

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-4
October 23, 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, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Police Chief, Ed Hudak

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-4 [11:53:35 a.m.]

A Discussion regarding the protective bollards installed throughout the City.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Mena)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Bollards – H-4, Commissioner Mena.

Commissioner Mena: This was just a follow-up to the discussion we had back in, let's see, I have the transcript here, a year ago, October 24, 2017, where our Insurance Advisory Panel had come to us with the issue of bollards and just analyzing with public safety security issues. This was following one of the incidents in Europe, I think it was in Barcelona, if I recall correctly. So we had a discussion then, I have the transcript here, I'd asked that it be attached to the item, but it wasn't, but if we could fix that. Obviously, we had this issue two weeks ago where a car, I'm sure all of you heard and saw, drove into the window at the Barnes and Nobel on Miracle Mile. This was an accident, it happens; and I just wanted to sort of – I had recalled that we had this discussion on bollards and sort of evaluating what I think comes down to what an acceptable level of risk is, because the reality is, you can't at the end of the day prevent and preclude somebody from driving on any pedestrian right-of-way, a hundred percent full-proof, but this

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being a high pedestrian area, I just wanted to circle back to it and just make sure that we are looking at this. By given this recent incident we are sort of evaluating if there are any weaknesses that we should be concerned about and just making sure that we are thinking about that going forward.

Police Chief Hudak: Yes sir – and again, I think our constant strategies of what we had changed since the first conversations that you referenced. We do have a comprehensive triple redundant plan when we have major events. So the placing of stages, the placing of our larger fleet utility trucks, both police, fire apparatus, the trolleys, we incorporated all that along with additional vehicle neutralizing type of secondary devices so somebody....plough into that. The other part of that is also what we call the operation over-watch, which is a high-rise kind of observation deck for the police department to look at some of the other threats that have posed to other places in the United States. The day-to-day operations on the Mile and taking into account, I hesitate to call them bollards, almost like bumps or curbing, kind of like a modular curbing. What we found in this accident that we are speaking of specifically, definitely driver error. They were charged in it. The natural reaction according to the individual was while parallel parking the wheels were already at a degree. The collision point for the bump, if you will, or the speed was actually at an angle, which sent them into the store itself. And I would defer to our engineers, but for us to make that totally safe on walking, we couldn't have a break and it would be putting up like Jersey barricades.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Police Chief Hudak: Don't think that's something that the City wants to and I wouldn't recommend that, to make it, and as you said livable, accessible be it not a deterrent and that's kind of on Miracle Mile. So the bumps right now, the parking bumps are in place if there was a curb in that area. What we have seen and I can defer, I can bring some of our traffic reconstruction experts in, that kind of jettisons up a vehicle in these similar situations. The pictures from our crime lab that took, even this case on a straight level surface was raised up into the store. A lot of people thought it was a doorway, but it's probably a two and-a-half, three foot wall that it went up and over into the area itself. Curbs sometimes give that even more of a trajectory. So, that's something else that we have to take into consideration when we are reconstructing these accidents. As far as Giralda, once the decision is made on that, we do have actual bollards there that were put in there. We would reinforce those when we do have events, kind of like when we talked about the different skies that we put up, the Umbrella Sky. When the police department is there we are actually using those vehicles. As much as people get upset that I think we are taking a cheap parking space that's not necessarily the case. We like to have our vehicles there only because of that would help us deter someone from trying to come through, but also kind of set a signal that the police department is in that area. So again, I think what we are seeing on Miracle Mile, and I actually rode it again this morning, as people are starting to

park those cars, it's kind of saving them from going up on a regular basis up onto the flat line of Miracle Mile. Having those vehicles parked there is also another deterrent. This was an accident. The individual's wheels were in a perfect position, but when he thought he was hitting the break, he went forward rickshayed off the car in front and then hit the gas again, rickshayed off of where we have the parking bump and then up into the store. And again, thank God that the individual in the store was not seriously injured.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: A lot of these things are inevitable. My office was for many, many years at One Biscayne Tower and there was a car thought he was going to hit the break, hit the accelerator and drove off the 13th floor and there was a concrete barrier, drove off the 13th floor onto Biscayne Boulevard.

Police Chief Hudak: And again, to do something for me to tell you all that, OK, it's as safe as it could be for pedestrian and the Manager and I had this conversation. I can't have a break and anything up other than something that you can walk through. So, I don't think we want to put Jersey barricades down Miracle Mile. I think having those cars there, the valet parks, the valet pick-up stations are always manned, those people when they are pulling it in, so there's that constant traffic. The parking bumps, if you will, even if we reinforce them, I don't know if that would definitely change anything, only because there's still too much space for somebody to go through and careen off in this case. This wasn't a head-on. This stops people from backing up and most of the impacts that we see are somebody bumping into the car. With the sensors it's kind of slowed that down as well. This traffic accident, although alarming, happens on a regular basis, we see it. It was driver error. In this case the parking bump itself probably prevented just from where everybody was positioned, because there was a second person that was standing on the sidewalk and the rickshay off that, probably saved that person from getting literally run over. From where they were standing, the second time, its illustrated on the traffic diagram that when it hit the second thing, it really kind of did its job and sent it much to the dismay of the man inside the store, but sent him toward the window.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Some books were ruined.

Police Chief Hudak: Some books were ruined, yes sir.

Commissioner Mena: I assume the vehicles that are parked parallel to the mile are obviously a natural sort of barrier that you have.

Police Chief Hudak: Exactly. That does create an extra level – and this is what we are doing when we do a tree lighting. As much as we like to show off some of our trucks, there is a strategic plan in place every time we do that. That is also backed up by other things that we just don't advertise to make sure that we can disable a vehicle that would enter into that area, plus we

have what we call the over-watch, which is obviously funded by the department to keep us safe from up above, so to speak, without going into...

Commissioner Mena: On special events you guys, you and Fire obviously do a great job. We had that Disability Awareness Month event two weeks ago, and there was a fire truck positioned at the end and another one on the other side.

Commissioner Lago: One was the tree lighting, remember the tree lighting.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: The Christmas Tree lighting was also wonderful.

Commissioner Mena: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Anything else Commissioner?

Commissioner Mena: No. I think that's it. Again, I just ask that you continue to evaluate.

Police Chief Hudak: We continue and we've talked to the Manager on a couple of...I think as Giralda goes forward and once this body makes a decision on what it is, I think there is a lot of other things that we can do as a City. The façade on the front of this building was also with a bollard type of situation in mind, in front of the police department. It's not just putting a bollard in there to stop something at a certain rate gets extremely large to do that and I think that's where, like if I were to tell you. If we wanted to make Miracle Mile safer for our pedestrians, we would have to put Jersey barricades all the way down the side and I don't think it's necessary, because you can't get there the way the fountains are and everything else like that, you can't just drive down the sidewalks easily. Can it be done? - absolutely, but I don't think it's as easy....

City Manager Iglesias: Bollards are normally designed for a load of 7,500 pounds, so if we go beyond that then we have to go to much, maybe like what the federal government is using in similar buildings, but then again of course you create a situation where you can't use the street very well, there is usability issue; and we are coming to a point where what do we – do we get a Jersey barrier or do we get bollards, how many things do we do?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you for putting this on the Commission, because I received several e-mails in regards to...Commissioner Mena already took care of it. There were several people, not only business but also residents who have a concern.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

[End: 12:04:15 p.m.]