

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-3
June 2, 2026
Public Safety Building, CMR
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz
Jackson Rip Holmes

Agenda Item F-3 [Start: 4:39 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission directing the City Manager not to proceed with any major capital improvements that would require temporarily ceasing operations at the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center until the reverter clause in the deed to the property has been modified to address the City Commission's concerns regarding its potential interpretation; and directing the City Attorney to pause on litigation efforts until further direction is provided by the City Commission. (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Item F-3.

City Attorney Suarez: F-3 is a resolution of the City Commission directing the City Manager not to proceed with any major capital improvements that would require temporarily ceasing operations at the Coral Gables Memorial Youth Center until the reverter clause in the deed to the property has been modified to address the City Commission's concerns regarding its potential interpretation

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

1

June 2, 2026

Agenda Item F-3 – Resolution of the City Commission directing the City Manager not to proceed with Any major capital improvements that would require temporarily ceasing operations at the Youth Center

and directing City Attorney to pause on litigation efforts until further direction is provided by the City Commission.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: This was an item I brought in an effort to try to help reach a resolution with the World Memorial Youth Center. The reverter clause has been a point of contention because of its lack of clarity for some time. And this particular resolution would put a pause on doing major capital improvements other than the maintenance that's required for our normal operations, but not a teardown of the building without having the reverter clause addressed. It's a one-way street right now that if misinterpreted or misapplied or a lawsuit begins, and the property is reverted back to the World Memorial Youth Center, there is no requirement for that organization to continue to run a facility as it is intended to be run for the benefit of the youth. They get the property rights and there's no obligation going forward. But that is the reasoning behind this resolution to try to bring closure to this issue.

Mayor Lago: Anyone else on the Commission? I know you have a following item on F-4, so.

Commissioner Lara: Well, actually what I want to do is I wanted to withdraw F-4 and continue conversation and dialogue regarding F-3.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Okay. Would you like to address it now?

Commissioner Lara: Well, no, I wanted to say, since we're on that on obviously the F-3. The intent behind what F-4 was, interestingly, the Vice Mayor and I, obviously we don't confer on these things in advance.

Mayor Lago: So, you're not violating the sunshine law?

Commissioner Lara: Right, because I'm not committing a violation of Sunshine. But I do think that great minds think alike. And we both, and not maybe inconsequentially, we're both attorneys and we're kind of thinking the same way. How do you get to an elegant solution or resolution or an elegant exit off a highway of imminent filing of litigation, right. So, I always feel that litigation will be the last resort, the least preferred path, always. If there's any way to avoid litigation because there's a legitimate dispute, you must exhaust all reasonable alternate avenues. I think that the Vice Mayor has come up with an interesting one, right. Because, and maybe this is the way, without rehashing it all right here, the concern has always been, among others, but the main concern has been, is truly the effect of the reverter clause, how any challenge can come at any time with respect to its interpretation. So to allow some oxygen into the room, to allow the parties to explore without any undue pressure or undue, if the case may be, personal feelings being involved, none of which that I have or share, to be able to figure out what makes sense for all the parties to put a pause on the litigation, to do so until such time as this reverter clause matter, the parties can sit down and come to a resolution. And the biggest concern would be the major capital investiture, right.

City Commission Meeting

Certainly, I understand and believe that the city wouldn't be in a position, shouldn't be in a position to invest millions of dollars and still have unresolved the uncertainty that presently the reverter raises. So, I would be supportive of the-- I am supportive of the Vice Mayor's resolution, again, with the common view that we both share of wanting to explore a resolution short of litigation by giving everybody a fair and reasonable opportunity to do so.

Mayor Lago: So, my colleagues don't have anything else to like to say, I just give you my thoughts on this. I'm ready to move forward. I think we've, no pun intended, over litigated this conversation. We've given three opportunities for the members of the board to show up. We have been stood up at the dance three times. I'm not an attorney, thank God. But anybody will tell you who's a litigator and I have one on my left and one to my right, that in these moments, you cannot show weakness. You cannot give up your hand or at the end of the day, they won't take you seriously. They do not take us seriously already, okay. You've had multiple members of that board leave the board. As a matter of fact, one left two weeks ago, the vice chair, I think, is no longer part of the board. And there is no transparency. There is no need to discuss it or argue it or belabor the point. We've had this over and over again. We can talk about five years of not being an active 501(c)3, you know, not providing documentation. This is supposed to be our partner. This is supposed to be our partner. I think it's a great move to freeze all major capital projects. Let me give you one final example. And that is in five years, in five years, and I'm sending out today a letter out to all the residents, an email, excuse me. It will detail the success of the pension, the leadership of the Manager. We started in 2015 funding significantly more than we needed to. One of the items that came out of that pension board meeting was that if we continue to overfund the pension and the economy continues to move forward as it's been moving forward over the next five years, we'll have about \$25 million, correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Manager

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct Mayor.

Mayor Lago: About \$25 million of excess monies that we will no longer have to attribute to paying down the pension. We'll be close to 98, 99% funded. Right now, we're almost 80% funded. We're right there. We continue smoothing. We're right there, 77, 78%. We've done a heavy lift. We've done a heavy lift since it's going from almost 50% when we started overfunding the pension in 2015. Why do I say that? In five years, we can basically renovate the complete Youth Center. By the time that we've done the plans, we've entitled it, we've gotten them approved, we've selected a contractor. It probably takes about two and a half years. And then when you build it, it takes another two years. The thing about it could be about a five-year process. If you're socking away \$25 million, you could potentially pay that renovation in cash. How can you make an investment of this magnitude? By the way, remember what Kirk Menendez wanted to spend, close to \$175 million on a bond issuance, which I voted against. Thank God I voted against that, because right now the city will be paying a lot of money as our taxes are being cut. So, I cannot support renovating significantly. And by the way, I'm all for it. I think the Youth Center deserves a master

City Commission Meeting

renovation after we've completed with City Hall and the Mobility Hub. I think that is the next big project. We've done Venetian Pool. We're going to do now the Water Tower. We're going to do the Gondola Building, which are smaller projects. But probably the magnitude of the Youth Center requires real attention and real commitment. We can't do that knowing that there's a reverter. What have I proffered over and over and over again? And for some reason, I'm not sure why they don't take it seriously. Either a covenant, or I'm willing to go even further and to require a referendum. There's the constant ridiculous statements by the blogs that are said that we're going to sell the Youth Center, or we're going to redevelop the Youth Center into some multifamily. It's a political ploy, the politics. They stoke the fires, they scare people. I mean, that's pure insanity. We're in the business of trying to acquire as much land. Look what we're doing today. We're acquiring the neighboring building of City Hall. And wait till they hear about our, we're almost there, Mr. Manager. We're almost there. Well, we are there conceptually. We're there. We finally got the agreements. We're going to paper it up. Your office is going to paper it up, and we're going to deliver on the largest piece of land in private hands. And we'll bring that into the city. And what are we going to do? We're going to put a covenant on it so that it'll remain a park in perpetuity and you cannot build anything on it. But we're about protecting green spaces. So, it pains me to see people get scared for political ploy and political reasons. But thank God we didn't approve that \$175 million bond issuance. So, to me, I'm in favor of that. I just think, I just asked my colleague, the Vice Mayor and Commissioner Lara to put a bookend on it. If you want to freeze litigation and effort that the two parties can come together and have a real conversation, I'm all for it. Look, we're doing our part. We've invited them in here three times. They stood us up at the dance three times. We've said, okay, we're going to freeze litigation now for three months. So hopefully we can meet and come to an agreement. And then we're going to make a commitment in three years to spend a significant amount of money to design and remodel or rebuild the Youth Center, to be honest with you. Maybe take a complete rebuild. We're going to give you three months to have these conversations or two months by the end of September 1st, we want to be ready to go. And then we will move on to litigation. But the idea that in perpetuity, we could just say, hey, we're going to freeze litigation. I'm not in favor of that. That would be a no vote. But I'm willing to support my colleagues on this because I think it's that we have to address this issue once and for all, because I don't think it's appropriate to have these constant fears and these constant lies that are being said that we're going to develop the Youth Center. I mean, that is sacrilegious in my eyes. So, I don't know how you'd like to do it, Vice Mayor. I kind of.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I mean, my concern for that property is more the fact that the exact opposite could happen if we end up in litigation. If the War Memorial Youth Center interprets that a certain percentage was not met because we have such vagueness in this reverter clause that opens it up to anybody's opinion, which we have many different opinions in the room about how much is too much in the way of adult activity versus youth activity on that site. So, the exact opposite is my concern. While they claim and think that City of Coral Gables is going to develop the property, it's

City Commission Meeting

more my concern that somebody down the line, whomever is on the board, and we don't know who's going to be on the board in the future, actually is the individual that's not going to maintain it as a Youth Center, has no requirement to maintain it as a Youth Center and could do something else with the property that is clearly not in the best interest of the residents of the City of Coral Gables. So, in order to maintain this property going forward, we have to put a bookend on the fact that we're not going to make this major capital investment unless they come sit down at the table and renegotiate this reverter clause. As far as a bookend on litigation.

Mayor Lago: A bookend on this grace period, more and more like, sorry to interrupt you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: On the grace period, I can take another look at that and address that in the future. I don't know what time period is appropriate there. Commissioner Lara, do you have any thoughts on that matter?

Commissioner Lara: My, through the Mayor, my view on this is that, I think that looking at it from a different angle is that both the, well, it's the current board, the board that we're dealing with, is desirous of the same things that we would be desirous of, ultimately, is that when the time's appropriate for a capital improvement of a material and major scope, we all would want that. It is that common desire to get to that end point that then the city has leverage to get their attention so that we can come to a resolution regarding the reverter clause. I think that if people will be reasonable about the concerns that have been raised for a very long time at this point to reach agreement that will protect all interests, then the leverage that the city has is that we're going to hold off on making the capital improvement of a material size, right. Because then we would be subverting our responsibilities to the residents with respect to millions and millions of dollars of potential expenditure. So, I think, Mayor, that there's great benefit to putting a pause, not losing the momentum, continuing the conversations, but always understanding that if the parties can't come together for resolution, the keys to the cell are in their hands if they want to resolve the reverter clause with us. If not, we have to protect what otherwise would be a major capital improvement expenditure. So, the way that this is presently phrased, I'm still supportive of it, the way that the Vice Mayor has it.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, Commissioners, this facility is a dated facility. There's no fixing it. If we were to do a new facility, it would probably be around now, around 70 to \$75 million. And it's very dated. It's older buildings. It would have to be torn down. That means that there will not be a youth center for two years, two and a half years. And so, what happens when there is no youth center? And technically, it's not a youth center. I think I would rather have the control on the City Commission than any board from any place else. But there's no fixing this building. Really, if we're going to go to something new and something, and it really warrants it because it's an incredible

City Commission Meeting

facility used by my nephew, by my son, by everyone. And you have the kids of kids now using this facility. So, it's not a facility that can be, that-- we're not dealing with a correction of the facility. We're doing a complete reconstruction of this facility, which means there is no youth center for maybe two or two and a half years.

Mayor Lago: And there's an opportunity, Mr. Manager there, where we're going to take that drastic step. We're going to spend, let's say \$100 million on a facility of this magnitude. Then let's make it the best. Let's dream big. What do I mean by that? You have an intersection, a street that runs between the library and the youth center. Maybe we combine those streets, making the youth center even bigger. Man, these are just thoughts, ideas that we can work. We own the library. So, at the end of the day, we can do something even better. We're going to have combined parking. Maybe we do something in the youth center where, again, there's actual, speaking out loud, underground parking. You know, it's expensive.

City Manager Iglesias: A tremendous master plan.

Mayor Lago: You could do something beautiful. Or you can do a master plan with A, B, and C, and then have different pricing in regard to the magnitude of it, which is something that we've always done. For example, we did with this building. Remember, we talked about additional floors. We saw the cost. And, you know, sometimes I regret we didn't do an additional floor here.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor we talked about elevated swimming pool.

Mayor Lago: Remember that?

City Manager Iglesias: Running decks, underground parking. I mean, the site really lends itself to a lot of, to a tremendous project. In 31, if we take care of the pension plan, then it would give us about \$25 million of additional funding at that time. But I do think that the building, there's no saving the building.

Mayor Lago: And what we need to do is make sure we're going to have this real conversation. If you want to put a freeze on capital and we're going to have this real conversation, that's fine, but there has to be a timeframe for this conversation. It just can't be, you know, we'll see you in six months. We'll see you in two years. We'll see you in five years. It has to say, okay, let's sit down and have a conversation. Let's see what comes out of it. Designate somebody from the Commission to be involved in those conversations with the Manager and the City Attorney. And we have a real sit-down conversation to see how we can find consensus. But I would just ask that my colleagues, I'm willing to give. I'm just asking that my colleagues put a bookend on it so that we can come back and say, look, these are our findings. This is what transpired. That's all I'm asking.

Commissioner Fernandez: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, this conversation continues to happen as if the City of Coral Gables had oversight over this association, but it's actually the other way around. The association was created as a mechanism to protect residents and ensure that the Coral Gables Youth Center always remained a youth center. You know, and as I continue to hear this conversation, there was one word that came to mind and I didn't want to say it unless I looked up the definition. Obtaining money, property or services through coercion, intimidation or the wrongful use of threats. It's exactly what's going on here. It's extortion. We're trying to extort a foundation or an association that was created to protect the residents in order to secure a change in an agreement that we already had. And we just heard, well, you know, we're going to make a covenant on this property so that it doesn't become X, Y or Z. Yet now we're trying to change a reverter, which is, yes, a covenant agreement that was made with the association way back in the day when the property became the city's to use for the youth center. And I understand you all have concerns about the use of the funding and we're not there yet. We have no money in the budget right now for youth center capital projects. There's been discussions for the last, probably six or seven years, but it hasn't materialized. We're talking about a large sum of money for the renovations of the center. You know, and we hear, oh, people are being scared into believing that it's going to be redeveloped. What is the reason we're trying to get rid of the reverter? The reverter is there to ensure that the residents of Coral Gables always have a youth center to rely on. That property will never change its use. If we're talking about making changes, underground garages, all that sounds great, but it does not change the fact that something has to protect that property to ensure it is always a youth center. And look, I trust that the five of us up here have the desire of keeping it a youth center. I don't believe anybody up here has a desire of changing it into something else, into selling the property. That's not what I believe. I believe we do have the best intention in mind of preserving the youth center, but I think we're spending a ton of money going after an association to try to change a reverter, which is there to protect our residents. That's why I'm not supportive of this. I don't believe we should have gone into litigation to begin with. I believe, I mean, we are asking an organization that oversees us to provide us with documentation so that we can find a way to get away from a reverter. Yet to this day, Mr. Clerk, have we released all of the public records that were requested under discovery?

City Clerk Urquia: We have not released anything. We're still going back and forth on what was requested.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, this is an organization that oversees us, and we have not released records, putting ourselves in a situation where they can file paperwork tomorrow to take the youth center away. Just because we have not released our records, proving that we're using it for the right purposes. So, I think going down this rabbit hole, again, we're trying to use muscle power to try to get something that we don't even have a right to request. You don't go buy a car and then show back up at the dealer 10 years later and say, hey, I want to renegotiate the contract that I signed on

the car because it doesn't work for me anymore. It doesn't work. That's not the way it works in reality. And let's call it what it is. This is political, 100% political.

Mayor Lago: You're done, sir?

Commissioner Fernandez: I'm done.

Mayor Lago: Okay, good. First and foremost, Madam Vice Mayor, in a typical Commissioner Fernandez way, he doesn't give you all the information. This is good for a sound clip on the Gazette or Con Leche or whatever it is they call it. Mr. Clerk, will you do me a favor? Will you put on the record, even though it won't make it tomorrow, maybe the Herald will print it, how large was their public records request?

City Clerk Urquia: It was an extensive public records request. We're going back and forth with the association in order to narrow it down to determine a number that is somewhat accurate and realistic.

Mayor Lago: Okay, I'm going to ask you again. I'm going to ask you again. I know you want to protect the city. You do, it's okay. But we have to show how ridiculous the public record was. Because somebody who is serious, and this is why I want to make sure the Vice Mayor understands this as per proposal, they are not serious. They haven't come here three times. They're not protecting the youth center. You know why they're not protecting the youth center? Because they can't even keep their 501c3 active for five years. That's not serious. That's not a firm or an entity that's serious. They don't even keep their own records in order. But Mr. Clerk, I'm going to ask you, please, to tell me how large of a public records request did they make and what was the cost of that public records request?

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I don't have the exact number right now, but I want to say it's upwards of 200 million emails. We worked back and forth to try to reduce the scope of the public records request. The last number was something around 20 million emails. But we're still going back and forth before providing them with an estimate on how much it would cost to produce over 20 million emails from the city.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, how long have you been part of the City of Coral Gables?

City Clerk Urquia: 2003.

Mayor Lago: So, you're 23 years here, correct?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, sir.

Mayor Lago: Amazing, congratulations. You learned from one of the best. And you have this lovely young lady here who works with you, who's your right hand. Let me ask you a question. In your 23 years of being the Assistant Clerk and now learning under Walter Foeman, who we miss him a lot, is this the largest public records request you've ever seen in your life?

City Commission Meeting

City Clerk Urquia: Without a doubt, sir.

Mayor Lago: So, when you say these things, it just adds credence to my statement that they're not serious. What they're trying to do is bog us down in the mud. But that's fine. And my colleagues don't want to do it. I don't have a problem. I'm ready to move on. They're not protecting anything because you know who protects us? The City of Coral Gables does. Why? Because we maintain it. Because the Manager goes out there with the DCM and ACM and staff and they deal with people and they address the maintenance of the building and they're there in the building. Anybody who sits on that board and puts their entire family on the board is not doing what's in the best interests of the city. And we may disagree with it and want to continue to play politics. That's politics at its finest. That's politics. You can maintain control of the board. So, hundreds of millions of requests in regard to public records requests, being invited here three times and not coming here. We can go back and forth all day. I'll vote in favor of this. I don't have a problem. Even though I oppose it because it's not going to go anywhere. Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, because there've been so many misstatements put on the record, I want to make sure, Commissioner Fernandez, that you understand what I stated. The reverter clause that was written back in 1950s, just like some leases that we've had in our city from decades gone by, did not anticipate the reality of what could happen if misinterpreted. Number one, it's not reciprocal. Number two, it does not protect the youth center. It absolutely does not protect the youth center. In fact, it does the exact opposite. Because it's not reciprocal. They can assert that the reverter clause hasn't been complied with and then receive the property and have zero obligation to run it as a youth center. There are no protections for the residents in that reverter clause. None whatsoever. Nor does that board answer to the residents who vote in this city. They can do with it what they want. They will tell you that their board bylaws, which can be changed and amended, and state statutes, which can be changed and amended, somehow protect it. Perhaps that's a new avenue for Live Local. Perhaps it's a new avenue for other legislation that we could never imagine in our life, 10 years ago, would exist today. They're not protecting the youth center. They're just protecting an old right with a poorly written document that doesn't adequately protect the youth of our city, or even a memorial that it is supposed to represent. Because boards change. People on those boards change. And the best way to protect the residents of Coral Gables who vote for people that sit up here and can remove the people that sit up here is to make sure that it's a reciprocal reverter clause, not a one-way reverter clause that benefits an organization whose body changes is not subject to answer to the residents of Coral Gables. So, this resolution, if you had read it, precisely identifies that as the issue. It says, whereas the City Commission fully and unequivocally intends to continue the operations of the Coral Gables War Memorial Youth Center for the recreation and benefit of youth of Coral Gables, but concerns remain regarding the restriction of a portion of the youth center property that is subject to a non-reciprocal reverter clause. Therefore, while disclosure by the association of its organizational operational financial records would alleviate those concerns to a certain extent, the City Commission ultimately remains

City Commission Meeting

concerned about the potential for future interpretation of the reverter clause, which is overly broad and contains no guardrails. Okay. And that's a fact. It has no guardrails. The residents of Coral Gables are not protected by that reverter clause. This resolution aims to resolve that issue by getting people together to sit around a table to once and for all have clear language defining how we're going to protect this valuable asset for the future, long before we're all gone.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, I'm also, again, I'm in favor of getting together again around the table. I just don't want to be, once again, be waiting at the altar for a fourth time for them just to even show up. So, I have no issues. I just would like for just a timeframe possible.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We have some ballot items coming forward in November on property taxes. I think we'll have a clear forecast at that time as to when we will be able to include in a capital improvement budget items such as the youth center. So, it asks that we revisit the matter in January or December, your choice, to address this timeframe issue, okay.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: As far as the capital improvement budget. But I'd like to pass this as it is right now, and we'll bring it back on the agenda after the November election. I'll move it.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Castro: And through the Mayor, question. I know that Commissioner Lara's item was to stop litigation until there was a meeting. Is there any combination? Are we stopping litigation with Vice Mayor's ordinance? Not an ordinance, it's a resolution.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It's a combination. We didn't violate Sunshine. We just happen to be thinking along the same line.

Commissioner Castro: No, no, absolutely. I never suggested you did. I just wanted to make sure if this is actually stopping litigation.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes, it does say, and directing City Attorney to pause on litigation efforts until further directions provided by the City Commission.

Commissioner Castro: Beautiful. Okay. So, then I will support this for the reason being that, yes, I agree with what Commissioner Fernandez is stating. However, this is a resolution. So, to be honest, anybody, like there's another majority, can come up here and dissolve that resolution or amend it. I mean, as easy as that, it's just a resolution. It's not a covenant. It could be undone very easily. And I think right now stopping litigation and making this a bigger deal is more important. And the other thing, if I really, really wanna be honest, I think the reason this is being done is because at some point we're investing so much money into a mobility hub. And I don't think this

City Commission Meeting

Commission wants the youth center to be placed on the ballot compared to the mobility hub, because they will be afraid that the residents would probably prefer to invest some money in the youth center. But that's, I mean, I already know where this is going. So, I will support the resolution and just a minor correction here. It's not Arroz con Leches, it's called Political Cortadito.

Mayor Lago: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: By the way, I would never support anything going on the ballot for a referendum that did not have a revenue stream. Again, the mobility hub has a revenue stream coming from parking fees. The idea of spending \$175 million, thank God I stopped that and I was a no vote on that. It would have been disastrous. Just like taking from our reserves would have been disastrous. Just like the COLA was a disaster. So, at the end of the day, we have to be very fiscally sound. And this is why we're moving forward in the direction that we're moving in. Thank God we did the things that we did in 2015 leading up to this point. Because if not, you wouldn't have the reserves, and you would have a bloated albatross of a pension system that would be 50% funded. Very easy to poke the finger and say the things that you want to say, but at the end of the day, delivering on fiscal responsibilities put the city where it's at right now. Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: So briefly, because we're really beating the dead horse here.

Mayor Lago: Yep. What happens when you're a newcomer to the city, you forget, you don't know how you got here.

Commissioner Lara: The Mayor and the Vice Mayor and I, we voted for and gave direction to the City Attorney to bring the litigation. Two of the three so far, the Vice Mayor and I, have sponsored resolutions to put a pause on that litigation, right. So, I'm not even sure what Commissioner Castro was referring to about this is not a covenant or that it can be undone. Of course, it can be revisited. We were on the upside of the vote. It's not an amendment to the earlier one, but it's an evolving situation. We are exploring ways to get to the common goal end. To one extent, I agree with Commissioner Fernandez, right that nobody on this dais wants to do anything other than preserve the War Memorial and the Youth Center in the way that it was always intended to be maintained. As I believe the same for the current board of the War Memorial Youth Center. But I completely disagree and I actually got to say, I find it unfair and even offensive to suggest that the Vice Mayor's resolution is an extortion move. That's inflammatory. I don't think you're advancing the ball here in any way. It's kind of distracting. So that being said, bringing it home, right. I think that what we want is to bring the parties to the table to see if we can resolve what is an unfair meeting out of obligation as the Vice Mayor said. We are the ones that respond, and our bosses are the residents and we're subject to what the residents want, but not the board. They don't, right. The Youth Center, the War Memorial Youth Center do not answer to the residents. And so, we have quite a bit at stake here to ensure that we're the best, most responsible stewards of the taxpayers' money. And so, to negotiate with another party with respect to the interpretation of a reverter

drafted 60 years ago to meet with and meet up with the current landscape that the city's facing right now is expected. And it is something that is what we've been elected to do, not simply say, set it and forget it. So, I'm still exploring and I hate to be delaying this, but although I'm completely in support of the Vice Mayor's resolution, I am still contemplating what the Vice Mayor is saying would be some type of a bookend. And so, I would suggest a friendly amendment and put a bookend by the end of this year.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It's essentially what I was trying to say. We have a vote coming in November on increases in Homestead exemption that may inform our decisions going forward. So that's why I said December or January would be the bookend to revisit this matter.

Mayor Lago: Would you just allow me, and I'm willing to support this, again, give another opportunity for them to take me to the dance and not show up a fourth time. Would you just grant me the ability to at least have a bookend on it, and I'll meet you there and I'll vote in favor of it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: What bookend are you looking for?

Mayor Lago: Whatever makes you happy. December. I was going to go September 1st. I'm willing to negotiate.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I wanted to get past the property tax.

Mayor Lago: Well, that'll be done December 1st. Does that make you happy?

Vice Mayor Anderson: December 1st.

Mayor Lago: Okay. By the way, Commissioner Fernandez was incorrect once again. There has been money spent already in the youth center. There has been conceptual drawings that were worked on. That there was significant money that showed a complete remodeling of the youth center. Am I correct or not?

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: And they were embarked on by-

City Manager Iglesias: Bermello.

Mayor Lago: By Bermello Ajamil and Partners. And they were beautiful, by the way, beautiful renderings. And I was in support of that 110%. I would love to see that come to fruition. I think the city deserves that. I think our children deserve that. Future generations deserve that. And I think that that building, not only is it outdated, there's a lot of wasted space there because of the little rooms, doors here, open spaces that are not even used. Case in point, one of the things that I would love to see, and I mentioned it before, we have such an amazing gymnastics program. They

City Commission Meeting

are literally, I don't want to say this, but overcapacity. They're begging, begging. That's how popular and that's how well and the awards that they're winning. They're begging us to expand. They've come to see me, Vince, we'll take double the space. I don't have the space to put you. We'll pay more. I want to pay you more rent. Give us space. Give us the auditorium. Give us, we don't have the space for that. So, I appreciate the concession, Madam Vice Mayor. And this is why we have to be very, very careful when we say things. There has been money spent already. There are conceptual plans. It is a public record. We were moving forward. It was discussions of \$175 million bond. The parks with the majority of the money going to the youth center. It was brought, it was worked on. We paid lawyers. We paid outside counsel. We paid consultants. So, we were here. Thank God I voted no. So, where would we be today. So, what do we do? We did parks like David Lawrence Park. We did parks like Dorothy Thomson, properly budgeting, not encumbering the city with more debt. So, Madam Vice Mayor, would you like to make a motion on your item?

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll make a motion as amended on the floor.

Mayor Lago: With December 1st being the bookend?

Vice Mayor Anderson: December 1st as a bookend.

Mayor Lago: Do we have a second?

Commissioner Lara: Second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, we have no public comment, correct?

City Clerk Urquia: No, we do. We have not done public comment yet.

Mayor Lago: Okay, public comment.

City Clerk: First speaker, Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road, 305-323-2154. If it was not so sad to hear the comments that I've heard today, I would be laughing from now till the end of the year because we're missing a point where we're talking. And by the way, I was accused of bringing forth negative comments before. And now we have two Commissioners trying to put this to make it work. And who came up with the negative comments? The one that accused me of always bringing negative comments. Enough on that. I have been around enough to remember how many times the youth center plans, and I'm glad that the Mayor remember, we did have a plan. And then Commissioner Menendez was convinced to push it up a little bit so we could do something else. And then we pushed it up a little more so we could do something else. And then I'm glad that my ex-friend, my old friend brought up the fact that then we decided not to do it because there was a break, because there was a break, because the same as I was deposed from being madam mayor, Commissioner Menendez became the bad person and politics came in. And it's very sad that we know we need to do it. The Manager says the place needs to be done and Commissioner Menendez doesn't have any

children. This is not benefiting him. This is for the children of this, for the youth of this city. And we are still dealing with politics. You know what? When we talk about poorly written documents, I remember when the Matheson family took Dade County to court and they won because when you have an agreement as this one, you do have legal ways to keep it. And you know, we keep saying, and yes, it does sound like extortion to me. I didn't know what word to use, but then Commissioner Fernandez used it. It's either you do what I want or you're not going to get the money. Darn it. I watched enough crime movies to tell you that sounds like the mafia talking. I'm sorry. Okay. I believe that this is all part of the revenge tour. And you know what? The youth of our community deserve to get a new youth center and stop the politics.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Clerk. Jackson Holmes.

Jackson Holmes: Greetings. Thank you very much. I hate to say this, but this is the most shocking attack on children. This thing of trying to get them to lift their reverter that I've ever seen in our city. It's an attack on children. It's saying that, as far as I understand this, there were people that owned this land, and they owned the land. There's no negotiating over a reverter. If someone says, here's a present, here's the land, as long as you always use it for a youth center. That's not for mutuality of a reverter. That's really unbelievably, I would say dishonest, talk about mutuality of reverter. They owned the land 100%. They said, you can have it as long as you always use it as a youth center. And I interpret this thing as an unconscionable attack on our city's children, saying that the city wants to have the right to do with this, whatever the city decides. Maybe it's an elementary school. Maybe it's a developer that contributed to a campaign. We should never even be thinking about the possibility of selling the youth center to a developer. It's incredibly bad. I think you should rescind this whole ordinance or motion or whatever resolution that you're doing. It's a disgrace. Thank you. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

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

Mayor Lago: We have a motion and a second.

City Clerk Urquia: We do, sir.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: I go back to 1972 where a Commission sat on the dais and told its residents that it is the intention of the Commission that the said lots should be used only for overflow parking from the youth center and the library. Today, this Commission is saying the intention is to continue to use this lot for youth center. Yet today, we took a vote where this Commission voted to rescind that commitment it made to the community back in 1972. And the

only protection that we have for this youth center is an outside organization that is there to oversee the city's operation and ensure that it's being used for the right reasons. For that reason, I'm a no.

Commissioner Lara: Yeah, I got to say that just so many misstatements that are flying around that it's mind boggling. I think that, again, what we're trying to do here today with this vote is ensure that the intention of the original grantor, which is to maintain a War Memorial and a Youth Center, always remain a War Memorial and a Youth Center. I would suggest in the not-so-distant future, we really should be exploring a covenant so that it is absolutely crystal clear that what both parties want, both parties agree to. Because right now, what's been agreed to doesn't quite get us there. But if everyone is exactly on the same page and they say what they mean and they mean what they say, then a covenant would be the clearest and most efficient way to ensure that it remains exactly what it was intended to be when it was granted 60 years ago to the city, to protect not only the children, but also the memory of those who served. My vote is yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The gross misinterpretation in statements that were made by certain members of this Commission about what the purpose of this resolution are and the unfortunate way certain residents have accepted that as being the truth is sad because the purpose of this isn't to indeed protect the youth, protect the future forevermore. Many times, when you begin crafting something, whether it be in words or by an invention, the first iteration is a great idea. But as time goes on, we can improve upon it. We improve on engineering, we improve on designs, and we certainly can improve on the language in a covenant that forevermore will protect the youth and memory of those who gave of their lives to protect our country. And it's sad that people use loose words such as extortion as if this is extorting some money. The true meaning of extortion is that we're taking some money away from somebody. No one's taking money away from the War Memorial Youth Center here. What we're trying to do is make sure that the original intent of those who crafted the reverter clause are protected in a much better fashion going forward. So, my vote is yes.

Mayor Lago. My vote is yes. And again, it continues to be embarrassing that the Vice Mayor just mentioned right now the word extortion is used by Commissioner Fernandez. It's probably like one of the most obscene things I've seen a Commissioner do on this floor. It is the most obscene thing I've seen when someone says that extortion occurs. That's just a lack of knowledge and really understanding of what we're trying to do here. But again, I wish it was just a lack of knowledge. That's just true disingenuousness in an effort to politically grandstand tomorrow on the blogs and clobber somebody over the head by something they're going to send out. It's just shameful. So shameful that it actually happens here. And thank God this is all coming to an end soon enough. It can't come fast enough. And I'm grateful for the voters to have changed the elections from April to November because this will be all exposed and people will be made aware of just the absolute ridiculousness. I mean, look at the agenda. Look at the amount of legislation that's proffered by certain individuals of the Commission and look how little legislation is proffered by people in this

body. You come to work, you come to office, to offer office hours, to provide a service to the community, to meet with residents in the neighborhoods, to really address the needs of this community, not for a paycheck. And at the end of the day, it's just embarrassing that those words are used. So, my vote is yes, unequivocally. And I would like the Manager and for the City Attorney to have one of the elected officials, I don't want it to be me, be selected, hopefully one of our attorneys. So that means either Commissioner Lara or the Vice Mayor to assist and be the point person on this moving forward. Just like we did with the Mark, but just like we've done with our University of Miami Development Agreement, I think it's important to have a direct connection with the Commission that way, we don't have to wait for Commission meetings. We don't have to wait for, I have a weekly meeting with the Manager. I talk to him every single day, four or five times a day, but you don't have to wait for that. And I have full faith and confidence in my colleagues on the Commission that they'll do what's right by the city. But just the idea that you would mention extortion, I mean, it's just embarrassing and it's shameful. Shameful. And again, that's just the type of politics that we don't expect here. We expect it in other cities, but we didn't expect it here. Would you mind Madam Vice Mayor, I'm going to leave it up to you or Commissioner Lara.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'd be happy to serve in that capacity.

Mayor Lago: Okay, thank you, Madam Vice Mayor. Moving on, something a little bit more beneficial and I think a little bit more happy. Item F-5 is an item that I put on the agenda.