

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1, G-2, and G-3
April 28, 2009
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno
City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
City Clerk Staff, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

G-1 [Start: 10:33:06 a.m.]

Presentation of excerpts from the Landscape Beautification Advisory Board meeting of April 2, 2009, requesting the following action: In order to integrate the designs, the Landscape Beautification Advisory Board would like to see a landscape design for both traffic circle intersections on Segovia Street (Biltmore Way and Coral Way) including the hardscape and landscape prior to planting the Segovia Street and Coral Way Circle.

Mayor Slesnick: We have a series of items from the Boards and Committees, G-1 through 4; Mr. Manager.

City Manager Salerno: G-1 is a recommendation from the Landscape Beautification Advisory Board which would like to see a landscape design for both the traffic circle intersections on Segovia Street between Biltmore Way and Coral Way, including the hardscape and landscape prior to planting the Segovia Street and Coral Way Circle. Staff is recommending that the item be forwarded to the Public Works Department for consideration with final plans to be reviewed by all pertinent departments.

G-2 is a recommendation from the Library Advisory Board; they are recommending that the City search for additional parking around the library building to be made by the City of Coral Gables. We are going to ask the Public Works Department; our recommendation is the Public Works Department evaluate that matter and provide that information back to the Board, initially, and I will go from there, depending on what the options are.

G-3 – The School and Community Relations Committee request the City Attorney to engage Florida Power and Light in an open and preemptive dialogue prior to making a final decision of where and how to place new power lines stemming from FPL project for the safety, welfare and health of the Coral Gables children in the public schools. Our recommendation is the City engages the services of consultants to evaluate the effects if any, on what is being proposed by Florida Power and Light, principally in the area of health and to ensure that there would be no impact to our Fire communication system at the nearby Fire Rescue Station.

Commissioner Cabrera: Mr. Manager what is your expectation of timeframe in which to (a) hire a consultant?- and then (b) do the necessary analysis to then move forward with some sort of position as a municipality.

City Manager Salerno: Well I don't believe we are going to get really good information from FPL until some time in June, and there are a number of periods of time that we will have, many months after that for us to have the appropriate input, so hiring a consultant should not be a problem from that standpoint, and principally they are going to be looking at the distance from residential communities to the power lines based upon what they propose there, and the consultant as far as the radio consultant can do that very quickly as far as their analysis. It's really for us to be prepared that once we receive the packet of information from FPL that we are not just having to take FPL's word for it that there is no negative impact on our residents; we will have independent, we want the Mayor and Commissioners to have an independent way to validate what they are telling us.

Commissioner Cabrera: When do you anticipate receiving the package from Florida Power and Light?

City Manager Salerno: I believe the City Attorney met with FPL representatives yesterday perhaps.

City Attorney Hernandez: We've met, we've had ongoing meetings with FPL representatives and Mr. Delgado's office has been attending meetings. Right now what we are doing is we are expecting their official application to be submitted to us in June; we are anticipating June 1st, but it's anytime during the month of June. During that time we would be able to evaluate it and then determine whether or not to recommend a public informational meeting be held, and that's really what we are discussing at the present time with the Manager's office and Mr. Delgado and we are learning about what is being proposed by FPL at the present time.

Commissioner Cabrera: I think I read Mr. Slesnick's message where he outlined or suggested the possibility of reconvening the Utility Service Board, if that's what we called it.

Mayor Slesnick: I don't remember what we called it.

Commissioner Cabrera: I don't recall it either; I know Commissioner Kerdyk and I worked together on it, but it may make sense to put that Board back together once we receive the information from FPL, once the Manager has an opportunity to digest along with the City Attorney, and once we get the consultants, analysis and outcome, we may want to have a citizen

group look at this, because I think this is really going to become a very serious issue. I keep reading about it, and I keep seeing other municipalities taking positions on it, and I think it was wise of you to say let's look at this closer before we take any strong position.

Mayor Slesnick: And I think I hope everyone understands, the citizens understand that FPL proposed two possible routes, one was Bird Road, and one was U.S.-1, and based on input from this City early on the Bird Road route was eliminated for consideration, leaving U.S.-1 as FPL's only choice that they could find, so that's what we would be viewing as that, but we would like to acknowledge the fact that the good work of the City in deterring them in considering Bird Road as a possible route.

City Manager Salerno: The last item is a recommendation...

Mayor Slesnick: Before we take the last item because that may be, let's just take the first three; on G-1, the landscape beautification, the recommendation from staff was to forward the recommendation to Public Works for consideration with final plans to be reviewed by all pertinent Boards and this was on the traffic circles of Segovia in Coral Way as far as landscape design. As far as I know that is underway, but if we want to accept that recommendation sending it to the staff, I think they are already handling that. Do I have a motion for that?

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move that.

Mayor Slesnick: Moved by Ms. Anderson seconded by Mr. Kerdyk, all in favor please aye, opposed like sign. On item two (2), the Library Advisory Board asked us to look for additional parking space, and the staff recommends referring it to Public Works to evaluate the site to see if there are additional parking spaces that we had in that area. Can I have a motion on that?

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Second.

Mayor Slesnick: Moved by Ms. Anderson second by Mr. Kerdyk, all in favor please say aye.

Commissioner Withers: Wait, wait Don, I think they want to consider parking along Segovia, how do we feel about that as a Commission?

Commissioner Cabrera: Is that a recommendation?

Commissioner Withers: That's one of the...

Mayor Slesnick: Well I thought that was going to be reviewed by one of the staff before.

Commissioner Withers: Well why don't we weigh in on that. I'm not in favor of putting parking on Segovia.

Commissioner Anderson: No, I'm not either.

Commissioner Withers: I think it is an option; before staff wastes a lot time on it, I'm not in favor of that, I don't know how you all feel.

Commissioner Anderson: I agree.

Mayor Slesnick: Well I don't disagree although I haven't seen the plans; I don't even know what it looks like. If we are going to continue to go forward with a median, we are really going to tramp the thing if we put parking, and that would really disrupt, I think, the homes from across the street from the library. That's the problem; the library is surrounded by homes on two sides and then park on the third side, and all the parking we have there is already...

Commissioner Withers: And how do we feel about parking along, I'm just trying to, before staff comes back with these plans and drawings and hiring architects, how do we feel about parking under the banyan trees on University?

Commissioner Anderson: I was thinking about that as well, how do you navigate the root system?

Mayor Slesnick: If they do it....in other words if that area could be somewhat approved without disturbing the banyan trees to make it more clean marking.

Commissioner Withers: With paved spaces?

Mayor Slesnick: Well I'd like to think....you know seriously, there is a big difference pavement as we know it in the traditional sense and some of the new stuff that's put in, that grass grows...

Commissioner Withers: Like the blocks, the paver blocks.

Mayor Slesnick:...paving blocks and things.

Commissioner Withers: We are OK with cars on University just not Segovia?

Mayor Slesnick: I didn't say OK, I said I would consider that; they are already there, there were 200 cars parked along University.

Commissioner Cabrera: Well would you consider closing that stretch of Riviera between Segovia and University Drive and then turning it on...

Commissioner Withers: That was a contentious vote; I remember that vote.

Commissioner Cabrera: I was the Chair of the Parks and Rec. Board, but that could give you lots and lots of parking, and make it safer.

Commissioner Withers: Stand the field on the...put in a regulation field baseball field on that one.

Commissioner Cabrera: No, you can't because you've got the structure already built, but you could have wonderful parking both at the Youth Center and for the library and make it safer for the kids, because those two intersections are still the most dangerous intersections we have.

Mayor Slesnick: You want to consider it again?

Commissioner Cabrera: Oh, I would be, absolutely!

Commissioner Anderson: Happy to do that, I know that was an original....

Commissioner Cabrera: I think most of the naysayers from those days have long since left, either this earth or this community, so I'm all set for new naysayers.

Commissioner Withers: It was a 3-2 vote, and I was against closing it, but...

Commissioner Cabrera: You were a lot younger then...

Commissioner Withers: Yeah, but the ramifications were it was for the expansion for the Youth Center fields, not as much for the parking....

Commissioner Cabrera: Parking, not for parking....

Commissioner Withers: We gained the ability to put in one more regulation size AAU baseball field, and it was a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar cost to do it, the cost wasn't effective.

Commissioner Cabrera: I remember you also were very concerned about the safety.

Commissioner Withers: But I think it is a good idea to relook at that street.

Commissioner Anderson: It could be like a complex, library...

Commissioner Cabrera: It would become a vacation, a street vacation, a roadway vacation.

Commissioner Anderson: It would certainly be worth considering.

Mayor Slesnick: We have a motion about sending it back to the staff for further study, and that's been amended to suggest we are not interested in parking on Segovia, all in favor say aye, opposed like sign; and that brings us to G-4.

[End: 10:43:44 a.m.]