock on three doors every day and say, "I am your local beat cop. That's me. Here's my number," whatever, that would be helpful.

Interim Chief Hudak: Yeah. I'm hearing more and more that the officers, I think they're engaged in the community, which has been my mantra to them is that, you know, we touch every cop, every person if we asked them -- if I asked you to think about every interaction you had with a police officer, you could probably remember, whether it was a ticket, something stolen. And as I told the officers from day one, you're -- this person's going to remember you for the rest of their lives; you have to make it a positive impact, and I think we're going in that direction with the officers, because I mean, our deployment hasn't changed much over the last month. We have a lot of people out there. But during those roll calls, I get more comments now about what's the big blue truck doing? It's just a roll call. It's a briefing. And I believe that is a deterrent, which we can't quantify, but I believe there's a lot more people seeing us out there. I think the stories that are coming out are positive ones, and I think the officers are fully engaged. As again, I want to become part of community, not just protectors of the community.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Well, I have a few comments for you and a few questions. Have we followed up in regards to lead online? Are we going to use that software?

Interim Chief Hudak: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Are we going to go in a different direction?

Interim Chief Hudak: No, we're not necessarily going in a different direction.

Commissioner Lago: OK.

Interim Chief Hudak: What we have right now is we have a demo going on right now with something else that was in the pipeline.

Commissioner Lago: OK.

Interim Chief Hudak: When that's done, then I'm going to report back to you, all through the Manager's Office, about where we're going.

Commissioner Lago: OK, a few things. Number one, I'm not asking for hard numbers, but I mean, I've heard and I've seen obviously a significant amount of police presence in the neighborhoods, which, you know, the residents are extremely happy. I've gotten a lot of phone calls about that, complimenting the Commission, which we should be complimenting you and your staff, which doing an incredible job, the Majors that are here. I will tell you a personal story that happened to me that I thought basically defines what the Mayor is saying. We're in the process of doing Baptist Health Day, second year. Last year we did Saint Mary's Baptist Church, and then this year we're going to do the Cooper Park. Baptist Hospital and Doctor's Hospital are going to donate the funds to revitalize that entire project. That entire park this year, that's going to be the project for November. I don't dress as a Commissioner. I don't wear my shirt. The officer that happened to stop, he did exactly what I feel what the Mayor stated is essential, and what I think we fell off at a certain point and we weren't doing as an organization. This individual I think his name is Rogers -- Roger.

Interim Chief Hudak: Officer Steve Rogers.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. He, in McFarland, stopped; there was about five of us having a meeting at 9 in the morning, 9, 9:15; staff from Baptist Hospital, myself, and some of the facilities from Doctor's Hospital. He stopped. He asked what was going on. I introduced myself. One of the individuals introduced me as Commissioner Lago. "Oh, wow. I never had the pleasure of meeting you." You know, we had a quick discussion, and I thanked him for instead of just driving by, he stopped, got out of his car, made it a point to introduce himself, and I think that is crucial. The neighbors noticed that. So there was about four or five neighbors at front Cooper Park. You know, they came out. They noticed that. And that type of presence is a game changer, in my opinion. I think it's essential, and I think it just shows, you know, we're going to make the difference in reference to the lives of the residents here, and I think that's crucial. Another thing that I'm very grateful for was the fact that I saw you last night at the public meeting at Saint Augustine's Church. The residents were extremely grateful not only to see the staff that was there in reference to the traffic circle, but also the fact that you were there and you briefed them. I've spoken to my neighbors. They're happy about the arrest. They're happy about, from what I've seen, a reduction in burglaries and crime. I mean, over the last, you know, two weeks. Can we talk a little bit about that? I mean, what are we seeing?.

Interim Chief Hudak: Yeah, we can. We're going to continue to send you all, and this goes back to the statistical data we talked about. I mean, I met with our records area yesterday, and we are going to continue to unify one report that shows everything that we track. We are not ever going to get into the discussion again about our UCRs versus FDLE (Federal Department of Law Enforcement), because it's different numbers. So we are going to have a written policy on how we put that out.

Commissioner Lago: Let me tell you, one of the individuals that pulled me aside at yesterday's public meeting, told me, you know, "That's exactly what we need." We need to be able to have access on a monthly basis to basically say, "OK, how much car burglaries? How many home invasions? How many this? How many that? You know, the crime broken down simply in a way that everybody can understand it and see that either we're progressing or we're not moving in the right direction.

Interim Chief Hudak: And I had a meeting with the Miami Herald last week to discuss just this. And I as I told you all the night of my appointment, I'm not going to talk about anybody else's numbers. It's just, it would be disingenuous for me and not transparent. I can't describe what parameters or filters were put on those numbers. At the end of it, when the UCRs come out, will be the only time that I would stand in front of you and the Manager's Office and say, this is our report card. So this is how we did compared nationally apples to apples, but because we drill down so much and because we look at every category, when we do the comp stat-like meetings, which we're going to continue every Wednesday, you all will continue to get what we're looking at, what the Police Department is looking at as far as targeting. Yes, I believe dramatically our numbers were down, OK, our incidents were down, and that wasn't just because we've been out there. I think there's been some great case work by the SIT Team. I think there's been some great follow-up. There's been some arrests outside of our jurisdiction. Again, I'm going back to the balance, and we have to do both. We can't do one or the other, because I don't think that's worked. We can't quantify what the deterrent is by having marked units out there. However, if it makes the civilians, it makes the visitors, it makes the residents feel better, then that's what we need to do. So I believe our numbers are down, but I'm not going to claim a success. This is an ongoing process for years. And as we look to the future in some of those strategic planning is, as the downtown grows up because of this Commission's action, we need to look at how we're going to address that five years down the line, of how we're going to change and I will come back to you all with my recommendations, what it is. Right now, the Manager's Office and what was put in place, the Burglary Task Force, which Major Pedroso started up when he was the acting before this, has been a success. My next challenge this week is to transition that back where we're going to continue using the money to fill in those slots of where we're going to put people and pay that overtime, because we have vacancies specifically looking for those burglary-type crimes that affect everybody.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: You know, let me just say a couple words. First of all, I went to the crime

watch meeting. The Mayor happened to be there that you were at. I think probably your last one. And let me tell you. That was a heck of a show that you all put on. That was very good. And anybody there was extremely grateful for your thought processes as you brought some of your staff with you, and it was just very, very helpful, and I want to commend you for that. I think it would be important for us to know how the hiring process is going through this whole -- these efforts that -- you know, that we are instilling so that we know we have an accurate gauge on where we stand as far as police officers. That needs to be factored in retirements or any other things needs to be factored in so we get a really, really good idea of where we are, our staff is at. And let me just say one last thing. If at some point you need more police officers, that's when you need to come back to us and make those requests. Because again, as we stated when we had this meeting here, we always want to provide the Police Department with as much resources as possible to make it effective.

Interim Chief Hudak: And when we are staffed, both civilian and sworn, and we can do an analysis of what we have full staff, and that's giving a one or two position delay -- then I will come back to you and make recommendations. Right now, I think in working with the first meetings that we had with the HR Director and the Manager's Office, we're looking at trying to broaden the pull that we can get to; we're looking at some recruiting incentives that we have to, because we're not lowering our standards. We may change something to get a bigger pool of candidates, and I probably shouldn't use that after everything today, but that's what we need to do as well. We need to look at the best, good candidates we can. So we're going to make some changes. I really want to put in some programs, and we've talked about this already, like we used to do to have our officers, to have our employees bring people in that are like-minded in what we're looking for as far as policing, so we're going to look for some benefits, some rewards-type things that we're going forward. So we're going to go that is our priority. I mean, our priority is to make people feel safe and be out there. The second most exigent circumstance for me inside is we have to retain who we have. In a long-term process, in looking at the DROP (Deferred Retirement Option Plans) program, we're going to be able to project out. Commissioner Lago asked for a report, which because of a lot of the temporary moves and temporary assignments and the boots on the ground. I haven't had that answer yet, but I expect

to have it in the next week, and that will be distributed through the Manager's Office as well, as I can tell you where everybody's at, and that's going to be some of the readjusting. Again, I'm going to tweak things in the department. I have to tweak things in the department to continue on what my vision is, but that's going to be shared with all of you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK. And one last thing is the committee. I think, if staff could go ahead and circulate out how the committee, how it was allocated last time, because I think it may have been in zones. Did we have the --?

Interim Chief Hudak: Well actually, my recollection was, it was Commissioners appointed from different areas of the City, and then they would have quarterly meetings, and again, would report back to you; would be just like another board.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Right.

Interim Chief Hudak: And we moved it around the City at different times.

Ms. Birdsill: If I recall, there were 12 members. So each member of the Commission appointed two and the City Manager appointed two.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Correct.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Mr. Leen: May I say something here? Have you determined yet how you're going to establish that committee? Because there as you said, there used to be when I talked to the City Clerk. My view with that committee is that you could simply rescind the prior resolution dissolving it and you could reestablish it.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Mr. Leen: So it wouldn't necessarily have to be done by ordinance.

Mayor Cason: Just let us know.

Mr. Leen: ...have to be done by ordinance, this could be done by resolution, in my opinion.

Mayor Cason: Let us know for our next meeting. Chief, one other thing, since this is going to come up later, I wanted to get your views now so you don't have to stay around for it, but the alarm, connecting the alarms directly. Do you feel any risk that without a filter for your alarm companies that you could get overwhelmed by calls? I know we're taking away the penalty for the first call -- first four false alarms, but can you handle direct alarm calls to you?

Interim Chief Hudak: I believe we can. I think, what it does and depending on how we dispatch those as a direct connect -- right now, for the business owners, that comes right to us, and our dispatcher then tells us, so we immediately have the closest unit in the area respond. I do not believe we are going to be impacted by these alarms, because if they contact us first, they have about seven minutes max, based on our response times, to contact the homeowner to cancel us. And if we have not arrived at an alarm and somebody cancels us, which is their prerogative, then there is no charge, there is no penalty assessed, and there is no false alarm call. I mean, so that's what we do. I don't believe it's going to be an issue. If it's foul weather, our protocols change or we do drive-bys, in lightning storms or things like that; and then we go back afterwards, which could take hours, to check those businesses, but, you know, we do take the weather conditions into effect as well.

Mayor Cason: Yeah. I've noticed that if you get a lightening spike or something, bam, off goes the alarm; you get a call from the alarm company; you're not around to pick it up, it's --

Interim Chief Hudak: Right. And we've done this in the past. Some supervisors and some shift commanders, you know, they take two officers, put them in one car, and then we just take the

alarm and we go by as soon as the weather clears, which takes us longer, but we just want to make sure there wasn't anything during that time period, but we go by immediately. I mean, it becomes an officer safety issue at the time.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Anything else?

Commissioner Keon: I have one question with regard to Marine Patrol. I've heard from a number of residents or different people, that because of the canopies or whatever there are on the boats that we use, that they're not able to get up all the way in the canals or whatever, and I think -- I don't really understand exactly how you deploy the Marine Patrol and is it necessary that they be able to get under all of the bridges on the canal? Is it an effective way of, you know, patrolling? I understand, you know, in some of the communities that are right on the water, where there are no bridges and they're widely opened, they're very effective. But on a couple of the waterways where we have a number of canals and, I guess, going into Cocoplum and whatever else, you know, do you use Marine Patrol? Is that the function of the Marine Patrol? Is that the purpose of them? I mean, are they able to get up the canals or whatever and maybe you could just look into it and talk about, you know, the role that the Marine Patrol plays in the patrolling of the waterways and those sorts of things, because I keep hearing they can't get up there because of either the covers or the canopies on them or --

Interim Chief Hudak: The Bimini tops.

Commissioner Keon: The different things -- the Bimini tops and whatever. And, you know, if we're going to use them, do we have the right kinds of boats and whatever? And you can come back. You don't have to answer that now.

Interim Chief Hudak: OK. Well, I mean, I can.

Commissioner Keon: But maybe you could come back to us on it.

Interim Chief Hudak: There's one boat that -- there's one both that we have and there's two Bimini tops that are permanent. We do have two other boats. We have a Jon boat and we have another Contender with a Bimini top can be brought down, and they can make it all the way up to the Biltmore, which we use on the Fourth of July. So yes, they are up there constantly. If we get, you know, wake issues, manatee issues.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Interim Chief Hudak: They can get up there.

Commissioner Keon: OK. So we have two that can't, but we have two that do?

Interim Chief Hudak: That's correct.

Commissioner Keon: And those two that do and can get under any bridge in the City --

Interim Chief Hudak: We can put everything down and they can get -- high tides permitting and low tides permitting, but they can get through all of that.

Commissioner Keon: Right. OK. And I guess maybe you could just check and see if we do that.

Interim Chief Hudak: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: OK. And would you just look into that and --

Interim Chief Hudak: Absolutely.

Commissioner Keon: -- let us know? And is it effective? I mean, it may not be effective --

Interim Chief Hudak: I do believe it is. I think --

Commissioner Keon: Our deployment of your personnel, I wouldn't know that; you would.

Interim Chief Hudak: I mean, I think it's like --

Commissioner Keon: You would be able to tell us.

Interim Chief Hudak: I think it's like everything else, you know, in the community-based aspect that we're going, I mean the south end and people have boats and property on the water, they want to see those officers as well. That's why we have a Marine Patrol. So we do -- you know, it's all 46 linear miles of our waterways because we have to get up there. And, you know, going forward, when we're fully staffed, I think there's some replenishment that we can do as far as positions are concerned.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Interim Chief Hudak: Right now we have two boats that can get up there. You know, obviously, you know, maintenance and things like that play into consideration, but every time we've needed them, you know, our assistance on the waters, on the bay...

Commissioner Keon: Right. Is -- yeah, absolutely.

Interim Chief Hudak: ...is there. And, you know --

Commissioner Keon: I mean, I know during lobster season and all those times.

Interim Chief Hudak: Right.

Commissioner Keon: And during the holiday time.

Interim Chief Hudak: But we do have a presence.

Commissioner Keon: My question really dealt more with the opportunity to patrol those waterways and the fact that you do have two boats and do we do that and is it an appropriate deployment of...

Interim Chief Hudak: Absolutely.

Commissioner Keon: ...personnel and do we have the people to do it? That's fine. Maybe you could just look into that.

Interim Chief Hudak: We're short-staffed on Marine Patrol right now.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Interim Chief Hudak: And I think, eventually, once we get passed this and we start hiring people, I expect to put them back to full staff, but they do have the ability to patrol up all the waterways.

Commissioner Keon: OK. I hear that that we're not doing that, so maybe you can just check into that.

Interim Chief Hudak: A big part of that is staffing issues --

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Interim Chief Hudak: -- but I'll continue to make sure we direct those as well.

Commissioner Keon: OK, fine. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Chief, thank you very much.

Interim Chief Hudak: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you for coming.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mayor Cason: We're looking forward to seeing you.

Commissioner Lago: Good work.