

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-3
December 5, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item C-3 [9:24:15 a.m.]
Mayor's Comments

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The next has to do with the City Hall Courtyard. The City Hall Courtyard is an euphemism for our abandoned property, if you want to call it, that annex out there where private property would have been condemned a long time ago; and I'd like to have the Commission adopt a resolution instructing the City Manager to clean it up and to clean the windows because the place is an embarrassment for us, and it has been an embarrassment for a long time and we just can't continue having something like that, something where if it was private property it would have been condemned a long time ago as abandoned; and I'd like to hear the Commission's...

Vice Mayor Keon: It would have been fine...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli:...very, very...and we have no bats on...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor there are no bats in the cottage, but I wanted you to know that we have set aside, you all have set aside \$3.3 million dollars to renovate, restore City Hall, over one million dollars for the 427 Building, and over \$400,000 for the cottage. We are going to be moving third floor into the 427, we are moving to e-permitting, we are going to be putting significant renovations into 427, and major restoration into City Hall. But I wanted you to know also that the staff has just managed the \$1.5 million dollar Merrick House renovation; they are completing the \$1.6 million dollar plazas, fountains, and entrance ways; they are completing the \$23 million dollar streetscape, you saw the launch of the Public Safety Building, which will be tens of millions of dollars, they have now ordered the Fire Station No. 2, which is ten to eleven dollars and then we are moving to the City Hall campus. It is our commitment to you that we will do it right, we will do it fully, and you will be able to celebrate those renovations and restorations, but because of the deferred maintenance for a very long time, we are catching up and we are catching up not only bandaiding, but physically correcting the conditions of the properties and that takes time; and so we understand the priority on cottage, City Hall and the 427 Building, after we have authorized the contractors to commence vertical construction on Public Safety Building, you'll see the physical start of that project, but staff has already been meeting on a very regular basis on how do we make sure that it is acceptable and convenient for residents, whether they are online or in person, millions of infrastructure dollars both technology and physical, and so while I appreciate the desire to create a resolution to say, we must get it done, I also ask that with a \$200 million dollar capital plan that you have approved that we are implementing, that we allow the priorities to have already been underway to be near completion, not fully completed before we commence, but it is our fierce commitment that the City Hall, cottage and 427 Building will be done in the same quality that you all expect.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm sorry, but that's not the point. I invite Commissioner Quesada, Commissioner Mena, Vice Mayor and Commissioner Lago to come this Saturday with a hose to hose those walls because they are filthy. This is not a \$3 million dollar project, that building is filthy and let's get it cleaned, if it cost \$100, \$1,000, we'll raise the private money to clean the building. It's filthy the way it is and clean, those walls.

Vice Mayor Keon: I agree with the Mayor on at least the outside appearance of that building, even if you don't go in to renovate the interior of the building, it's kind of like the garage on Aragon, I thought looked so bad for so long, it looks wonderful now that it's been cleaned and everything. I really think it's not a matter of the actual renovation of the cottage itself, or the interior work, I think it's a matter of, if its painting the outside of the building or white-washing it or whatever you do so that it doesn't look like a deteriorating building as you come in the back door of City Hall. Clean the windows, I don't know if we put pictures in the windows, but we

have a creative staff. It's really just to make it – it's going to not make it function better, it's not going to do anything on the inside, but at least it has to look better.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's clean it.

Vice Mayor Keon: It needs to look better than it currently does just for the sake of this campus, if we could just do that part of it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's a matter of cleaning it; it's not a matter of renovating or anything else. I agree with you, we have this huge budget, but let's clean those walls, clean them.

Commissioner Lago: We have an issue with that, I agree. Again, a lot of residents that come to the City to conduct business walk through that building or walk around that building every day and have mentioned it several times, but I had a quick question for Dona. Can we get that with a pressure hose, because again, I'm not sure of the exterior situation of that building and whether that stucco will crumble if you hit it with too much pressure?

Mrs. Spain: I so much appreciate...[inaudible – off mic]...that can be used on this coral stone; it has to be very gentle.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well let's do it. Madam City Manager will we do it?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I understand sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK. Thank you, thank you very much.

[End: 9:30:41 a.m.]