

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-4
April 24, 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
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller
Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-4 [0:00:00 p.m.]

A Resolution for the City of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for a preference to utilize Park Impact Fees for Park Acquisition, unless such fees are otherwise earmarked for other park system improvements and providing for an effective date.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, H-4.

Commissioner Lago: This is real easy. I know it's...

City Attorney Ramos: A resolution for the City of Coral Gables, Florida, providing for a preference to utilize Park Impact Fees for Park Acquisition, unless such fees are otherwise earmarked for other park system improvements and providing for an effective date.

Commissioner Lago: Alright.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner.

Commissioner Lago: I think staff is going to come up and have a -- some sort of presentation. Let's go. We're short on time today. We...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Lago: No, which is good.

Commissioner Mena: Good.

Commissioner Lago: Let's do it.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Lago: Look, this is important. We're talking about...

Commissioner Mena: You looked surprised, and then you took out a board.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Lago: You surprised me because I thought you were surprised, and then you're -- got a full Kinko's prep here, so, you know -- so, this is important because we have about -- we have scheduled, I think, around 20 to \$22 million worth of funds that are going to be coming into the coffers of the City via legislation that we proffered, I think, about a year ago. So, over the next ten years, you're seeing about \$22 million, and I think this discussion is warranted based on the fact that currently that money is going to be only dictated towards acquiring properties. And now we're having a full discussion about not maintaining...

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Not maintaining -- and let's be clear about that, correct?

City Attorney Ramos: Correct. You cannot...

Commissioner Lago: Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Ramos: Use impact fees to maintain.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yes. So, for the purpose of this exercise, what we looked at is the park -- the impact fee ordinance that allows for not only acquisition of property, but you can make improvements, but it does have to increase the capacity. So, the first thing we did is, you know, we -- at one point, we went back -- a few years back when we did our comprehensive plan, we changed our comprehensive plan. Back in the day, it used to be something called concurrency, where you would go one basketball court per a certain thousand

people, and that's how you kind of did your improvements. We went away from that, as most agencies have gone away from it, more to levels of service. So, in terms of level of service, it actually looked at the areas where you were going to be. It wasn't only what you had. It was what you had in relation to where people lived. So, we -- and I had presented this at an open space workshop in the past, where we developed classifications of our urban open spaces in our neighborhood parks, and what we wanted to do was have a quarter-mile radius, which is a five-minute walk, or a half-mile radius, which is a ten-minute walk, for these residents to come to these spaces. One of the things that we kind of altered with our strategic planning is we looked at accessibility. We didn't want our residents to have to cross major roadways. So, what we did is we started mapping that, looking at those major roadways. And we found -- we have a full -- we have a south, we have a north and we have a full city view. There are some places where we don't have either an urban open space or a neighborhood park. And there's a few areas that were -- became areas that we should look to. When properties come up in these areas, these are the ones that we should look at and that will increase our capacity and our levels of service. So, that was one of the things that we did here. And you know, there's a few areas -- there's an area right here -- Coral Gables Senior High, this area that's a gap, and there's a couple of other gaps.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Can I speak to the gap on Coral Gables High?

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You'll remember San Antonio...

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: There was a...

Commissioner Lago: About 30,000 square feet.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Yeah, 24,000 square feet. The residents were very much in favor of park space, but very far away from the school. They were worried about loitering and other issues. And so, we're sensitive to that. So, we want to look west. And then another thing that came up was at Gable High, they -- we have an agreement with them to use the fields at night, but they're not lit, so the opportunity...

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: To light those fields may be another way of solving that park (INAUDIBLE).

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, that segues into the other part of expenditures, which is not only land acquisition. There are things that we can do to existing areas that could increase our levels of service. As the Manager mentioned, if we have some improvements with Coral Gables High, all of a sudden, that increases our radius there and this becomes a public meeting place, a neighborhood park or a space where the community can use. And we also looked at other improvements that could be made. There could be some roadway improvements, which would increase some of our roadway access so then we could have even greater radiuses on those radiuses that are being cut by major roadways. The last thing that we did is being an accredited agency, I have the ability to have a database from the National Recreation Parks Association, and you kind of look at all the agencies and what -- that are in this database and you look at what they have versus what we have, and you can do comparisons for the entire country, do comparisons for your state. You can do comparisons with agencies that have similar populations, and there are certain areas that we could benefit from having more amenities, you know, things like playgrounds, things like athletic fields. I think what's important is that we should look at -- as we're going through -- we're in the process of -- we're just about done with the procurement process for our master planning. We're under the Cone of Silence, but we're just about at the end of that. And I think, you know, more than just the numbers, you need to have neighborhood input and you need to see what the community has a need for. And I think

the master planning will also help in that, but that is another avenue that the impact fees can be used for, not just land acquisition, and you can increase the levels of service either way.

Commissioner Lago: Well, one of the things that I asked you and why we deferred it to the 24th was give me a number, give me a percentage of...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Those \$22 million. What do you need and what do you deem as appropriate?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: My...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So, just so you know, right now we have \$191,000.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But we know that we're acquiring -- we have money in the acquisition -- is that 1.5 or 1.8? 1.8 in acquisition, separate from impact fees. We have \$191,000 in the parks impact fee, but we're going to accrue, over the next ten years -- and I think conservative estimates...

Commissioner Lago: It was conservative.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Of \$21 million.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. So, my question to you is...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So, we...

Commissioner Lago: I kind of need to know a number of what you're looking at because when I came up...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right, I know.

Commissioner Lago: With this park impact fee of .5 to mimic what Miami-Dade County's doing...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: The sole purpose of it was with the...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Idea of it's becoming more and more expensive to buy property in Coral Gables.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Correct.

Commissioner Lago: And these pocket parks -- just by Betsy Adams Park...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Is a prime example. I mean, that's a home run.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's expensive.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. You drive by that park every day, and there's parents...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: The only thing that's missing is a fence, and that's coming soon.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Correct.

Commissioner Lago: Some wall structure or fence. If we could offer that type of, you know, atmosphere to the neighborhoods...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: And if you notice, a lot of projects that are coming here, if we vote in favor or we don't vote in favor...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: They're having that park amenity, that 12,000, 11,000 square foot park. The park on -- the piece of property on Valencia, 33 Alhambra...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Is offering that amenity.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Because people want some sort of green space. So, I don't have a problem giving the -- again, it's not my money. It's the City's money and my colleagues supported me on that measure a year and a half ago, two years ago, when we came up...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: This additional park impact fee. I think there's a good opportunity to aid you in what you think is appropriate, but I need to know what is it, the number.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Well, my recommendation is looking at not an equitable split, but looking at more of a 60/40 split, with acquisition towards improvements. In that case, because there's -- in my case, in using Coral Gables High, when you can make that -- if you can make an improvement there that'll open that up as a space, that kind of solves that need. That hits that neighborhood and has that area. So, I think if you can find those opportunities and put them in the spaces that we already have -- some of the spaces that you mentioned, there could be some equipment, some things that they would want in there later on. Maybe the community didn't want it right now, but there is an opportunity maybe to revisit that and it will increase the capacity. You will have a piece of equipment that you didn't have...

Commissioner Lago: You're saying...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: In the past.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. When you say capacity -- I just want to -- I don't...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I'm not a parks master plan...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right, right, right.

Commissioner Lago: Individual.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So...

Commissioner Lago: So, when you say capacity, you're saying like the appeal, so people will use it more, correct?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right. And also, the...

Commissioner Lago: Usage.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Total number.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Like if you only have -- if you have one playground for 8,000 people in your population, you have another -- you add one more, that reduces your service number, so now you're looking at serving more people, so you've increased your capacity to serve the public with that amenity.

Commissioner Lago: Because if you look at Betsy Adams Park right now...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: People are driving from all over the place to use that park because...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Lago: Of the amenities that are offered at that park.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Correct. You're right.

Commissioner Lago: Because it's a safe atmosphere. There's, you know, an opportunity for young kids to play, larger kids to play. It's a really good park.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: So -- right, and so that leans to both because it's the land, but it's also where you can put in that, and I think that also -- we need to be focused on that in the future that, you know, certain neighborhoods, you know -- what I heard, as I've gone around the neighborhoods and had community meetings is not everybody just wants an open piece of land.

Commissioner Lago: So, how much money...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: They want something in it.

Commissioner Lago: How much money do you have right now in your budget for this type of work to be accomplished?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Well, for capital improvements...

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right now, we're -- we have a parks and maintenance repair matrix that goes about 1.39 a year, and that's for everything. That's not for adding. That's for renovations. That's for replacement of existing material. That's what we have in our Parks and Recreation capital matrix.

Commissioner Lago: So, is it safe to say -- again, not being a parks professional...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: That that 1.39 barely gives you enough money for upkeep and it doesn't allow you to really deliver or roll anything new out in regards to programming? Is that safe to say?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: For the most part, yeah. It's mostly renovations and maybe repurposing of existing areas, but not a lot of additions.

Commissioner Lago: Okay. And we have 300,000 a year that we're raising, obviously, through our budget to go towards acquisition.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Correct.

Commissioner Lago: Correct?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: With \$1.8 million.

Commissioner Lago: And by the way -- I mean, correct me if I'm wrong -- it's been extremely difficult to actually find a property to buy. I've sent you a few, and they haven't met our criteria.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But now we have a map of criteria. This is so they'll be able to identify this neighborhood is under parked.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What's your pleasure, Commissioner?

Commissioner Lago: Listen, I don't have an issue at all. I mean, so you're saying 60 percent go towards...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's a suggestion. That's what I...

Commissioner Lago: Towards acquisition or...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Towards acquisition, towards acquisition.

Commissioner Mena: But you're not trying to -- are you trying to -- I know you want to get a picture and I agree with you, but you're not trying to like lock it in, right? Like it's going to be 60 percent, or are you just trying to get...

Commissioner Lago: But he's...

Commissioner Mena: An estimate?

Commissioner Lago: He's saying lock it in. He's saying -- that's his number. That's what he's thinking about.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Well, you're asking me for my opinion.

Commissioner Lago: But it's an estimate.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I think -- that's my opinion.

Commissioner Lago: I feel comfortable in...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I was going to...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I was going to say 70 percent.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: And...

Commissioner Lago: And then use 30 -- but I feel comfortable...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: I'm pretty comfortable with 70/30 as well. I think either one there...

Commissioner Lago: But I want to make sure not only you're comfortable, but my colleagues are comfortable.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Well, that's why...

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's important.

Commissioner Lago: So, with 30 percent, you're talking about an additional \$6 million over the next ten years.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Right now you have 1.3 a year.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: So, if you can do another \$6 million, you're talking about potentially, you know, bringing \$600,000 a year into the fray, into the mix...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: And that's...

Commissioner Lago: Which would be...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: And that's substantial.

Commissioner Lago: About -- a 50 percent increase of what you have right now.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: That is substantial, yes.

Commissioner Lago: Not 50, 40 and change.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Forty something percent, yes.

Commissioner Lago: Forty something percent.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's substantial.

Commissioner Lago: So, why don't we discuss this? Why don't we debate between 60 to 70 percent.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: My only fear -- and I just want to say this, and I don't have a problem using some of this money for what we talked about, you know, diverting it from acquisition to extending and achieving certain programming levels that we think are appropriate for our residents.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: I just want to always remind the residents -- not remind the residents, excuse me -- my colleagues, that land is so expensive -- and I have brought probably two or three different pieces of property to staff, to the Manager...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: And it hasn't met our criteria. So, you know, we need to find properties that meet our needs so we can spend this money.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Correct.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Or save enough so that we can buy something significant in an area...

Commissioner Mena: But...

Commissioner Lago: Of great need.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, but I also think that there's areas that we can improve -- using that Gables High example that -- or existing parks that you can like just totally overhaul and add

capacity to that is effectively an acquisition, you know what I mean? I'm not saying it's acquiring land, but it's changing the level of usage that that park gets dramatically...

Commissioner Lago: Like, for example, Kerdyk...

Commissioner Mena: By doing something really high quality.

Commissioner Lago: Like Kerdyk Park, that park has...

Commissioner Mena: It's underutilized.

Commissioner Lago: It's underutilized. It has a kind of like workout kind of station area.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: (INAUDIBLE), yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Correct? It has a -- I don't want to say tiki hut kind of...

Commissioner Mena: Gazebo.

Commissioner Lago: A gazebo.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It's got a pavilion, yes.

Commissioner Lago: The appropriate word, excuse me.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: But it doesn't have anything for activation for like young children that I'm aware of. I don't see it.

Commissioner Mena: It has...

Commissioner Lago: I don't go to that park. It's out of my -- I go to...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: It will soon.

Commissioner Mena: It's 100 feet from my house.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: No. It's -- but you're right. That's a great example because...

Commissioner Lago: I go to that Publix, so I drive by and I see...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: But it's a great example.

Commissioner Mena: Overhauling that park and doing...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Mena: A much more significant play area for kids...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: But, we're putting a...

Commissioner Mena: Would totally change the usage.

Commissioner Lago: Like Betsy Adams.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We did have a...

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We did have a community meeting there and we did have a playground that we have selected, and that one's already in the capital improvement program.

Commissioner Mena: But he's trying to do...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: That's already funded.

Commissioner Mena: But he's trying to do that with \$185,000, right?

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Correct.

Commissioner Mena: So, that's not a lot -- you know, in terms of when you start doing the foundation, if you want to try to add some sort of shade, that's why I'm trying to help him to be able to do more...

Commissioner Lago: And I don't think you'll be able to do it for 185.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Lago: I build schools for a living. We design them and build them, so I know that 185 is going to fall short.

Commissioner Mena: Doesn't get you far, exactly.

Commissioner Lago: You know, between the banners, the flag banners for the shading and the poles...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right, the shading.

Commissioner Lago: And the foundation, all the construction work...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah, the permitting and everything.

Commissioner Lago: That you need to do, you're not going to meet it.

Commissioner Mena: And I think that's symptomatic for the improvements he probably has planned for other parks, too.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We have a certain amount of money and that's...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: We work with it, and we do what we can.

Commissioner Mena: And I appreciate that and I expect that.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: But I'm hoping we can try to utilize this to help him and...

Commissioner Lago: Let's find a number between 60 and 70 percent...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: So, that'll deliver between 5 to \$6 million over the next ten years.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: That'll be great.

Commissioner Lago: I think that's a nice injection.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yep, absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: And I would also like to see -- if you could do me a favor, I want to take this opportunity -- because land is only getting more expensive...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Tell me where we're missing parks.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: Because I drive through the city and people drive through the city. I can talk...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Commissioner Lago: To realtors and say, listen, if you see a house, if you see something that's not historic -- and I know Dona just looked at me. Don't worry. We're not going to be knocking down any historic properties. If you see a property that comes up for sale, call us. In this area, we're looking.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Absolutely. We can do that. And we -- I can illustrate that through the mapping with you and show you. And there is -- there are certain areas that are of greater need than others. And we look at -- when any property is brought to us, we look at -- as it has been in a lot of the properties close to bigger parks recently, so you know, if it's right -- if it's a block away from a major park, it's not necessarily for parkland. Now, there are different uses when you have land acquisition -- you know, if you're -- maybe it could be used for something else, a more passive space, like as an entrance or something like that, then those are different things that we look at.

Commissioner Lago: Do you want to ratify this today or do you want to come back with a defined number, between 60 and 70 percent, and bring it to the May 8 Commission meeting? We'll make a motion right now. How do you want to do it?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a motion right now.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Whatever is the will of the Commission. It's fine with me.

Commissioner Lago: You need to get to a number.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Like between 60 -- is it 65 percent? Is it...

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Sixty-five percent will work for me.

Commissioner Lago: Okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a motion.

Commissioner Lago: You guys are good? Alright, so I make a motion to divert 35 percent of the funds that are currently going to be, hopefully, attained via the park impact fund -- fee, excuse me, from acquisitions to an increase in programming, not maintenance, correct?

City Attorney Ramos: That's correct. Did you say 35, so the remainder?

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: Thirty-five.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: For enhancement to the park.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, to enhancement, not...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there a second?

Commissioner Lago: Maintenance.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Not maintenance.

Commissioner Mena: Second.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Only renovation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. Will you call the roll, please?

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 3-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Parks and Recreation Director Couceyro: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next item is...

Commissioner Lago: Fred, do me a favor. Just...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: J-1.

Commissioner Lago: Give me an idea of where we're looking for parks so that I stop sending the Manager areas -- like pieces of property that come up for sale that we're already awash with parks.