

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-5**  
**August 27, 2019**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**  
**Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**Assistant City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Police Chief, Ed Hudak**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Robert Fernandez**

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Agenda Item G-5 [0:00:00 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, strongly urging the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County to adopt legislation prohibiting hourly hotel/motel rentals within the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Keon)

(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: G-5, Vice Mayor Lago.

Vice Mayor Lago: Commissioner Keon. She's the one who put it on the agenda first.

Commissioner Keon: No, go ahead. Go ahead, go ahead.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Would you like me to read the title?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, read it. Go ahead.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: So, this was an item sponsored by both Commissioner Keon and Vice Mayor Lago entitled a resolution of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, strongly urging the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County to adopt legislation prohibiting hourly hotel/motel rentals within the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County and urging those legislative bodies to take up legislation similar to that that this body passed prohibiting hourly hotel and motel rentals within the City of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you. No, I think, as we've seen the experience that we have had with Wishes Motel since we enacted legislation that Commissioner Lago sponsored to prohibit the hourly motel rental and, you know, we had hoped maybe through annexation we would be able to extend that and, obviously, at this time we're not. That isn't happening. So, we would like to urge the City of Miami -- all cities. There is also -- there also is a whole string of executive hotels in Hialeah so -- that rent by the hour -- to not rent hourly. We know that, you know, the hotel itself -- I'm not saying that they are doing anything illegal, but they are the occasion for a great deal of illegal activity that can go on there when you rent by the hour that we know is affiliated with that sort of rental.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, I wanted to just -- briefly, I wanted to thank Commissioner Keon for -- when I saw that she put this on the agenda, she let me cosponsor it with her. Like the

Commissioner mentioned, we, as a community, have worked very diligently to ensure that hourly motels do not exist in the City of Coral Gables. Like the Commissioner mentioned, Wishes Motel has been complying and we've made sure through the police on a monthly basis -- and I don't want to give up too much information, obviously, because a lot of it's undercover work to make sure that compliance is adhered to. Also, the MOU between the City of Miami and Coral Gables has been incredibly effective, and I want the Police Chief to come up here to talk about it. Where -- it's my understanding where we've arrested over 100 people this year, and correct me if I'm wrong, involved in a bunch of different illegal activities on the Miami side. And that was the intent of the MOU. But before we get into that, I want to explain to you why we're here today. We're here today because a long time ago, this Commission -- I would say -- let me get the exact number from the ordinance -- 2016, when we passed this ordinance. I, along with Commissioner Keon, we started receiving phone calls and we started receiving emails from residents that live in the North Gables area. It wasn't just one. It was a lot of people calling saying that when they went out and they walked their dog or when they went out for a jog or just went out to the convenience store, they were engaged with people committing nefarious acts. Either it's prostitution, either it's drug dealing or there were suspicious individuals in the neighborhood -- that were cutting through the neighborhood. That's when it piqued my interest. And I have gone on multiple ride-alongs with the City of Coral Gables, the City of Miami and with Kathy Fernandez-Rundle's Office of Human Trafficking. And I have witnessed the activity associated around these motels. I've noticed a lot of -- I've seen johns arrested, some of them from our city, individuals who come down here looking for prostitutes, who I have seen personally enter the City of Coral Gables looking for a location that is quiet, that is desolate and is dark to commit a sex act with a prostitute. I've been there when that prostitute's been arrested and the john also. I've also been in the motels not only here in Coral Gables, but in the City of Miami and seen the activity that's there. So, I don't need to preach to the choir. I've said this before, and I remember Commissioner Mena's made multiple comments on the issue. As the father of two young daughters, to me, this type of behavior and seeing something before me is unacceptable if I don't do anything about it. This Commission has taken a great stand. Our police officers have worked diligently. Because just because a crime is occurring 30, 40, 50 feet away from the City of Coral Gables, we can't turn a

blind eye to that because those are the type of individuals that come to our city to commit crimes. A lot of the people that are enslaved into human trafficking or into prostitution with actual pimps, they're enslaved via a vehicle and that vehicle is drugs. It's addiction. I've seen those prostitutes committing those acts with -- basically as a result of them being addicted and having to continue their addiction and looking for money any way they can. So, what we're requesting today -- and I don't want to speak for Commissioner Keon, but I think that I -- she'll accept it, is that we are held accountable, every single person. This city here has done everything in its power to work with those motels, to work with different entities out there. We tried while we were negotiating annexation to, you know, be as flexible as possible so that if they were absorbed into the city like Commissioner Keon said it's not going to happen now. I was in favor -- always in favor and I mentioned it to my City Attorney for an upzoning. I was always in favor of assuring that, you know, if they came to the Commission, if they were willing to divert their attentions from hourly motel rentals, that we gave them the carrot and not the stick. And I can -- I think that's what the Commission was in favor. So, it's our responsibility and it will always be my responsibility to ask my colleagues in different commissions throughout Miami-Dade County to stop this type of behavior. With the Super Bowl forthcoming -- everybody knows that with the Super Bowl -- and the Chief will give you a little bit more data -- comes significant sex trafficking. So, I want the Chief to just talk a little bit quickly about the MOU, how effective the MOU has been, the fact that, like Commissioner Keon mentioned, a lot of these motels are magnets for illegal activities.

Police Chief Hudak: Correct. Thank you, Commissioner, Vice Mayor. In 2018, part of the MOU, we made 57 joint arrests with the City of Miami Police Department along the Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. That's both sides of Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street that but the City of Coral Gables jurisdiction. The second, 2019, this year, we've made 40 arrests. In 2019, we've had seven joint details since the beginning of the year. In 2018, we had five details. This does not include other undercover operations that I briefed you all on separately about the Wishes Motel in our jurisdiction. We've been there approximately eight times as well, and we had one violation that was subsequently -- gave them the warning and we continue to monitor that as well. To your point on the human trafficking and what it has to do with the NFL, the NFL has focused on that in other areas that

they've come to. Currently, your police department has one detective assigned and another commander assigned to assist in that. This is a joint effort with the State Attorney's Office, the Coral Gables Police Department, the City of Miami Police Department. It always has been for as long as I've been here. We have worked Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street to that -- to those specific complaints that have come up for the last, like I said, 35 years or so that I've been associated with the city. We continue to do this. Again, I believe that people find refuge in some of these areas to the point where even with the hourly arrangement that we have in Wishes Motel, they just change their plans. The days of meeting somebody on the street and going to that dark corner has now kind of transcended itself to people will meet online. They will establish a place to meet and they will go to one of these hotels, Wishes Motel. We've seen -- I've seen that firsthand. So, we continue to - - I believe the ordinance -- our ordinance gives us the ability to go in -- not necessarily in an undercover capacity, but also in a uniform capacity to check and make sure and to ask people how much did you pay. So, there is an advantage to having this. I will take any tool in the toolbox that you want to give us as far as when it comes to how we could better address the situation for everybody's quality of life in that area to include anybody that is enslaved in sex trafficking. You know, through most of these issues -- and I want to be very clear. When we do these operations, understand how we interdict first those people that would be soliciting for sex, male or female. And then we have undercover officers take those positions. We do see an uptick on people trolling, if you will, for a better term, and then we arrest those individuals that would be the "johns." We have had, on a few occasions, working with HSI and the Human Trafficking Section, working our way up to the people that are actually organizing the trafficking, the people that are making the most money out of this billion-dollar criminal syndicate. We continue to work with our other partner law enforcement agencies. I know there's a lot of rhetoric going around that we are not doing anything. As you all have known, as I will -- you know, I'm not at liberty to discuss it with any of you of what the undercover things because of those operations that we did have, we had to cancel one because somebody breached the confidence and identified one of our undercovers. That was a joint decision by myself and Chief Colina that we were not going to go forward. So, I think we continue to work this. Again, this is a tool that has been successful in the City of Coral Gables. We had one violation, as the City Attorney knows, with Wishes Motel on the hourly rate. But we

have continued to look at it and we have made other arrests in the Wishes Motel, not necessarily connected with human trafficking. So, we've had some other criminals that have done vehicle burglaries, things like that. Next month, you'll be hearing about the Officer of the Month who his arrest started by somebody at Wishes Motel where we were at and actually tied them back to several vehicle burglaries in the north end. So, it's a tool, not necessarily specific for human trafficking but for everything else that goes on in and around our city.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Fantastic, Chief.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Chief.

Police Chief Hudak: Thank you, sir.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We received yesterday a letter from Robert Fernandez, dated August 29, on this issue. And I'd like for the City Clerk to make it part of the record. Mr. Fernandez, you want to address this? Good morning, sir.

Robert Fernandez: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, and City Commissioners. My name is Robert Fernandez. I'm with the Gunster Yoakley Stewart law firm, 600 Brickell Avenue, Suite 3500, Miami, FL 33131. I'm here on behalf of Resorts of Dade, Inc., doing business as the Miami Executive Hotel. We're located at 4350 Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Miami, FL 33134. I appreciate the opportunity to speak today. I'll try to be brief. I just want to highlight a few of the points that I made in the letter from yesterday. First of all, my client has been operating approximately almost 40 years at this location on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. And as I attached -- and we have always tried to cooperate with law enforcement. As you saw -- if you had an opportunity to read my letter, I attached a lot of correspondence that my client has had with different law enforcement agencies over the years, both in cooperation and in seeking assistance from law enforcement. Also,

as Vice Mayor Lago might recall, at some point in 2017, Vice Mayor Lago met with my client, shared his concerns about what was going on in 8<sup>th</sup> Street in reference to some of the criminal activity, shared with us the fact that you were going to be seeking the interlocal agreement with the City of Miami creating this joint enforcement zone, which you just heard Chief Hudak talk about, from 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 42<sup>nd</sup>, and both the south and the north side of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. As you recall, when you went -- presented at the City of Miami Commission that interlocal agreement and seeking support from the City of Miami, I, on behalf of my client, got up and spoke as well in support of that on behalf of the motel/hotel businesses on 8<sup>th</sup> Street because it's the right thing to do from a public safety standpoint. And it also is good to make sure that the residents and the businesses on 8<sup>th</sup> Street are going to be safer from it. And I'm glad to hear from Chief Hudak that it's been working and that there have been, you know, more arrests in reference to that in the area. You know, the reason why I felt compelled to write the letter that I did on behalf of my client is that at some point in, you know, the debate about the annexation of the Little Gables area, it became, you know, frankly, a little expedient, you know, to pick on my client as a place of prostitution. And that is something that I have heard throughout the course of the annexation, which, you know, frankly, you know, was disheartening to hear that in light of, you know -- despite the long track record of working with law enforcement over the years, which you have all those documents, despite the fact that we spoke up in favor of the interlocal agreement because we do think it's a good thing for that community, and despite the fact that, you know, Chief Hudak, I believe, just on August 5, a short while ago, of 2019, was asked by somebody here on the dais, can you please tell me the incident and arrest report data from my client in particular, the Miami Executive Hotel. And I believe -- and he -- and I'm sure he can verify it for me. He said we've had seven calls for assistance, and those range from a customer complaint to there was a traffic stop that ended at my client's business to there was a stolen car that was found on the property. As far as I recall in listening to the tape very carefully, there was no mention of any arrest for prostitution, for any human trafficking, for anything in any regard for that whatsoever at my client's property. And I think he was looking at data from early 2018 when the joint enforcement zone was taking place, all the way to the date of when he made that presentation. So, despite all of that, you know, there has been this rhetoric, which I'd like to try to turn down saying that my

client's place is a place of prostitution simply because it's a short-term rental place. And frankly, I just don't think that's fair. And number one -- and secondly, not based on any facts or evidence that is before you. And so, you know, I am not going to sit here and tell you that that's not a problem. It is a problem, but it's going to be a problem anywhere. Not too long ago, there was reported in the Herald that there were three students that were arrested for prostitution in a sting that the City of Coral Gables did and it wasn't at the Wishes Motel. It was at the Colonnade. Is anyone going to get up here and say that the Colonnade is a prostitution place? Of course not. Respectfully, it could happen anywhere. It could happen at The Biltmore. It could happen at the Regis. It can happen anywhere. It's a serious issue that we all have to work together on. But no one would ever call those places a prostitution place. Places that are -- do a short-term rental are an easy target, and I understand that. But facts are important. And so, this Commission is certainly free to go ahead and pass this resolution, but please have it be based on data, on criminal statistics. And more importantly, I would just respectfully request that the inflammatory language as it relates to my client, which I frankly think is as a result of the annexation, which is a whole separate issue, needs to just stop. It's not productive. It's not helpful. It's only alienating my client and potentially others that would like to try to work with you and with law enforcement, you know, to try to combat this activity. So, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this issue because it is important to my client. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

Commissioner Keon: Can I ask...

Vice Mayor Lago: I think we...

Commissioner Keon: You a question?

Vice Mayor Lago: Have to respond.



Commissioner Keon: Could I ask you a question, please?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, please.

Commissioner Keon: What is the -- what was the basis for your -- or for these motels to be hourly rentals as opposed to most hotels that rent by the day? What is the bene -- I mean, why would you -- what do you -- I mean, what is the business model that you're seeking or the business client that you're seeking that would rent by the hour?

Mr. Fernandez: Commissioner Keon, I'm not here to try to defend to you or to convince you that...

Commissioner Keon: No, I'm just asking you.

Mr. Fernandez: That my client's business model is going to be one that you agree with. My only point in that is that my clients offer the option of a short-term rental or a daily rate as well.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mr. Fernandez: And my only concern is that because of the fact that we offer both options, some have sat there and made, you know, negative inferences and assumptions and innuendos about that particular establishment versus any other hotel that has to deal with these issues like -- just like we do. Everybody has to deal with it. Everybody has to be vigilant. I'm not going to sit here and pretend to get into the mind -- if adult consenting couples who are not conducting illegal activity want to do a short-term rental versus a full-day rental, then so be it. My only point is don't demonize my particular client's establishment without having any factual support, especially if we've gone out of our way to try to work with you. That's it.

Commissioner Keon: So, you rent by the hour for what -- for what reason was that?

Mr. Fernandez: We don't rent by the hour, first of all. It's a short-term rental versus a daily rate. And I think -- and I'm not going to sit here and be able to tell you why are all the reasons why somebody might do a short-term rental...

Vice Mayor Lago: But what constitutes...

Mr. Fernandez: Versus not.

Vice Mayor Lago: A short-term rental?

Mr. Fernandez: Several hours.

Vice Mayor Lago: Several hours. So, if somebody walks in there two hours, three hours, that would be a short-term rental?

Mr. Fernandez: Whatever the terms are for that particular hotel.

Vice Mayor Lago: Madam Commissioner...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Commissioner Keon: I...

Vice Mayor Lago: I...

Commissioner Keon: I mean, generally, hotels or hotel rooms are for accommodations generally for someone to -- while they're -- I guess they're traveling, or they don't have a home or -- you know, or they're away from home or for whatever reason they would rent a hotel room. I mean,

I've rented a lot of hotel rooms in my life, but I never rented one for less than a night. So -- but it seems there are -- there is a great deal of -- there is prostitution along 8<sup>th</sup> Street. They are out and, you know, publicly on the street and walking on the street. The police have told us when they have gone there -- Police Chief Hudak, you have been at the -- when -- over the years in patrolling 8<sup>th</sup> Street, you see prostitutes going into the hourly motels to...

Police Chief Hudak: Oh, I think we see them go -- I mean, there's a lot of different places. Sometimes they get in the cars, as Commissioner Lago...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Police Chief Hudak: Said.

Commissioner Keon: But...

Police Chief Hudak: I will tell you -- I can speak to the Wishes Motel.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Police Chief Hudak: When I was out probably two months ago while we were out on a unrelated traffic stop, a gentleman was dumped off by his john because they had arranged to meet at the Wishes Motel.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Police Chief Hudak: When we were there, they -- the client -- for lack of a better term -- decided to leave and left him there. We ended up getting the...

Commissioner Keon: Arranged for a ride home for him.

Police Chief Hudak: Yes, we did. We arranged -- we actually called his mother to come pick him up.

Commissioner Keon: To come pick him up.

Police Chief Hudak: But to the point on my statements specifically to the public meeting that we had, okay, we -- the interlocal agreement that we have does not cover, in this case, the Executive Motel on the south side. That is Miami-Dade County's jurisdiction.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Police Chief Hudak: Any of those reports that I referenced to were our assist other agencies...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Police Chief Hudak: Where we were there. If they have other intelligence reports that would not be public record, I don't have access to those through that police department.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, Commissioner, let me -- and I see your face basically. When somebody who says they want to rent a motel by the hour, it just doesn't make sense. I mean, if you need the free Wi-Fi, go to Starbucks. You know, and if you want to wash your hands, there's a free bathroom there too. But the way that business is conducted now when you talk about this type of nefarious activity, it's all handled by Backpage. Because when I was with -- when I've gone on major, a few stings with the City of Miami and the City of Coral Gables, with Kathy Fernandez-Rundle's office with Major Alfonso, who's no longer with the City of Miami, who retired, what they're doing is they basically -- they conduct the business via Backpage. And then the john,

which is the police officer, goes to fulfill that appointment and arrests the prostitute. The hourly rentals facilitate this. What I have seen personally myself -- so, just to respond to Mr. Fernandez. I'm neither blind nor turning a blind eye to it, and I had both Major Alfonso with me and a NET operator from the City of Miami who was with me at that moment. Those guys are not blind either. I've seen prostitutes get picked up. I've seen prostitutes fighting with their pimps on the street. I've seen drug dealers. I've seen johns pick up a prostitute. We followed them into Coral Gables where we arrested them. So, again, when you talk about Coral Gables and you talk about the Colonnade Hotel, yeah, I mean, of course, there was an incident where three UM students were arrested as a result of some sort of raid that occurred, or they assaulted...

Police Chief Hudak: Well, no. We...

Vice Mayor Lago: Or they assaulted the individuals.

Police Chief Hudak: So, understand, that was an intelligence report...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Police Chief Hudak: That came out of the University of Miami. The Police Department picked the Colonnade Hotel, and we did that specifically, so we could...

Vice Mayor Lago: Oh, okay.

Police Chief Hudak: Control...

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay.

Police Chief Hudak: We can control the arrest of the individuals.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Police Chief Hudak: So, that was not -- we -- they chose the Colonnade. The Police Department in setting up the operation chose the Colonnade Hotel because we could get our equipment into the room for whatever recordings we needed.

Vice Mayor Lago: Prostitution is the oldest business in existence. Could it happen in Coral Gables? Of course. And let's be honest with ourselves. Everybody knows and has heard that on 8<sup>th</sup> Street for years, for decades, it's a haven for crime and for prostitution. Why did we put up a geofence? Why did we have those issues about five, six years ago with the North Gables? And now, you've seen that taper down because we've been addressing it with the geofence, with the neighborhood safety aides, our police officers stepping up the patrolling. Because we're attacking the root of the problem. We're attacking it with the MOU. We're attacking it with this hourly piece of legislation. Let me ask you a quick question. In reference to March 5, 2019 -- this is the Wishes Hotel. This was the citation that was given out to the Wishes Hotel. Do you think that it's been effective, the daily versus the hourly rate that we have basically enforced on the Wishes Hotel? Have you seen crime and issues, you know, subsequent related crimes go down as a result of this type of legislation...

Police Chief Hudak: Has it had an...

Vice Mayor Lago: And its oversight.

Police Chief Hudak: Impact? Yes. I believe it's had an impact because the demand is not there where they could get -- you know, depending on who it is. If somebody wants to rent a room for half a day or a day and conduct ongoing business out of there, now, that just...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Police Chief Hudak: Makes my job easier to see if somebody has multiple visitors to a room. We can kind of draw a legal conclusion to stop and interview the individuals coming in and out, so yes, it has.

Vice Mayor Lago: And let me -- this is my last comment and I'm -- unless my colleagues have anything to say about this. The reason why this legislation is important -- and I hope that the City of Miami adopts it and other municipalities adopt it -- is because people aren't renting rooms by the hour to play Monopoly or Parcheesi or you know, hide and seek. Every time that I've walked into a room where there's a prostitute where we have picked up that prostitute on Backpage, there's drug paraphernalia, there's drugs in the room. And a lot of those people are forced into that type of lifestyle...

Police Chief Hudak: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: Because of their drug addiction. So, we have a decision to make. Do we think it's appropriate, even though it's in -- oh, it's not in my backyard. It's somebody else's backyard. But it's 30 feet away. No, we have to -- I think our responsibility as elected officials is to do resolutions, do ordinances, but to obviously roll out everything we have in our arsenal to try to help the residents of this community.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you want to make a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: I just wanted to make sure none of my colleagues...

Commissioner Mena: Can I just ask you a question?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, of course.

Commissioner Mena: When -- 2016, I think you said, when you passed the Coral Gables version of this ordinance, I presume at that time there was some discussion with City of Miami and/or the County about this. Do you -- and was there not...

Commissioner Keon: There was...

Commissioner Mena: Was there any sort of like urging them to do something similar at the time?

City Attorney Ramos: There was with Miami, not with the County.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: With Miami.

Commissioner Keon: Not with the County. Because the City of Miami was, for the most part, the neighboring jurisdiction.

Police Chief Hudak: It was across the street. So, the specific target of the MOU is the north and south side street of Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The tool that it gave us -- and this goes along with the hourly rates -- is that for years my officers would be on the south side of Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street. And what would happen is those soliciting clients would just go to the north side of Southwest 8<sup>th</sup> Street and we couldn't do anything. And since the MOU, we've done joint operations, but if our officer sees someone on the north side by a block or two, they can actually take action, you know, effect an arrest, along with an offense incident report. We call it an AOA, assist other agency. So now, that whole area has become proactively patrolled. Likewise, the City of Miami can do that only where the City of Coral Gables and the City of Miami meet. There is no agreement between Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami. It wouldn't involve us.



Vice Mayor Lago: So, the reason why this is important is because this is why we rolled out -- why I rolled out the MOU with then-Commissioner Suarez, who's now the Mayor. It was the importance of being able to address the issue, even if it's not in our backyard. Right now, I'm in the process of drafting -- and Miriam can give you a little bit more background on it, if you so need, a similar MOU with West Miami, which I think is a great opportunity for us to see -- you know, to always continue to work with our neighboring communities. Because again, just because it only -- doesn't happen in our borders doesn't mean that it's not affecting us. Remember, most of the crimes that are committed on Coral Gables residents are not committed by Coral Gables residents.

Police Chief Hudak: Correct.

Vice Mayor Lago: They are committed by people who are coming into our city committing an act -- again, be it their lifestyle, be it their addiction, whatever that may be. They have issues and they're coming here to rob or they're coming here to commit an act. So, it's a tool that, again, I think every police officer I've spoken to says it works. You and I rode together what, three months ago, four months ago? When was it?

Police Chief Hudak: About three months ago.

Vice Mayor Lago: About three months ago, we rode. We didn't ride enough that evening. We should have rode longer, but I had to get home early. But it's a tool that works. I think it's in our benefit. And like the Chief just said, the hour -- changing from hourly to the daily rate, it has its benefits. It doesn't -- it basically reduces the amount of individuals that are involved in these nefarious activities basically inhabiting these areas.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner -- I mean, Vice Mayor, I think we've discussed this...

Vice Mayor Lago: Ad nauseum?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: Ad nauseum?

Commissioner Fors: If I...

Vice Mayor Lago: I don't know if my colleague wants to say anything.

Commissioner Fors: Mayor, I'd like to say...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Fors: I have a few questions for the Chief.

Vice Mayor Lago: Sure.

Commissioner Fors: And by the way, I think the MOU is an excellent tool too. I think we should use it as much as we can and exhaust everything that we can do under it. I want to be clear because I wasn't clear from your -- I guess, from the Vice Mayor's summary of your response. And I want to make sure we're not throwing a pebble at the problem because I do think there's a problem that we need to address now that the MOU, you know, does a good deal of that. Is it your opinion that hourly rentals does increase the activity of -- the prostitution activity at these motels?

Police Chief Hudak: Well, I believe it increases the activity no matter what, whether it be illicit activity or not. Here is what I call a tool in the toolbox. If you have an hourly rate, people can go in and out of a room on a regular basis basically every hour and be customers. If we are aware of that, there's really not any reason for an investigative stop, right, for any of those people. Now, if we have somebody who has a half-day or a day rate and we see several people going in and out of

that room, then we have a good reason, knowing the history -- not at that location but in that area -- to do an investigative stop. And again, it's not so much about busting the prostitutes. It's about stemming the human trafficking, and that's where we have found it to be most advantageous for us to intervene with the individual before they get back to whoever that controlling person is or that "pimp" is. I mean, we arrest a lot of johns. Listen, we bring this to ourselves when we start to put our officers out. And I don't want -- I can't downplay that enough. You know, we arrest a few of the prostitutes. Then we put our decoys out and we're literally beating off people because they're stopping. That area is known. So, we are kind of bringing that on, and I'm okay with doing that because we will find some people in their criminal history that have ties to human trafficking organizations. So, that's a gamble that I'm willing to take, along with the City of Miami Police Department that the more we do these, the more we're going to find that pinnacle person who is making -- who is bringing in the people. And that's why part of our task force operation with HSI is to follow the money, not just take these girls off the street or guys off the street but get them help.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Any more comments?

Unidentified Speaker: Nope.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. Will you make a -- somebody, make a motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: So move. Commissioner...

Commissioner Keon: Second.

Vice Mayor Lago: Keon.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's been moved and seconded. Will you call the roll, please?

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Fantastic.

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Could we make sure that...

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: That every municipality, the County and the League of Cities receives a copy of this?

City Clerk Urquia: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.