

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items 2-1 and 2-2
February 25, 2025
Police and Fire Headquarters
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Alberto Parjus
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parking and Mobility Services Director, Monica Beltran

Public Speaker(s)

Lisa Detournay, Parking Advisory Board Member
Maria Cruz
Jackson Rip Holmes

Agenda Item 2-1 [11:48 a.m.]

2-1: A Resolution of the Parking Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission direct staff to evaluate the current process for review of loss of on street parking spaces, remote parking, and payment-in-lieu requests related to certain development projects.

2-2: A Resolution of the Parking Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission direct staff to evaluate appropriateness of the parking replacement assessment fee and other similar parking fees.

Mayor Lago: We'll move onto item 2-1.

Commissioner Menendez: Mayor, if you don't mind and I apologize for interrupting, is there a way that we could have E-2 heard, the folks from St. Teresa have been here the whole morning and I think, if possible, we could do that.

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Mayor Lago: I'll hear them next. The Clerk asked me, and I already committed to hearing 2-1.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

Mayor Lago: So, after we're done with 2-1, I promise we'll hear that one next. It should be very quick.

Commissioner Menendez: Thank you, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: 2-1 and 2-2. Thank you for being here with us. Good to see you again.

Ms. Detournay: Thank you for accepting me. I'm Lisa Detournay, I'm one of the five members of the Parking Advisory Board, and we finally after discussing for over a year, we prepared two resolutions. This was done pretty much in the summer of last year, but we've got them finalized recently, that's why its already 2025. In any case, I'm sure you both have, you all have read both of them. So, I'm just going to state how we feel on the board. For the last couple of years that I've been on, just almost two, and some of the more senior members, we found that so many projects are coming to us requesting authorization to take, pay for or whatever, but to take parking spots that are metered on the street in the neighborhoods for the developments, and we found that we are so far along in the process, the developers are, that what we opined doesn't make a difference. We are coming at the very end when parking and zoning has already approved it, sometimes Board of Architects have these things on the plans that they are given and we can see that even though we made an opinion earlier on that these shouldn't be taken away, they are still in the drawings. So, we're asking, basically to be heard earlier on so that we make a difference. That's kind of in the process what I wanted to bring up. We discussed that developers are not including parking on their own property, but rather asking to remove parking spots to use bump-outs for some of the green space that they are supposed to, like tree replanting, where we have maybe three spots, we'll lose one, at least to get the two and then the bump-outs. This has affected several of our board members personally in their neighborhoods. Also, with the swale packages that have been allowed, you can see as you drive around, many people have beautified their swale and leaving you to only park on somebody else's swale, etc. Also, we have a lot of park events, events at parks and things like that in the neighborhoods that rely on street parking for the people that are in attendance, and those spots are being taken away. Basically, we don't want to give anymore parking spots away. That's kind of what the first resolution is. The second one involves fees. We found that though these things were gone over, excuse me, I think in 2023, nothing was ever changed. The fees have not been updated for at least ten years. Originally, I believe the fees were based on the amount of parking a spot would generate, is that correct, a parking spot how much they would generate and metered fees for a period of ten years or something like that. But the amount of property value has gone up so much that we think this is unfunded. Well, like I said earlier, trying not to give anymore parking spots away, but at least if somebody has to have them to make it more worthwhile to the city to be reimbursed. That's kind of the gist for both of them. Do you have any questions. I've got Monica Beltran here, who's in charge of the parking and she can answer anything that I didn't go over well.

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Mayor Lago: Madam Director, would you please join us. Could you provide a little bit of color in regard to the board and thank you for being here and waiting. I appreciate that and thank you for your service to the board. Thank you.

Parking Director Beltran: Good afternoon. Monica Beltran, Parking and Mobility Services Director. So, when I joined the city and I started participating in the Parking Advisory Board, of course, some action had already been taken on different projects, and there was a little bit of frustration that I sensed and that was expressed over the fact that yes, they are an advisory board, they do not make decisions, etc., that lies in your hands, but rather that they felt that they weren't being heard. So, to ensure that we were all on the same page, we did take some time to meet with our attorney, our attorneys, and also with Jennifer to ensure that we would go over the code, etc. We studied the resolutions, etc., so that we could speak intelligently and know the background before we moved forward. These two resolutions came about and it took a little while and a lot of assistance from legal, came about the desire to, number one, have an opinion early enough in the process, because they were concerned that some developers may move forward and invest a lot of money in projects that later came to them and it was already a fait accompli, they felt and they would not have a voice. Number two, that studies be conducted with these developments that would be more in tune with what is happening in the parking world and what is happening to parking inventories, because you get the complaints every day from neighbors that don't find parking and also from neighbors that want to preserve the swale, although it is right-of-way, and also from park goers, residents that want to enjoy our activities, but there is limited parking. So, there seems to be an increasing demand for parking, but a decreased inventory, which is going to come to a head, and therefore the Parking Advisory Board wants to be as proactive as possible to say, hey, before you move forward with projects, please study what is going to happen with parking. Commissioner Castro, we just recently heard from a resident that I spoke to yesterday, and she was saying she can walk two, three blocks, depending on the time of day that she gets home to find a parking space. So, just to keep that in mind that we cannot decimate parking and increase demand if we want to, the residents and visitors to enjoy the city, then they need to have parking, and I think that's the gist of these resolutions put forth by the board.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor. I understand 100 percent the concerns and I want to go ahead and take action on these two resolutions. I wanted to go ahead and put on the record that developers pay a parking fee, and each parking spot is \$42,000, remote parking is from \$10,000 to \$12,500 per space, and parking in lieu is \$25,000 per spot. The last revision was January 2023. We are ten months away, but I would not be opposed to actually starting this a little earlier. So, I would like to move both of these resolutions.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I would agree with you, and I just would like to maybe expand a bit and I'm going to give you some of my observations over time, because each section of our city has different issues. I'm going to start with the residential infill district where we have a number of historic buildings that provide zero parking, and we want our historic buildings, but if there is going to be a new building coming in and this discussion was touched upon during the 1505 Ponce, our code only requires so many parking spots, but its not taking into account various number of factors there. The section of our city that is east of Ponce and basically north of Navarre has a lot

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of historic buildings, plus compounded with Philips Park, demand to go to Philips Park. On the west side of Ponce, there are historic buildings as well, but the concentration is not as heavy as it is on the east side of Ponce. So, I think in the residential infill district, anywhere in there, we need to have a special study done on parking needs and demand. One of the buildings on Minores that my father-in-law used to own was a twelve-unit building. They are efficiencies, so even assuming that you have one car per unit, and you don't have two people in that efficiency, which is more likely to happen today than it was in yesteryear, due to the cost of housing, you are going to fill an entire block full of parking and this is why people have to walk so far. I know that when I brought, and this was before your time, Ms. Beltran, the issue of having handicap parking signage put in front of a particular building where we had a veteran who was disabled there, that there was a lot of consternation about whether or not the city was required to do that and we came up with a process where somebody can now apply to have a handicap parking spot in front of their apartment building, even though there are not painted lines, because apparently the painted lines broke whether or not we were required to provide handicap parking, which I think is form over substance. We need a complete inventory of that area and looking going forward, what the parking needs are, because we can't make decisions on new development there if we don't have that information. How many parking spaces should be absorbed by the new buildings, you know, there's a need, okay. They always want something from us, they need to give something back, they need to help solve this problem. This problem exists in other areas as well, but I don't know without a parking study what the full breath of needs are versus demand and how many spaces sit unoccupied. It depends on when you walk the neighborhood and I'd rather it not be just my casual observation that the parking on a particular street is not being used and therefore bump-outs are not going to have an impact. I'd like to see the existing parking use because you have X number of apartment buildings there occupied by how many residents and how many spaces, they historically use versus what's going to happen to those spaces after the fact. I'm basically describing the Biltmore Way area that is west of LeJeune, and then we have our Central Business District, which we already have a parking study on, and we know that the demand far exceeds the supply that we have right now; and the other areas that we have issues and systemically I think we can find some solutions for that by improving services is Biltmore Hotel, never has enough parking; Venetian Pool never has enough parking, and along with all this in all these areas and I know ADA remediation is something that we are going to be moving forward on a lot stronger is, as you are doing the parking study, every single block needs to have a curb cut near where you have a handicap parking spot. You have to look what the existing use is – is there a dentist office, is there a doctor's office, is there a reason why demand is going to be higher in those areas. In the ADA remediation cases that I've worked on, you always have someone saying, well that's all that's required by the code. I said, but you have a hospital, you have a hospital, so you have to respond to the demand that you have. So, if we have areas with doctor's offices, pain centers where someone has pain and needs to get into an office, you know you are going to have more demand there for handicap parking than is required by the very basic formula that we have in our city code. So, I do think we need to have a comprehensive parking demand study in our city to provide this Commission and the boards better guidance on how much parking we need to include in the buildings in certain areas. So, that's my friendly amendment, it's a little lengthy, but I think it's clear.

Mayor Lago: Do we have a motion and a second.

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Commissioner Fernandez: Madam Director, you and I have had numerous conversations about having some sort of comprehensive parking study in the city. Biltmore Way in particular has been a major concern to residents for many years and it seems like periodically parking spaces have been removed for development projects sometimes for businesses that were trying to rent out parking spaces – and sure, it sounds great on paper, \$42,000 for parking spaces, the city is making money off these spots, but we are creating a problem for residents and I think that needs to be our focus. So, I agree with – I think I understood the friendly amendment was to make it a comprehensive citywide parking study, so I'd be happy to support that. I think that's something that we have been in conversations about doing for some time. I think its time to get it done. I appreciate the work that the board has done, and like with every other board, we always welcome any suggestions and how we can make residents lives better. This is a board that's extremely important, not just for the Central Business District, but for residents who come to the CBD and park in different parts of the city, so its important to hear from you and I appreciate your dedication and your time to our board and all the other board members.

Parking Director Beltran: I think what I'm hearing is that what we should be working toward is a master plan.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Parking Director Beltran: In other words, an all-comprehensive master plan that doesn't focus just in some areas. Another issue of concern by the way is employee parking. If business is to grow, where are employees going to park and I've heard from residents that with these scooters, these mobile scooters that people carry in their trunk, they'll park in residential zones, take out their scooters and scooter on over. Now, the good news is, we have a very robust and wonderful trolley system that truly helps, but we need somehow to consider some type of park and ride where employees can have access to the trolley or to our offerings so that we diminish parking demand as well as congestion in our roadways.

Commissioner Fernandez: And I think your predecessor and I spoke about this during a Commission meeting, with all the requests that we're getting for remote parking from new development projects and other buildings, we need to make sure that we have a full inventory, because we always rely on the developers presenting to us, well, we found these number of parking spaces that X, Y, or Z location, but we don't have any inventory in the city that we can say, okay, we have confirmed that there are the 100 parking spaces that they need at that parking garage, and other impacts that it may have. A project that's three blocks away from the parking that they are trying to utilize is going to create pedestrian issues, is going to create other issues in the area that we also need to take into account. So, I'd like that included in your master plan.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, before moving forward, I have members of the public requesting to speak on this item. First speaker is Mrs. Maria Cruz.

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City Attorney Suarez: Mr. Mayor, while Mrs. Cruz comes up, I would just like to clarify the motion, because there were two requests from the Parking Advisory Board. One was asking the Commission to direct staff to evaluate the current process, and the second one is requesting that staff evaluate the appropriateness of the fees. So, we are also hearing that there should be a comprehensive parking study done, so if we could get some clarification on the motion.

Commissioner Castro: I was the one who moved the motion. I accept her amendment and exactly how both of the motions are written.

City Attorney Suarez: So, it would be a motion directing staff to evaluate the current process to review the loss of on-street parking spaces, remote parking and payment in lieu request related to certain development projects and also directing staff to evaluate the appropriateness of the parking replacement assessment fee and other similar parking fees, and also to conduct a comprehensive parking study.

Commissioner Castro: And can you take it back to the board too, to their board.

City Attorney Suarez: So once staff had done its evaluation to get feedback from the Parking Advisory Board.

Commissioner Castro: Correct.

Commissioner Fernandez: Then I guess it would come back to us as a parking master plan.

City Attorney Suarez: Correct.

Mrs. Cruz: Okay. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I'm going to talk very fast because we have some representatives of St. Teresa here, sitting here for hours waiting to be heard while we skip around. I think the time has come when developers want to build, they need to have the number of parking spaces that we require is not working. When they have to pay the city to rent or to, you know enough is enough. We are not in the business of renting spaces. We're not in the business, we should not be in the business of selling spaces. We need those spaces. Our residents need those spaces. The people that come to use the businesses need those spaces. The developers need to provide their own spaces, so they don't have to take our spaces.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Rip Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: So, I'm relatively uninformed about the particulars of this consideration, but I think I'll say amen to what Maria Cruz just said. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Mr. Clerk.

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City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Alright. We have a motion and a second.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. We have two resolutions, right.

City Attorney Suarez: I think the Commissioner made one motion for all of the requests.

Mayor Lago: I just want to make sure we covered everything.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.