

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-5
January 11, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Jorge Fors
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Jessica Keller

Agenda Item I-5 [Start: 5:33 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, authorizing City staff to negotiate and execute a month-to-month extension on the contract with Freebee to continue the current on-demand public transportation services.

Mayor Lago: Moving onto I-5.

City Attorney Ramos: A Resolution of the City Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, authorizing City staff to negotiate and execute a month-to-month extension on the contract with Freebee to continue the current on-demand public transportation services.

Deputy City Attorney Suarez: Mayor, Commissioners, Cristina Suarez, Deputy City Attorney. This proposed resolution allows the city to continue the current Freebee service under the agreement on a month-to-month basis while city staff evaluates potential options to continue Freebee service as an ongoing free public transportation service in the downtown area. The Parking Director is here if you have any questions.

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Parking Director Kinney: Its almost hard to believe that it was February 1, 2019, that the Commission voted to start the pilot project with Freebee. We began conversations in the fall with the county and with Freebee on what the future service might look like, because we have just spent the last dollar of our FDOT grant, and there were a few issues that came up. So, we are asking to continue on a month-to-month until we work through those with the county.

Mayor Lago: Any questions?

Commissioner Anderson: No, not for me.

Mayor Lago: None. With that I'll entertain a motion.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll make a motion.

Commissioner Fors: Second.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before you continue, we have a member of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Jessica Keller.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Keller the floor is yours. Good afternoon.

Ms. Keller: Hi there. My name is Jessica Keller and I'm a resident of Coral Gables. Before I speak further, what is the funding source for the Freebee?

Parking Director Kinney: The funding source is primarily CITT funds, same source as the trolley.

Ms. Keller: And can that funding source be used for other transportation projects?

Parking Director Kinney: There is a percentage of CITT funds that must be used for transit, but there is also a portion that can be used for other transportation related projects. At this time, I believe 100 percent of CITT funds are used for transit.

Ms. Keller: Thank you Kevin. I appreciate it. I wanted to speak in relation to the extension of Freebee and this probably surprises you, because I'm supportive of multi-modal transportation. I've used the Freebee service and the service is excellent. And the Parking Department has done a fantastic job of managing the service provider. But what we didn't talk about is the \$483,000 annually it cost to run it. We finished the conversation this morning about additional funding sources for traffic calming. My opposition is related to priorities. Earlier today, the Mayor said safety is a priority. Commissioner Menendez said safety is priority one. In 2018, the City

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Commission adopted the Sustainable Complete Streets policy. If you read it, or if you read it, safety is the priority. The first section of the resolution says, when there are conflicting needs among users and modes, the following prioritization will apply. One, above all, safety is paramount; two, followed by mobility; three, among the modes, vulnerable users shall come first; and finally, four, seat balance among all the modes involved. Traffic calming has been a heated topic of conversation for years and impacts every person who lives in the city. Freebee is a free luxury service provided to a few people and does nothing to make our streets safer. Like I said, its an excellent service, but it's a luxury. You already have the policy in place, when conflicting needs arise safety is first. Residents were not asking for free door-to-door service when Freebee arrived. Residents had been asking for traffic calming and waiting five more years for traffic calming is a tough pill to swallow. And Public Works didn't even talk about the traffic calming request that have come since the citywide plan; and we just mentioned that there are 14 traffic calming devices that could be used at the youth zones. As noted, paying \$480,000 annually to benefit a few. In past years you appropriated the following traffic calming; \$755,000 in FY20; \$500,000 in FY21; \$1.4 million in FY22; and you plan to appropriate \$1.5 million per year to build what's in the pipeline. An additional \$483,000 annually would go a long way to expedite the installation of traffic calming. I have one more thing to say. I haven't owned a car for about a year and-a-half now, and I live in the North Gables. I work, shop and play in Central Business District. I walk, I bike, I use the trolley, and I use services like Lift and Uber to get to places I need to go. I took a quick look at what I pay to get to my appointments, 1.2 miles to Central Business District over the last two months; \$7.42 per trip, and I pay about \$10.50 per trip to get to Douglas Road transit station. Kevin knows the numbers. I'm going on memory, but if I recall correctly, the price per trip for Freebee is in excess of \$5.00 per trip and less than one mile. For that the city could provide free Lift service to residents in a much larger catchment area or better, you could invest that money into traffic calming to make our streets safer. After all, you're not building sidewalks or bike infrastructure for those of us who chose the healthiest and lowest emission forms of transportation. The least you could do is slow down the drivers on our streets and improve safety. That's all.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Moving on. I will accept a motion.

City Clerk Urquia: We have a motion sir. I'll call the roll.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)