

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-3
May 9, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-3 [12:19:10 p.m.]

Discussion regarding possible new park space in Old Cutler Bay
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Quesada)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The next one is Commissioner Quesada getting possible new park space in Old Cutler Bay.

Commissioner Quesada: So, this is actually two items in one, thank you Mr. Mayor. Old Cutler Bay, which is down Old Cutler and you enter in there by Solano Prado, you guys may or may not know the area; so they have a guard gate and we actually passed a resolution, I was actually discussing what the Assistant City Attorney, Ms. Ramos, the issue we are just discussing right now. So, we passed the resolution related to the guardhouses that we want to be able to control the guardhouses, for the new members on the dais, the County actually oversees guardhouses within the City, we passed a resolution to allow us to go in and actually control the guardhouses, that becomes an issue when you want to do any kind of enforcement, we passed a law a year-and-a-half ago, almost two years ago maybe, saying that after 11:00 p.m. the security that's working at the guardhouse can force an entrant into the neighborhood to roll down their window

and ask them where they are going. The County was refusing to enforce that in certain locations, we had a few criminal incidences that we are trying to prevent in the future from occurring again. So, what I understand is, Old Cutler Bay Homeowners Association was required to pass a resolution, through the Homeowners Association, that they are in agreement that they want the City to oversee that guard gate. Now...

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: They actually want us to take over the Special Taxing District, not just the guard gate.

Commissioner Quesada: Correct, correct, my apologies.

City Attorney Leen: By County Charter we would take over – the guard gate is part of the special...it would all come together.

Commissioner Quesada: So, in an abundance of caution, I am making a motion to pass a resolution to have the Old Cutler Bay guardhouse be taken over by the City of Coral Gables, the Special Taxing District, the management and operation thereof, that's the motion.

City Attorney Leen: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: We need to pass this resolution in order for the County to release it to us.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there a second?

Commissioner Mena: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you want to call the roll?

Commissioner Quesada: I'm sorry, did you have a question?

Vice Mayor Keon: Yes, I have a question, because I understand that Hammock Lakes would also like the ability to do the same thing.

Commissioner Quesada: We need a letter from the Homeowners Association specifically them requesting it.

Vice Mayor Keon: OK. I would ask that the Manager talk with them please and ask them for that letter, so we can take action on it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Kings Bay also wants it.

Vice Mayor Keon: Kings Bay I think; I think each one we should – Snapper Creek I’m sure – every one of those guardhouses we should....

Commissioner Quesada: Reach out to the President of the Homeowners Association.

Vice Mayor Keon: We’d ask that the Manager reach out to the Homeowners Association and every one of those gated communities.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: So you know, City Attorney, myself, the two Assistant City Managers met with the residents of Hammock Oaks just last week, so we are fully aware of their situation.

Vice Mayor Keon: Hammock Lakes or Hammock Oaks?

City Attorney Leen: Was it Hammock Lakes or Hammock Oaks? – Lakes I thought.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, I think every one of them should be given that opportunity and then we can do it as a unified endeavor with the County to take over all, take them over as a Special Taxing District, that also gives us the ability to hire the guards, is that right?

City Attorney Leen: There may be a standing agreement that we work out through basically an Interlocal with the County that transfers it. I did receive from the Assistant County Attorney who oversees this, this sort of transfer. Some wording for the resolution, I’m just going to read the title in and we’ll adopt something similar, if it’s OK Commissioner. A Resolution of the City Counsel of the City, this is for Miami Gardens, it would be a Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, expressing the City of Coral Gables desire to transfer control of the Special Taxing District that’s been identified from Miami-Dade County to the City of Coral Gables; and providing for instructions; providing for adoption of representation; providing for an effective date. I have a model that I’ll put into the record and we will base it on that.

Commissioner Quesada: And, that shall be incorporated into my motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right – there was a motion and a second, will you call the roll.

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Vice Mayor Keon: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Quesada: And, I have one more item related to Old Cutler Bay and the park space. So, when you drive into Old Cutler Bay, Solano Prado is the primary street, when you get toward the end there is a triangle space when you make one of the turns, I'm trying to think here, there we go, so that park space right there its actually not a park at this moment, it's just empty green space; and the Homeowners Association has approached me and asked if they can make that a park for the community. So, I think it makes a lot of sense; it's a great big patch of green space currently there now. It's a little bit of an eyesore right now, it's such a nice neighborhood, and we've discussed this in the past its very difficult for us to create parks in South Gables just because it's so expensive property; and we've purchased all these new pieces of property to convert to parks in the North Gables and the Central Gables part of the City. So, I think this is an easy opportunity for us to turn this into a nice park for another area in South Gables. So, I would ask staff, if it's OK for the rest of the Commission to start looking into working it out, and seeing if we could get something done.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: If it's the desire of the Commission, we'd be happy to. Just as clarification, it would be a park that is open to everyone, not just residents in that area.

Commissioner Quesada: Correct.

Vice Mayor Keon: I think there is also a parcel in Gables Estates that they are looking at, that they would like to create a small park or a playground, so maybe at the same time you can speak to that Homeowners Association and help them to understand that of course it would be a park that is available to anyone in the City, but they would be designed the same as the pocket-type parks that we have that they are not intended for people to drive to, but for people to walk to, so they would be created in that fashion.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: When we talked with Gables Estates before, they were not interested in making it – they wanted it as a benefit for their members and not for the larger community, so the conversation paused, but we are happy to initiate or continue with this discussion with Old Cutler Bay if they understand that, if we develop a space like that it is open to anyone that wants to come.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's very good.

Commissioner Quesada: Thank you.

[End: 12:26:36 p.m.]