

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item J-1
December 5, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parking Director, Kevin Kinney

Public Speaker(s)

Mark Lemon, Vice President of Business Development Block by Block

Agenda Item J-1 [12:43:52 p.m.]

Introduction of Block by Block Project Manager Adrian Garcia and daily maintenance program for Miracle Mile and the 100 Block of Giralda

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We go to J-1, Block by Block project.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor and members of the Commission, one of the things that critically important for streetscape is, as it's completed that it stays clean, it stays swept, it stays scrubbed and so the City worked through Procurement to look at piggyback contracts and Block by Block is a company that serves over 100 cities in the country, mostly through Business Improvement Districts. Business Improvement District was not interested in evolving to a clean and safe where they would be responsible for the cleaning for Giralda 100 Block and Miracle Mile, the streetscape area. So you allowed us to increase the parking fees in the downtown to help pay for a daily maintenance and cleaning plan for the streetscape area of

Miracle Mile as well as the restaurant row, the 100 Block of Giralda. So Kevin Kinney, the Parking Director is responsible or will be responsible for the program and he wanted to introduce the team that will be making it sparkle.

Director Kinney: First, I just wanted to let you know that finally on Friday we fully completed and executed the contract, so they actually are Block by Block is now our contractor to maintain the streets, the two new streets. This is Mark Lemon; he is the Vice President of Business Development for Block by Block nationwide and I just asked him to share a little bit with you of their mission and how they see their partnership with Coral Gables. We have, just to let you know, interviewed a couple of the candidates for the operations manager here locally, that person should be hired within the next week and they will be on site actually working – Mark Lemon.

Mr. Lemon: Thank you and thanks for the kinds words. Actually Coral Gables will be our hundredth account in the United States, so we are very excited about that. Block by Block is a nationwide provider of clean and safe services. We have programs in Hawaii and Honolulu and Wy Ki Ki, we even have a program in Fargo, but most of our programs are in the \$700,000 dollar range, a couple of ambassadors. We do Beverly Hills, Santa Monica; we have four accounts here in South Florida, including Hollywood, Coconut Grove, Lincoln Road and Downtown Miami. So we are very excited to be working with you. Our company has a motto of hire for service and train for skill, so we call all of our programs ambassador programs, so even though this will be a maintenance contract the people out there will be in very nicely developed uniforms, they will be engaging with the public. They are expected to know all the restaurants in the area, all their directions, offer advice to anybody, but at the end of the day this is about maintaining the investment that you've created on Miracle Mile, and so our primary goal will be removing trash, picking up litter, we will be power washing. We will make sure that any trash can that is overflowing is picked up and removed, but anything that's basically done to maintain the streetscape is what we will do and we will also be bringing some national best practices to the table. So as you are getting to know certain aspects of the street and how the litter is being generated, we will introduce things like how to remove gum on the sidewalk, we have some proactive measures; cigarette butts, we actually have a program where we can recycle cigarette butts and turn them into industrial plastics; and we also want to be your partner in this and as you introduce more and more elements, we've seen almost every type of infrastructure across the United States. We can tell you what works in Florida, what doesn't work in Florida, maybe this product is better in some places than others, but we want to be your partner with that because we've experienced it all over the United States. So I know, I didn't want to take up a lot of your time, but I'm happy to answer any questions you have about Block by Block and go from there.

Commissioner Lago: Quick question.

Mr. Lemon: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: My biggest concern – the people that are going to be working for your company servicing the City of Coral Gables, are they your employees or are they subcontracts?

Mr. Lemon: They are our employees, we do not do subcontract.

Commissioner Lago: I'm happy to hear that. So you are going to be hiring people here to work in Coral Gables.

Mr. Lemon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: It's going to be the same people over and over again on the Mile.

Mr. Lemon: We don't share employees across accounts. We want them to be dedicated to the area; it creates buyer-ship and ownership of the area.

Commissioner Lago: Because I want to make sure that these people who are working on site know the lay of the land and that when they start speaking to some of the business owners, they can kind of build that relationship with them, it's important to know what the problems are, if we are dealing with, let's say certain areas that are continuing to be a problem that they can be addressed. If we bring somebody new on site, they are learning every single day.

Mr. Lemon: So they are dedicated. We also have a reporting system; all of our ambassadors will carry iPhones, so to your point about businesses we actually have a business contact system. We encourage all of our ambassadors to make at least two or three business contacts a day, not to be annoying, but to say, hey how is everything going?- is there anything we can do better?- is there an issue?- and if there is an issue, we can flag it for follow-up for somebody to address.

Commissioner Lago: And my last point. Can you make sure that your team provides the City, the City Manager or the Commission, obviously through the City Manager, I want to make sure that if you have any ideas of how we can be better, because just because we just spent all this money on our downtown, if you see certain things that could be better – inefficient that are maybe not providing good quality of service that people deserve tell us.

Mr. Lemon: Absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: If we have certain plants that keep dying and we keep replanting them over and over again, let's not plant those trees, let's go to some that are more resilient.

Mr. Lemon: Sure. That's all the type of sets that we want to provide. We kind of pride ourselves of being an ideas company.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much – great project.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can you contact the shop owners to wash their windows?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And we added a component that was important too and that's the safety component, can you speak to that?

Mr. Lemon: Yes. So we operate clean, safe hospitality and outreach program, so our safety ambassador program will during the evening hours we can do walking patrols, we can do safety escorts for people to and from their cars. We'll have a hotline number that will be for maintenance and safety issues that if you have any kind of thing, if you want to be met in a parking lot and walk to a business, you can call that number and that will be available.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you sir. When do you start?- when do you start?

Mr. Lemon: We are hoping to start like in the next two weeks since we already have the candidates.

Commissioner Lago: Can't happen soon enough.

Mr. Lemon: Yes. We are looking forward to it. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

[End: 12:50:32 p.m.]