

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-2
June 13, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Sustainability Specialist, Matt Anderson

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Magdalena

Agenda Item C-2 [2:34:35 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables in support of the Paris Climate Accord and reaffirming the City's commitment to the U.S. Mayors' National Climate Action Agenda.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: C-2, a Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables in support of the Paris Climate Accord and reaffirming the City's commitment to the U.S. Mayors' National Climate Action Agenda.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Is Matt Anderson out in the audience to speak on this issue and Jessica Keller? I'm sorry sir.

Mr. Anderson: Good afternoon Commissioners, again, Matt Anderson, Sustainability Specialist with the City of Coral Gables. Before you is a resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables in support of the Paris Climate Accord and reaffirming the City's commitment to the U.S. Mayors' Climate Action Agenda. To date, the 298 Mayors representing over 61 million

Americans have passed similar resolutions. Basically, the City has been doing a lot, the City has been accomplishing a lot in terms of sustainability and has set sustainability goals, 20 percent reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2025, and in November the City signed on as the Mayor's National Climate Agenda, which sets ambitious targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sets climate action and regularly reports on progress and shares lessons learned with other cities and counties and holds each other accountable. The Paris Accord which was agreed on in 2015 and signed in 2016 brought together 195 countries that accounted for 97 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions around the world. The two countries that did not sign on originally are Syria and Nicaragua and the U.S. is a part of that agreement set a greenhouse gas reduction goal between 26 and 28 percent by 2025; and the long term goal of the Paris Accord is to keep global temperature from rising above 2 degrees Celsius with our primary target of keeping it 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. And, some U.S. corporations with the recent discussion of the U.S. backing out of the Climate Agreement, obviously some 298 Mayors have already signed on supporting the resolution and some U.S. corporations such as Teslar, Facebook, GE, IBM, and BP, Exxon and Shell have been critical of the U.S. backing out of the agreement.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. We have two members of the public that want to speak and the first is Maria Magdalena, 21 Madeira, please. Please limit your comments to five minutes.

Ms. Magdalena: Thank you Mr. Mayor and Commissioners. It's Maria Magdalena its 21 Madeira Avenue, No. 16, Coral Gables. First of all, I respectfully request again for a postponement on this resolution.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, I said we are not going to postpone this discussion.

Ms. Magdalena: And, I thank you very much for letting me participate. So, the problem with the Paris Agreement is that climate change is a hoax...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is a what?

Ms. Magdalena: It doesn't exist, OK. It's all made up. Who is behind climate change? - it's Al Gore and the United Nations. I'm going to read to you very quickly, because I sent you an e-mail to all of you yesterday with all the highlights, bullet points why it has been proven that it doesn't exist. The first thing that happened was that the warming that they talk about happened before the CO2 rising. So, let me read this to you. Using the same climate sensitivity modeling as the UN's intergovernmental panel on climate change, is the IPCC, the world would only be zero point 137 degrees cooler by 2100, OK. Now after that let me read you what...said himself, he said, the fact is that even if every American citizen biked to work, car pooled to a school, use

only solar panels to power their home, if we each planted a dozen trees and if we somehow eliminated all our domestic greenhouse gas emissions, guess what, that still would not be enough to offset the carbon pollution coming from the rest of the world. If all the industrial nations went down to zero emissions, remember what I just said, all the industrial emissions went down to zero emissions it would not be enough, not when more than 65 percent of the world carbon pollution comes from the developing world; and if we do all this, it will only avert a meager 0.018 degrees Celsius warming by the year 2100. So, why are we spending so much money? - why are we altering our way of life for something that doesn't exist? Now, I ask you and I think it's a heavy burden – remember United States, thank God Trump is pulling out –, but anyway, if we were to do this, China would not be doing anything until 15 years and that's voluntary; India would keep their gas emissions for over 15 years, so the burden, the economic burden would be on us and it would be trillion of dollars. Is that sinking in or...? OK. So, why would we be paying for the rest of the world when we are not going to get anything accomplished? That's my question.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ms. Magdalena: Let me add something very quickly. We are having problems with not having enough police...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's a different issue, please.

Ms. Magdalena:...no, no, no, because what you are doing is spending money buying lots in Coral Gables and doing little parks, OK. So I ask you, if I could have – how can I get the paperwork of where is the money going? - what are you doing with that? - why are you buying, so many land in Coral Gables? - and then we don't have policemen.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you ma'am. Maria Elena Boza, 625 Navarre, Ms. Boza.

Commissioner Lago: She left.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Rhonda Anderson.

Commissioner Lago: She may have left also.

Commissioner Quesada: She has a statement on the card?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes. “Thank you for bringing this issue for our City. This will enable our City to continue to be a leader in initiatives to protect the health, safety and welfare of our citizens.” Rhonda Anderson. And Maria Elena Boza is, “As a City in the frontline of climate change, I applaud Coral Gables for its commitment to the environment and whole hearted support of the City’s standing of the Paris, the backing of the Paris Climate Accord and the U.S. Mayors’ National Climate Agenda.” Discussion?

Vice Mayor Keon: I make the motion.

Commissioner Lago: If I could just mention a few things. I think this has become a very politicized issue and if there is anybody that walks the walk and talks the talk and then comes to green initiatives myself. But, I’m going to tell you why I’m not supporting the Paris initiative and it probably comes to much surprise to my colleagues, is because when you look at the charts that I sent you from Bloomberg; it talks about the issue of fellow industrialized nations like India and China. About five or six years ago, the United States was the largest producer of CO2 gas emissions, and over the last four years we dropped by close to 14 percent, and that was accomplished through technology and that was accomplished also through the use of liquid gas, instead of using coal and through the use of solar and through the use of wind technology. I’m a big proponent of the fact that technology, for example Tesla and the Tesla roof, which is forthcoming, is going to really usher in the opportunity to get away from using fossil fuels. Why?- because it’s cheaper. What I’m paying right now in reference to my solar panels to be at my home for the next 15 years is costing me probably to save almost \$200 a month, and when I get my car, my electric car in the next few months, I’m probably going to be saving another \$150 a month just on gas. So, even if you are not into the environment, you don’t believe in sustainability like I do, everybody here believes and they want to make sure that they line their pockets with as much money as possible and that they are not throwing away money.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let’s get back into...its admirable what you do, but we are talking about the Paris Accord.

Commissioner Lago: Hold on, I’m going to give you...when you look at China, which is the largest polluter and India; India is right now increasing as per the graph that I showed you, and they don’t even have to follow the Paris Accord. They will be the largest polluter with China in the next few years. China is also not following the Paris Accord. By the United States following the Paris Accord you are talking it’s going to potentially cost the United State three trillion dollars, it’s going to cost about 6.5 million jobs by 2040. I believe that we can do better in the Paris Accord, because this is 100 percent voluntary and in my opinion it’s a wealth transfer. I think that what the City of Coral Gables does in reference to our standards, in reference to our LEED standards, in reference to certain things that we’ve been doing over the last few years. For

example, the plastic bags, the Styrofoam, buying open space; insuring that when a project is developed that it has true open space; another issue that we are going to be tackling today, making all our building LEED. I think that that is a step that we should be headed. I think that the idea of the United States is going to succumb to a national, excuse me, an international accord, which results in the loss of millions of American jobs and also trillions of dollars, to me doesn't make any sense when you have other countries that are ramping up as industrialized nations, but they are not following the accord. So, basically the United States is being subjected to a higher standard, which again, we always should be because we are the leaders of this world, but at the end of the day I think it should be a little bit of a level playing field.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think I disagree with you, I'm sorry I disagree with you. I think that the Paris Peace Accord, I mean the Paris Climate Accord is a voluntary, it doesn't obligate you to do anything, it is an expression of your commitment to do things in order to reduce climate emissions and in order to protect our environment. China, I'm sorry to say, I'm sorry to contradict you, has lowered its emissions and parts of India have, other parts haven't. I think that we should be at the leadership of doing good and protecting our environment and being from a City like Coral Gables, a lot of our properties are endangered by ocean level rising where 301 homes are in danger of not doing waterfront anymore. I think that it begins to support this effort by those Mayors National Climate Action Agenda. If there is no more discussion, madam Vice Mayor, you wanted to make a motion?

Commissioner Lago: But, I have one last comment. I have the Paris Agreement here after the vote, anybody who would like to read it, I think it's well worth reading.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, I have read it. Yes.

Commissioner Lago: It's an interesting document, gives you a little but more background....

Commissioner Mena: If I could just add one point. The woman who spoke earlier, I know you had a quote from John Kerry as to carbon emissions....no, I understand you, I understood, I understood.

Speaker: [Inaudible]

Commissioner Mena: I understand ma'am.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Please, please, please.

Speaker: [Inaudible]

City Attorney Leen: This violates our rules.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Come on – please. Go ahead.

Commissioner Mena: I think it's important to note that the same person you were quoting to us a John Kerry has come out staunchly against the action taken by President Trump and in fact he referred to it as the most self-defeating action in American history, so let's be careful who we are quoting and make sure that we are clear on what their positions are, because I think you were saying one thing about what John Kerry said and I think his position on this is crystal clear.

Commissioner Lago: And I agree with you, I agree with you, but I think where we fall short is this is a federal issue, number one; and number two, why is the United States being pegged while – look at the graph that I sent you. I know the Mayor disagrees with me, but this is taken from Bloomberg, so it shows China and the article is there, China and India spiking off the charts where they don't have to follow the Paris Accord...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, we don't have to follow it either, it is a voluntary compliance accord and it is an expression of goodwill to lower our emissions.

Commissioner Quesada: And in my opinion, I agree with the Mayor, I think it shows a strong statement for support of sustainability, which is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I don't understand your position.

Commissioner Lago: Not at the cost of millions of American jobs.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It won't cost millions of American jobs. It will not, it will create...OK, will you call the roll please.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Vice Mayor Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: No

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 4-1)

[End: 2:50:25 p.m.]