

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item K – Discussion Items
March 14, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Frank Quesada

Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item K – Discussion Items [4:17:27 p.m.]

Mayor Cason: Discussion Items – Commissioner Keon you have anything?

Commissioner Keon: I'm fine. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago.

Commissioner Lago: Make a Wish Foundation – We had a great event this past weekend. I don't know if Martha is ready.

Vice Mayor Quesada: No she doesn't.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, she does.

Vice Mayor Quesada: No she doesn't (laughter).

Commissioner Lago: I have some pictures to show you. I just want to make you aware that the Commission had a team and you see that tall guy right there with the glasses, that's Vice Mayor Quesada; there were seven heats, we won our heat, we won our heat, we had about 15 teams in our heat, about 75, 80 teams in all. The event raised \$80,000 for Make a Wish Foundation, we granted 16 wishes. I wanted to commend ___ and Brian who I have the pleasure of working out with them at gym, they do an incredible job, this is the third year. They were extremely grateful for the City's flexibility and their commitment. We ate 50 wings in three minutes and 25 seconds, we didn't make it to the finals – the team of four ate 50 wings in three minutes and 25 seconds, we didn't make it to the finals by about four or five seconds, and the finals was 25 wings as fast as you can.

Mayor Cason: What about the bones, what about the bones?- did you eat the bones?

Commissioner Lago: No, no. But we won our heat which I'm very proud of that and I will tell you, if you put that picture back up and I'll tell you why we didn't make it to the finals, put the picture back up. You see Commissioner Quesada, you see that picture, it's got really bad technique, you have to continue to lean over. He's so tall that by the time he picks up the chicken and takes it to his mouth...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I have a height disadvantage.

Commissioner Lago: He has a huge height disadvantage. He thinks we are playing basketball.

Mayor Cason: And it also looks like you were wiping your mouth after each chicken.

Commissioner Lago: He's wiping his mouth, he wanted to wear gloves, he had perfume on. I said, Vice Mayor, this is a contest you know, don't worry, you look great.

Mayor Cason: You think the guy in front of you had advantage.

Commissioner Slesnick: He needs to be in training next time before he starts.

Commissioner Lago: So we are going to do this again next year, we may be looking for a new location, potentially Ponce Circle Park or in front of City Hall; it would be a great opportunity. It was a great family atmosphere, spectacular family atmosphere. Vice Mayor will tell you there were a lot of young children there, my kids went and it was a few hundred people and we raised \$80,000 and 100 percent of the proceeds outside of what we had to pay for the City permitting

went to grant 16 wishes, so it's going to be something spectacular, so again that's number one; number two, I want to commend the City Manager and staff, because I want to make sure again, I know I mentioned it before, we have a sidewalk and we have a lighting program here in the City of Coral Gables, if you are a resident and you want sidewalks and you want lighting, it's something I'm very proud of, this is something I worked on about a year ago, no one has taken advantage of this program, zero, it's out there.

Commissioner Keon: There is a group that is...

Commissioner Lago: I know. I know. Those people are putting together, but I want to be very clear because in the debate it was discussed the other day, lighting is nowhere to be found and the City doesn't do anything.

Mayor Cason: Not true.

Commissioner Lago: Well, first off we've been working with FPL for some time. We are working on different things that are forthcoming in regards to modifying and upgrading our existing lighting and we are in discussions with them to actually potentially have LED lighting, but if you have an interest right now as a community, as a block, two blocks, three blocks, if you want to put sidewalks, if you want to put lighting in your area there is a path to achieving that goal. You can look in E-NEWS, you can look on the City website or you can write me an e-mail and I'll point you in the right direction. The program already exists to achieve this goal.

Mayor Cason: And we started back with the Neighborhood Renaissance Program for historic lights and we never had anybody who votes 50-50 on that one either, so.

Commissioner Lago: And by the way Mayor, did you mention that, how many miles of sidewalks have we fixed or added in the last...

Mayor Cason: Six miles.

Commissioner Lago: Six miles of sidewalks have been added in the last few years and we've actually connected a whole host of sidewalks that were missing connectivity in regards to streets.

Mayor Cason: Plus the capital program is roughly a mile more every year, so we are getting there.

Commissioner Lago: So thank you.

Mayor Cason: Anything else? We have a chance for rebuttal on the chicken wings.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know I'm OK with it, because there are actually worse pictures, so I'm glad those are the ones he picked.

Commissioner Lago: I was very picky.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, there were some bad pictures. Real quick – I didn't realize that some of the guardhouses we had County involvement, Madam City Manager.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Actually its County control, but we have been meeting with the different homeowners associations and the City Attorney will be able to speak about a process that would return it to the City.

Vice Mayor Quesada: My only point on this topic is, I was approached by one homeowners association that they are trying to remove that, I guess interference, for a lack of a better word. So what can we do to remove that?- because this homeowners association wants to actually purchase the guard gate, because the security guards that they hire in addition for their neighborhood, they have to go through the County and then they say they have a lot of problems with selecting those security guards.

City Attorney Leen: So Gables Estates when they came here with Laura Russo, remember they asked for us to change the law related to guardhouses. The Commission did and the City's position is that applies to every guardhouse in Coral Gables; nevertheless the County has not been enforcing our law. Remember we reached a compromise where we put a sign in front of the guardhouses telling people to comply with the law. Anyhow, Gables Estates is the reason why it complies with the law is because it's a private guardhouse, so that would be a possibility, but they would have to deal with the County to be able to become private guardhouse.

Vice Mayor Quesada: How can we assist those homeowners associations?

City Attorney Leen: My office and the City Manager can contact the County and ask them to....

Vice Mayor Quesada: This homeowners association wants to purchase the guardhouse because, I guess they've had a few robberies and they feel that it was the fault of the security guard, so they want to be able to select the better security company.

City Attorney Leen: One other thing we are doing and this is something that staff is still looking at, I know, but legally now based on a Charter Amendment to the Miami-Dade Home Rule

Charter, the City can take over the guardhouses from the County, it has to be done by an interlocal agreement; and so we are looking at that whether that's feasible. I know that that's something that the Commission, the City Manager and myself are interested in, we raised that with the County before and they raised this Charter Amendment, which has been adopted, so that's something I know Public Works is looking at.

Vice Mayor Quesada: OK.

Commissioner Keon: I think the only issue – the reason that they are done through the County is because it was done, it was built and then staffed and operated as an assessment to the property owner, instead of them appointing the costs, and having someone that actually takes care of the payroll and all that stuff independently.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it.

Commissioner Keon: I think that's the difference of why they went that direction.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But we've discussed the ability for the City to take over that responsibility and to have Public Safety work with them regarding the guard issues.

Vice Mayor Quesada: One last thing is, we talked about plastic bags, but I think we should be a better role model and not have 15 plastic bottles here.

Commissioner Slesnick: We have nice glasses.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Can we, at least us try to start using the glasses? I know I'm bad about it also, because this is like my fifth bottle today. As Craig was discussing earlier it earlier here, all these plastic bottles in front of him, so I think we should just try to make an effort, including me, the first culprit here, but if we can get like a water cooler outside somewhere we can fill.

Commissioner Lago: You taught me to use that water system that you have at your house, the one with the gas, what is it called?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Soda Stream.

Commissioner Lago: The Soda Stream.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Do you have it?

Commissioner Lago: No, I'm going to buy it, but you are the one who first showed it to me, that right there is normal water from the tap and it saves bottles...

Mayor Cason: You guys promoting private enterprise, private companies?

Vice Mayor Quesada: So we can just try in the future to actually use the glasses that we have just for decoration.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

City Attorney Leen: Can I ask a question for the Commission? If staff finds it feasible, because remember they are looking at it, is the Commission interested in the guardhouse issue, I think that would be good to know.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Oh yes.

Mayor Cason: Sure – and I think that the homeowners association that's what they want.

Commissioner Slesnick: There were two cars stolen last week.

Mayor Cason: Anything else?

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm sorry, she's right. In that neighborhood there were two vehicles stolen, I believe the same night.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because they went to Gables Estates first and the Gables Estates guard made them roll down the window and wouldn't let them in because they didn't know where they were going, but they went to this other gated community and went in and robbed two cars.

Mayor Cason: So they didn't do what they were supposed to do after certain times, roll the window down...

City Attorney Leen: What one of those residents should do, I would request to send me an e-mail saying that and I'm going to forward it to the County because they really should be enforcing our law and every time this happens, we try to point it out to them.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Let's avoid that altogether. Let's help this one community at least get away from this guard gate.

City Attorney Leen: Understand.

Mayor Cason: Anything else?

Vice Mayor Quesada: No, that's it.

Commissioner Slesnick: Two short things. No chicken wings served, but on Saturday there was a great St. Patrick's Day Festival well attended over at Ponce Circle Park, and on Sunday we had Bike Walk right outside City Hall, and again lots of bike tours and great for young children and all sorts of games and fun houses and music and a great outdoor party for our citizens, and I'm really glad we have both of those events happening in Coral Gables.

Mayor Cason: Great – Well, I guess March 28th will be the last Commission meeting for at least one of us, so we'll see you then, meeting is adjourned.

[End: 4:27:37 p.m.]