

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-8
November 18, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Assistant to the City Manager, Naomi Levi

Public Speaker(s)

Former Commissioner Barker

Agenda Item E-8 [Start: 10:43:53 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida creating in accordance with the City Code, Article III, Division 1, Section 2-64, the Hopkins/Cooper Scholarship Committee and setting forth guidelines by which such Committee shall be governed and providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date.

Mayor Cason: Let's do E-8, because there are people waiting on this. This is an Ordinance on First Reading related to the City Code, the Hopkins/Cooper Scholarship Committee and setting forth guidelines. Madam City Manager, would you read the title?

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Yes. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida creating in accordance with the City Code, Article III, Division 1, Section 2-64, the Hopkins/Cooper Scholarship Committee and setting forth guidelines by which such Committee shall be governed and providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification and

providing for an effective date. Naomi Levi, Assistant to the City Manager has worked closely with Commissioner Barker to formalize the Committee that we have in place now and she is going to present the item.

Ms. Levi: Good morning Mayor, Honorable Commission, City Attorney, City Manager. Thank you for allowing us to talk on this item. This ordinance presents an opportunity to formalize the administration of a City scholarship program and to ensure its continuity. The program has thus far been administered by an informal committee, whose surviving members include Commissioner Barker, Leona Cooper, Edwina Prime, and Leona Cooper-Baker, all of whom wish to continue their services in the same capacity. Outside of the formalization of the committee, the program will remain substantially the same. Scholarship awards will be distributed on a competitive and annual basis, with a maximum amount being \$5,000 per year. To be considered for the award a student must reside in the MacFarlane Homestead or Golden Gate neighborhood, demonstrate financial need, academic performance, be enrolled in Coral Gables Senior High, and maintain at least a 2.5 GPA. The original award amount can be renewed for up to three additional years, so basically a student can have four years of the award, provided that the residency, GPA, and fulltime enrollment criteria of the scholarship continues to be met. Finally, funds are sent directly to the recipient's college or university to defray expenses in the following areas of priority: tuition, room and board, text books and personal needs. The Hopkins/Cooper Scholarship program has graduated 15 students so far and 8 more are apparently working towards their degrees. So we are very proud of all the work that the scholarship has been able to assist with the students of Coral Gables. The City Manager's Office collaborated closely with Commissioner Barker on this initiative and we hope to see even more deserving students benefit from their participation in the program. Commissioner Barker really is the expert on this topic, because not only is he a scholarship founder, he has been a member of the committee since its inception nearly 15 years ago. We are very thankful for his ongoing assistance and guidance of the formulation of the ordinance and would now like to introduce him to say a few words about the program and the role of the committee has played.

Mayor Cason: City Clerk does he need to be sworn in, since this is a public hearing?

City Clerk Foeman: No Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Cason: OK. Go ahead.

Commissioner Barker: Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, it's a pleasure to be here today and I commend you for this ordinance and I thank Naomi for working so hard on this. It pleases me a great deal because we worked hard on this, we met and met and met with our committee, which is consistent of Gail Payne, Leona Cooper, Leona Cooper-Baker, Edwina Prime, and the late Bill

Cooper, he and I got together in 1989 and worked this out; and we had a great relationship with Coral Gables High. Gail Payne was the counselor there at the time, now she's on this committee, Dan F----- has always been supportive and now we have a new lady Ms. Elizabeth Starks who is working with us now. They reviewed the applicants and we have a meeting and approve the funds for it and your City's investment has been very important and you should be proud of yourselves because we've had 15 graduate from that area, which would never been able to go to college, and we are very proud of that and I really commend you for letting this continue, but on a permanent basis and we will continue to support it. There is an article that was in there that we will stay for the next two years and then the committee will be reorganized, but we will get it continued and we have one applicant so far for this year. So I'm very happy for it, it's like my baby, and I'm proud of it, proud of these people that have graduated and I'm going to thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: It has been your baby and I think it was three years ago was the last time we gave...

Commissioner Barker: Yes. We haven't had applicants for a couple years, but we screen them, we had one last year, but it didn't work out. So we are very cognizant of the fact that its City's money and we look at it very carefully before we make a decision. So again, I want to thank you very much. Any questions I'll be glad to answer.

Commissioner Keon: I just have one question. Along with this there is a commitment on behalf by the City in our budget process to fund this.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: There is \$5,000.

Commissioner Keon: I know. So our funding is \$5,000 annually.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Annually.

Commissioner Keon: So the fund can build to a larger amount even if there is not an applicant or is it only that we fund it when there is an applicant?

Former Commissioner Barker: I think we should take a look at it at that time to make sure that we give an appropriate amount to it, and I might add the funds are not given to the people.

Commissioner Keon: I know they are paid to the school, but what I'm asking is in the budget preparation every year do we beginning October 1...

Former Commissioner Barker: Yes. It has been -- it has been...

Commissioner Keon: But we fund this at what level?- \$5,000.

Former Commissioner Barker: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Former Commissioner Barker: Your former City Manager cut it out completely.

Commissioner Keon: I know. So I want to make sure that we are in agreement on the funding and the amount of the funding, so that it is hopefully in the future that won't happen, so that's all. I just want to ensure that we have on the record what that is and when it is.

Former Commissioner Barker: I want to commend the Interim City Manager and my good friend here who has worked very hard, Naomi, has worked very hard getting this going and I really appreciate it. If you have any questions...

Commissioner Quesada: Thank you for doing so much for the City for such a long time.

Former Commissioner Barker: Well, it's my pleasure, believe me.

Commissioner Lago: Have you noticed, it's fitting that you are up here because obviously you were here when we made the presentation for Baptist Hospital in regards to the William A. Cooper Park, which as you mentioned before, William was very involved in the commencement of this scholarship effort and his wife, which is still living and doing a lot for this community is very proud and very thankful. I spoke to her the other day and I mentioned this to her, but I haven't had the pleasure of meeting you for the first time and she spoke very highly of you. She said very good things.

Former Commissioner Barker: Leona is a gem.

Commissioner Lago: She is a gem. That's a strong woman.

Former Commissioner Barker: And Bill Cooper, her husband, who has left us to be in heaven and looking down on us now was a dear good friend and we worked together to get this started. I'm very proud of that.

Commissioner Keon: Naomi what did you...?

Ms. Levi: Well, I was saying traditionally the committee was given the discretion to decide that if there were no eligible applicants for a given year that the fund not be distributed. I don't think that would preclude us from still adding the monies to the fund for future distribution.

Commissioner Keon: OK. So if there is \$5,000 – if we allocate \$5,000 in the budget for this year, we are adding it now, we are adding \$5,000 in this budget year. So if a student isn't selected that would roll over then in 2015-16, do we add another \$5,000?- or does the \$5,000, is that – or do we add another \$5,000?

Former Commissioner Barker: No, it has not been that way. We just had the same amount each year.

Mayor Cason: Have you found that's been sufficient?

Former Commissioner Barker: What we have done is taken the amount and if the student decides to go to Miami-Dade you can understand that its more reasonable and we can spread the money out, it's not as expensive at Miami-Dade as it would be at FAM-U in Tallahassee, but the money does not go to them, it goes straight to the school.

Commissioner Keon: I don't have a problem with that money accumulating if you don't have a student, because they are probably existing students that you maybe can increase your award to. So I don't have a problem with that. I only want to make it clear so you don't have to come back again and then going forward no matter who is here, we know what's at stake for them to change it, it would have to change the ordinance. So that's all I'm asking.

Mayor Cason: I think the advantage of letting it accumulate is that you might find a student that's really, really good that could go to a school that's like a Harvard or something, but \$5,000 wouldn't do it, but if you had more in the fund you might be able to get them into a school that would really help them develop their talents.

Former Commissioner Barker: I understand.

Commissioner Lago: Why don't we modify the ordinance?

Commissioner Keon: Amend this to include a provision that it would be funded annually and allow to accumulate.

Ms. Levi:...cap it at \$5,000, because currently it's capped at \$5,000 per any given scholarship class, so we could eradicate that cap that way...

Mayor Cason: Who is going to make the motion?

Commissioner Lago: I'll make the motion.

Commissioner Keon: I'll second it.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago is going to make the motion.

Commissioner Keon: I'll second it.

Mayor Cason: OK. Commissioner Lago makes the motion, Commissioner Keon seconds it.

City Clerk

Vice Mayor Kerdyk

Mayor Cason: Excuse me; I have to close the public hearing.

Commissioner Keon: As amended.

Mayor Cason: OK. Continue.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Keon: As amended.

Mayor Cason: As amended.

Former Commissioner Barker: Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: Thank you – really appreciate it.

Commissioner Keon: When it comes back on Second Reading you can include that language.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Could you include that language and also this may be a problem, because I'm not so sure we just haven't had this in the budget the whole time and maybe there is something accumulating in that fund. Can we reconcile what we've done before? You pointed out the last City Manager stopped the program, but there has been years and years that you've had that \$5,000 and maybe sometimes you get \$2,000, sometimes you get \$3,000, what happened to that that line budget?- maybe there is something that we should look in that from the past situation there is some accumulation already in that fund?

Former Commissioner Barker: There was no accumulation.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK. For sure you checked that?

Former Commissioner Barker: What we did was we used what we had each year and tried to split it up as best we could if we had 2 or 3 applicants.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK. So we never had the chance of it accumulating?

Former Commissioner Barker: No. Never has.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK.

Ms. Levi: If any money was undistributed due to an applicant's ineligibility, meaning they failed to meet one of the continuing criteria, the money was reverted back to the General Fund.

Commissioner Keon: Back to the General Fund. Well, I think I had spoken to Carmen yesterday and we talked about maybe working in conjunction with the Community Foundation, because I know that they are a lot of times a depository for different funds and things that would be of no cost to us that would allow the money to accumulate if there wasn't a recipient, so it wouldn't go back into the General Fund. It would allow it to continue to accumulate in a special fund, but you could absolutely set up your committee to review it and whatever; they would only be a depository.

Former Commissioner Barker: As information, I'm Vice Chairman of the International Finance Banking and served on that Board as a Director for years. I got the bank to contribute several years ago to help out, and I was very proud of that fact. It helps the bank also with the community reinvestment.

Commissioner Keon: But my concern was more your ability to allow that fund to accumulate...

Former Commissioner Barker: Yes, that's fine.

Commissioner Keon:...and what's the best mechanism to allow having to do that.

Former Commissioner Barker: I think it's a great idea. Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: I'm sure by the next time it comes back you'll all work that out. Thank you.

Former Commissioner Barker: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you Commissioner.

[End: 10:56:52 a.m.]