

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-4
May 22, 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
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Ed Santamaria
Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-4 [2:34:54 p.m.]

An update on Traffic Calming Initiatives currently in process at Miami-Dade County
(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Traffic calming.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission, for the record. Ed Santamaria, Director of Public Works. Commissioner Lago has asked for an update on our traffic calming initiatives with Miami-Dade County on a global level, meaning all the initiatives that we have in play at Miami-Dade County. I'm happy to report that on a 30,000 foot view, things are moving forward in a positive track. We've gotten a lot more cooperation with the County.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What does that mean?

Public Works Director Santamaria: It means...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We've been on a positive track for months.

Public Works Director Santamaria: It means that we are very, very close on attaining what we desire on a number of initiatives.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What do you mean desire?

Public Works Director Santamaria: We desire a new system where the traffic criteria are beneficial to us and we think we are very close on that. In fact, the final set of comments at the site the County had for us were something that we can live with, in our opinion. We don't think it really impacts on the numbers for us in terms of making decisions and judgements in terms of deploying traffic calming citywide. We are also very close in establishing a final draft of the interlocal agreement. We are also very close on a number of issues that we are working on, including "Blueberts" and Aragon, DeSoto.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Can you describe what "Blueberts" are, because I think you are the only one...

Public Works Director Santamaria: "Blueberts", I'm sorry, it's the area bounded by...

Commissioner Lago: That's the term that you and I use.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Right – exactly. Blue and Berg and Red and Alhambra, which is the area where we had the diverters removed by the County.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well what about the rest of the City?

Public Works Director Santamaria: The rest of the City...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Not thinking about Alhambra Circle, I'm thinking about North Greenway where you have cars at 50 and 60 miles an hour, they don't live there and it's disgusting.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Mr. Mayor, I think the rest of the City is going to be handled through the interlocal agreement of Miami-Dade County, which as I said before, we are very close on. So, I'm giving you a bird's eye view of this. For a more granular discussion on all the different initiatives, I am deferring to Jessica Keller who has been involved boots on the ground since the inception of the multiple modal plan.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Two months?

Public Works Director Santamaria: I think we are talking about a matter of months for certain initiatives.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We've been talking about a matter of months forever. Why don't we do something and then ask for forgiveness.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Mr. Mayor we are working within the conditions of the system and there are things that we can do...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They are going to sit on it.

Public Works Director Santamaria: There are things that we can do sir that we are going to be doing quite soon.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Public Works Director Santamaria: There are things that we can do that we are going to be doing.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm not satisfied at all that we are moving ahead with any kind of speed or movement.

Ms. Keller: One thing I would like to add is that the schedule that we provided you in January, we have adhered to it to the best of our ability. We have made an assumption back in January that the County would take about eight weeks to review our proposal. We are at the ten week mark right now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK.

Ms. Keller: To be fair, it's gone back and forth a couple of times, so it took about six weeks for the County to give us their first round of comments and we turned that around within two weeks, it's been two weeks back and forth since then. Right now the criteria...

Commissioner Lago: You are talking about the MOU, correct?

Ms. Keller: Yes. I'm talking about the traffic calming criteria is being reviewed by the Assistant Director and once she is, I believe, is the last stop at that point in time.

Commissioner Mena: This was, if I recall correctly, this was basically in response to their comments. We had to resubmit things, is that right?

Ms. Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: So, assuming you – is there any reason to believe they are not going to approve what you resubmitted?

Ms. Keller: At this point in time there is no reason to believe that...

Commissioner Mena: Because you did the things they asked you to do, right.

Ms. Keller: We've done everything we've been asked to do.

Commissioner Lago: Can you do me a favor? Can you provide me with a very simple e-mail, copy the City Manager, copy the City Attorney. Madam City Attorney can you write a letter on our behalf to Rebeca Sosa, Commissioner Sosa, excuse me, and Commissioner Suarez, along with the County Mayor, if my colleagues agree, basically giving them an update in regards to where we are in a very nice and respectful way asking for assistance, so we can get to the final end goal here. Can we do that or no? Do you agree with me or no? I want to know. I want to make sure.

Commissioner Mena: Yes. The only thing I would ask here is, do they think that's going to help the process or that's going to hurt the process.

Commissioner Keon: I think it helps if you call on your local affected Commissioners and ask them if they can help move it along.

Commissioner Lago: If you notice, I added at the end of that and I agree with your comments, that's why I added these comments, if you notice, playing into you exactly what you said, in a very respectful manner. Build everybody up; build staff at the County, Ms. Bravo, everyone and say listen, we are at the end of this, we worked so hard, our residents are in dire need. Maybe include some language in regards to the hundreds of thousands of individuals that drive through our City every single day and then maybe the Mayor can sign it and CC us all.

City Attorney Ramos: I was going to suggest, I'm happy to draft it. I think it may be better if it's going to the elected officials that it comes from the Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'll be very happy to do it, because I'm very frustrated.

Commissioner Lago: And then, I'll speak to Commissioner Suarez at the County and then what I'll do is he can put it as an agenda item on the Commission floor and I'll bring it up at the TPO also, at our next TPO meeting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, I realize that you are doing everything you can. My complaint is with the County and how long it takes for them to do anything.

Commissioner Mena: I think Commissioner Lago and I talked about this, I want to say at the Budget Workshop, I forget what meeting it was at, but let's start doing what we need to do on our end regarding concurrency and other issues so that once we get to the finish line with the County, we are ready to rock and roll and get moving with this.

Commissioner Lago: Just to dovetail on Commissioner Mena's comments and I hope the City Manager is listening to me and she always is. My number one item is traffic calming. I think Keon's was like two, Mena was two, Quesada is number one, I'm speaking for him, and the Mayor is probably top ten also. Everybody agreed this is number one priority, traffic calming; it's always in their top ten. So, I don't know how else we can tell staff that we are 110 percent behind you. Just tell us what you need us to do and we'll do it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, I think your suggestion of the letter is a very good one. If you can draft it, I sign whatever.

City Attorney Ramos: Commissioner Lago, I think you made a motion.

Commissioner Lago: I make the motion.

Commissioner Mena: I'll second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: All those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Opposed. Good.

Commissioner Lago: And, I would like to have on a monthly basis an update on City Commission items just on this item. I know we can discuss it on my Initiatives Tracker, if you want, but I'd like to always have this here so we can help you get to whatever destination we are hopefully going to get at, in reference to traffic calming.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Mena: But please, really start setting up meetings with us to talk about those other issues that we need to start working on, so that we are ready to go.

Public Works Director Santamaria: So, tomorrow I have a meeting on schedule to discuss concurrency. We already have a draft of some policy that we are reviewing internally with ACM Iglesias and then we'll start to meet with you individually to discuss concurrency and other issues.

Commissioner Mena: Great.

Commissioner Lago: I'd like to make sure that we send this letter out by Friday please.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Let us know what you need from us Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Ramos: I'll need all the facts, the timeline, etc.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

[End: 2:42:18 p.m.]