

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-6
December 10, 2024
Police and Fire Headquarters
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Governmental Affairs Manager, Fernando Weiner

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-6 [2:47 p.m.]

Update regarding the following State legislative priorities, and draft statutory amendments, to date: (1) Amendments addressing public and private school bus safety requirements. (2) Amendments prohibiting and penalizing cyber stalking and vicarious stalking of victims. (S.B. 54). (3) Amendments prohibiting and penalizing operating a vessel while intoxicated. (S.B. 58). (4) Amendments prohibiting the use of false and fraudulent statements to support removal of trees and requiring a permit for stump grinding to avoid impacting gas, electrical, communication, and water and sewer lines. (5) Amendments to the Florida Building Code necessary to reduce future insurance costs in Florida and requiring insurance discounts for property owners that have hardened their building or home to meet higher windstorm ratings. (6) Amendment to the Live Local Act to require notice to neighboring municipalities and cities regarding projects with a prescribed radius. (7) Amendment to the definition of “Recovered Materials” in Florida Statutes to allow for composting and reuse of plant and tree materials and pre- and post-consumer food waste. (8) Amendment to develop design guidelines for nature-based methods for improving coastal resilience (S.B. 50). (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Vice Mayor Anderson: F-6. I’m not going to make you read that into the record. It is an update. I brought this because I wanted to share with my colleagues some of the progress that has been made on some of the legislative items that I’ve been working on, and I know Mr. Weiner has been

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working on, as well, because we work together on getting some of this stuff drafted and delivered to our State Representatives for adoption. The first three items, I'm sorry the Bill No. didn't get published on the first one. I wanted to let you know where we are at. We have a sponsored Bill filed S.B. 52, on addressing the public and private school bus safety requirements. A simple explanation of that particular Bill is that in the 1970's, the statutes were drafted dealing with school bus safety where you have the lights and you have the stop signs so children don't get run over, and so, the police may ticket folks that try to pass those buses. Fast-forward, life has changed. We have private schools, we have Charter schools, we have vans that are transporting children to school, and we've had tragedies as well where a child has had a foot run over, because someone didn't realize they were behind a vehicle that was transporting children. So, this has been sponsored so far in the Senate by Senator Garcia and is moving forward. The second one is S.B. 54, and this deals with cyber stalking and various types of vicarious stalking. I've had the opportunity to represent some victims of stalking and there were some gaps in the statutory process. The original draft of this amendment was done over a year ago, actually two years ago. I sat down with our Police Chief, its gone through the State Attorney's Office, it was blessed, the final language blessed by them, and Senator Garcia was ready to move forward with it, this particular session, because it didn't make it in time for last session to get forward, and that one is S.B. 54. The third one that we already have a draft filed on is amendments to the prohibiting and penalizing operating a vessel, we're talking about boating, while intoxicated, that's S.B. 58. There is a co-sponsor as well on the House side, that is Hillary Casel from Dania Beach and the Senator and Representative working cohesively together to come out with a polished product. I spoke with Representative Casel about some enhancements to that language that she was considering, and I agreed with her. She is a former prosecutor in the State system. My experience, the larger part of my experience was in the federal system, so it worked out nicely with our different backgrounds to be able to come up with a better product in the end. The fourth one, the rest of these I'm still working on, except for the last one is the one that Senator Garcia is also filed a Bill on as well, amendment to develop designs for nature-based methods for improving coastal resilience, and that has been also something supported by the County Commission when they didn't want the sea walls that, the federal government wanted to put in to obstruct our view line. So, there are nature-based solutions that we can have with coastal resilience which include mangroves and plantings and if you have not gone to the Rosenthal Center to see the wave pool, its very, very enlightening what you can do under water to slow down the waves during storm surge. Fourth has to deal with the tree statute and our ability to stop fraudulent statements from being used to support the removal of healthy trees, and to also avoid people from doing stump grinding without a permit, so they are not hitting gas lines, water lines, electrical lines, which would cause a much more dangerous situation. The Florida Building Code item, item 5, was an item that I was able to speak to the Insurance Commissioner on, together with a bunch of representatives over six months ago. There is support for it, and Representative Mooney, I think is going to be a potential sponsor for that. So, sixth is what we talked about before. We have no sponsor yet on the Live Local Act notice requirement. I know there are some murmurings of various amendments to the Live Local Act and Mr. Weiner, if you have anymore to add to that particular one.

Mr. Weiner: Yes ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Before I speak about the seventh one, let me know.
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Mr. Weiner: Yes. So, Fernando Weiner, Government Affairs Manager for the City. So the City Attorney's Office and I met recently with the Bill sponsor, Senator-Elect Alexis Catalayud and at least from her perspective, as the original Bill sponsor, she assured us that she does not intend to amend the Bill as of this time, but obviously we have our language that we have brought forward, if that's something that we would like to add in, but from her perspective there won't be any changes this year.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. Did you specifically discuss the notice piece.

Mr. Weiner: We did. We did.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Minor tweak. Okay. And the seventh item deals with expanding the definition of recovered materials and I think there should be traction for this now, given the level of displeasure with incinerators that we should be able to take some of this material and at least turn it into a productive by-product, whether it be biochar or composting material to turn it into soil for farming or potted plants. So, I did get fairly good reception from folks that we do have a nice package of legislative changes for our upcoming session, and we should be able to get some of these things moving forward and passed this session. You have some additional comments on any of them?

Mr. Weiner: No ma'am. You covered it all.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. Alright. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.