

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-2
June 12, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Ed Santamaria
Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item C-2 [9:32:02 a.m.]
Mayor's Comments.
Update on traffic calming status

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next is update on traffic calming status and who's going to come?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Well we can do two things. We have the Public Works Director. You have scheduled a July 11 meeting with Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, Commissioner Xavier Suarez, we are now learning that Mayor Gimenez will come and you wanted to talk about three or four things. One, you wanted to talk about what is the status of the agreement with the City and the County and particularly as it relates to Red/Bird area, but also citywide. Second, you wanted to talk about crosswalks and the ability to extend beyond those crosswalks in front of City Hall. Third, you wanted to talk about the LeJeune Road Bridge Cartagena Circle.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's coming up at 3:30 (p.m.).

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Yes sir. But also the premise for your July 11 meeting, if you are not satisfied with the progress. With that can you give an update on traffic calming?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Before you do, let me tell you why I put this here. I'm very upset every time I go to Key Biscayne or every time I go to Miami Beach they have traffic calming up your kazoo. They have so many traffic calming devices that when I come in Coral Gables I don't see any. Yes, we are a pass through City, but because they are not a pass through City maybe they don't need them as much as we do. I've been hearing since January or since December or whatever, that we filed an agreement with the County, the County comes back to us; we get back to the County. At some point we run out of excuses. I mean at some point we have to move and have to have traffic calming in Coral Gables. You don't get the calls that we get for traffic calming, you don't get the Alhambra Circle, North Greenway where I happen to live, you don't get the Obispo, Venetia and other cross streets.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Milan.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Milan – I was thinking of a fourth one. You don't get those calls, but I get those calls and I say no, we filed the agreement. That's what you said last month. No, but we've heard from them, but that's what you said last month. Let's get it done and if it takes – I hope that we get positive or assertive testimony from our staff in our July 11th Town Hall meeting or meeting, because we just have to get the County going and maybe we should do it and say, I'm sorry or if they make us take it out, maybe we will take it out or let them force us to take it out, but we have to be responsive to our residents and we are not being responsive to our residents. Go ahead.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Good morning Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission, for the record Ed Santamaria, Director of Public Works. Regarding your concerns in connection to traffic calming citywide. I will first sort of make a couple of brief statements and then I will turn it over to Jessica Keller for a full more granular update, as she's been the one that's been handling this matter for a long time. I'd like to say that I'm very happy at this moment, because earlier this week we received word from Miami-Dade County their traffic calming criteria was accepted and approved with minor comments, meaning that we will be able to move forward with traffic calming citywide. I'd also like to say that we do have traffic calming in various portions of the City and also City of Key Biscayne or Village of Key Biscayne and City of Miami Beach also have traffic calming. A lot of their traffic calming improvements has been there for a while. There was a period in time where this was not such a complicated affair to pull off, but because of the increase in traffic countywide and the county's desire to protect their network in terms of functionality, the County stepped up in their vigilance over traffic calming. So we have been working within the system Mr. Mayor, unfortunately the system has taken an exceedingly long time to resolve, but it is resolving itself. As I mentioned a month ago, that we were on a positive track and we are very, very close. The fact that we have traffic calming criteria already approved by the County and we have interlocal agreements under development right now, under review by the County Attorney's Office.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But, they have been reviewing it for months. That's exactly what I tell people, it's under review by the County and they tell me, how long does that take.

Public Works Director Santamaria: The traffic calming criteria has been approved sir.

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you a question, because I had a conversation with Bravo this morning and I had a conversation, I talked probably two or three times last week. She told me that we were submitting comments back and forth and I actually have her text here, so I may read it verbatim. They submitted the revised agreement on Saturday; they'll either send preliminary comments yesterday. If the City of Coral Gables approves the changes then we will route this over to the attorneys. So basically the answer should be, if we've approved it as a City already.

Public Works Director Santamaria: We have sir.

Commissioner Lago: OK. Are you going to bring it to the Commission, so that we can take a look at it before?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Absolutely. But, we wanted to get the County Attorney's Office feedback on it for legal sufficiency. It's already done technically. They are doing the same thing that the Assistant City Attorney did for us.

Commissioner Lago: Why don't we do this to save time? Why don't we prepare a simple memo, you know I'm a big fan of memos, circulate it amongst the Commission and we can have a Sunshine meeting to discuss this while the attorneys look at it and if we have any comments we can basically do this in a process where the attorneys are looking at it and we can have any final comments or anything that we should have. If this is similar to what the City of Miami got approved or even better, then we should be in good shape, correct?

Public Works Director Santamaria: That's correct and I think we are in good shape.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's get it going, as opposed to saying it's under study.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: If there is a desire to set a Sunshine meeting we can begin working on it today and we'll give you some options with your staff at the end of the meeting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Give us options, yes.

Commissioner Lago: Do you want to have a Sunshine meeting in regards to this maybe next week to discuss. Maybe staff can send us a memo, so we can have our information.

Vice Mayor Quesada: A few years ago, maybe two or three years ago, you had definitely put together a list of what we can and can't do in traffic calming and there was a report that you prepared, I forget the exact details of it, but that's something you can recirculate to all of us. You recall that? We had come up with a number of different ideas of what can and can't be done.

Someone had talked about someone had been in Europe, I forget exactly who it was that said they would do bump-outs in different ways. We had a long conversation about that. I know we had it prior to meetings and then we had a big public meeting discussing it, and I believe there was a document that came out of it. Am I recalling that correctly?

Ms. Keller: I'm sure there was if you say there was. I've prepared a lot of traffic calming documents and memos.

Vice Mayor Quesada: It was nice because it just gave us a nice summary of everything that can and can't be done.

Ms. Keller: We have a number of PowerPoint presentations.

Vice Mayor Quesada: If you could just sort of circulate that to us as well, so to just refresh our memory on it.

Ms. Keller: OK.

Commissioner Mena: To Commissioner Lago's point, I'm open to having a meeting. I have an item on today's agenda regarding concurrency, which I know we've talked about in the past, so that we can already be ready to move forward once all our ducks are in a row. I think we all share the same sentiment that we want to move forward as fast as possible, so tell us what else you need from us to enable you to be able to do that.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Happy to work with you on that. Let me also add that we are very, very close to achieving traffic calming in the Blue/Bird area, which is that area that was subject to the traffic deliniers, traffic diverters that had to be removed; and so that's already been approved in terms of locations. We have an interlocal agreement regarding maintenance, but we are ready to proceed with the installation of those improvements at this time. And so, we hope that sometime over the summer before the school year ramps up and before traffic ramps up in the area, we will have traffic calming in that neighborhood, which is something, that that community has asked for a long time.

Commissioner Lago: Absolutely.

Public Works Director Santamaria: It is unfortunate that these initiatives take time and this is the system that we live in, Public Works, and we are trying to do our best to get these accomplished in a timely manner, and I do feel very comfortable that we will have solid goals that we will be able to realize in the next few months.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, thank you very much.

Commissioner Lago: Realize – you mean like implement?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Yes sir, absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: Just want to make sure we are talking about the same, because I know that we may have to wait, we may have some budget constraints and I want to...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Sir, you'll remember we put in significant dollars into traffic calming at the Commission's instruction and it's really just been a placeholder until we've seen the final from the County, but the monies are in place in order to do significant traffic calming citywide.

Commissioner Lago: But I also want to set expectations as well, so we'll have a multi-modal transportation plan that we are working on and all different types...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Traffic calming –

Commissioner Lago: But everything has a role, is interconnected.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Any connection to the multi-modal transportation plan, we are still on schedule, I believe.

Commissioner Lago: For November you said, last time I heard. OK. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, thank you very much.

[End: 9:41:07 a.m.]