

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-2
December 10, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors**

City Staff

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

Public Speaker(s)

Ramon Castella

Agenda Item I-2 [3:43 p.m.]

Presentation by staff on community outreach, education, neighborhood meetings, etc. regarding the undergrounding of overhead utilities.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

City Attorney Ramos: We're missing Item I-2.

City Manager Iglesias: I-2.

City Commission Meeting
December 10, 2019
Agenda Item 2-1 - Resolution amending Resolution No. 2015-101, to amend the purpose of the Transportation Advisory Board.

Vice Chair Lago: We have one more item.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, one more.

Vice Chair Lago: So, then I'll make comments...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Vice Chair Lago: About that after then.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Huh?

Vice Chair Lago: We have one more comment -- we have one more item, excuse me...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead.

Vice Chair Lago: On the agenda, I-2.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I-2.

City Manager Iglesias: I-2 is a presentation for the community outreach education neighborhood meetings for undergrounding of the overhead utilities.

Ramon Castella: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners. I'm back before you, Ramon Castella, with Stantec regarding the proposed public outreach plan/public engagement plan for the undergrounding for the City. We have a brief presentation. The project lead group is essentially what it was when we were here last month. We've also brought in the IT Director because of the IT component now in the public engagement, as well as Mr. Eugene Ramirez from Kivvit as public

relations. Just for the benefit of the public, remind why we're here. Back in May, we started a study of what it would take to underground the City and get ballpark estimates from FP&L, AT&T and cable, which we did. Last month, we were before you. We presented that and the Commission decided to move ahead to the next step, which is essentially go out to the community, both residents and businesses, engage the public in what it's going to take to do and so forth, and get a lot of input back and report it back to you. So, that's -- what we're here today is to present that plan essentially. Briefly, the goals are to provide candid, objective information, both pros and cons for the project and reliability, safety and aesthetics. Provide project scope, schedules, costs, you know, as best as we can and to listen and get a lot of good ideas and good feedback. We're sensitive to the issues that some areas are already undergrounded and how to deal with those communities. Get a -- you know, as big a footprint of communication as possible, utilizing as many channels. And then, should this process continue into an actual vote to continue the public engagement towards that -- towards that date. Multiple communication channels will be used; emails, letters, the City's website for undergrounding has been set up and it's going to be developed through the different publications here in the City, as well. There'll be a series of public meetings, community meetings, and other public meetings; Chamber of commerce, for example. The neighborhood meetings -- the community meetings will be held, you know, at different times. They're being scheduled now. There'll be flyers available, the use of AV equipment, renderings and so forth, and there'll be lots of, again, good feedback through questions to get...

Vice Chair Lago: Ramon, if I may. I just want to -- if you go back to that previous slide.

Mr. Castella: Sorry.

Vice Chair Lago: In reference to community engagement, if it was up to me, I would have as many meetings as you possibly could.

Mr. Castella: Yeah.

Vice Chair Lago: Don't be shy.

Mr. Castella: Okay.

Vice Chair Lago: In regards to requesting too many meetings.

Mr. Castella: Right.

Vice Chair Lago: If people come, perfect. If they don't come, it's just an opportunity for us to say that we engaged with the community as much as possible.

Mr. Castella: Right.

Vice Chair Lago: And if there's a -- you know, if you need resources to handle that, to handle more meetings, I think we should really focus on that because that's where I think we fall short sometimes because we allow people to say that we don't have enough community engagement and I want to make sure that's an opportunity for everybody.

Mr. Castella: To be heard and -- right.

Vice Chair Lago: Maybe even offer what Commissioner Fors brought up today in regards to some sort of Skype. Anybody that wants to watch, maybe they don't have to give public input, but at least they can at least see it live on TV or prerecorded. Think of something outside the box so that we can always say that we were accountable and transparent because this is a very -- this is a serious endeavor.

Mr. Castella: It's a big one, yeah.

Vice Chair Lago: That I've been working on for a while, and I want to make sure that we can -- people can say, listen, I don't want to vote in favor of this, X, Y, and Z; the cost, the commitment, the trouble, you know, the infrastructure or the headaches. It's fine, perfectly fine. But I don't want people to say that they weren't notified and that this wasn't -- that we weren't transparent.

Mr. Castella: Very good. Understood, Commissioner. As far as the schedule moving forward, between now and the holidays, the communications pieces are being developed and as well as the schedule of the times and locations for the meetings, and then where there'll be taking place. The draft website is also to be developed by then, by the end of next week. Then in early January, the lead group will review it, with an eye towards starting communications out to the community, towards the end of January. Then through February and March is essentially where all the community meetings will be held. As Commissioner Lago said -- Vice Mayor Lago said, these will be held with small groups, large groups, groups that request it. We'll accommodate them, you know, so we get to paint with a very broad brush.

Vice Chair Lago: I would reach out, if you could, to all the homeowners associations.

Mr. Castella: Correct.

Vice Chair Lago: Reach out to University of Miami, churches.

Mr. Castella: Right, Chamber of Commerce.

Vice Chair Lago: Synagogues, anywhere where there is public assembly, you know, reach out to them, make sure that they're full noticed.

Mr. Castella: Right. So, then the -- after the series of meetings that will be held through the months of February and March, we will then prepare a report of recommendations in early April, for an early April City Commission workshop where we come back to you. Of course, there'll be reports

along the way, but a final presentation of what the outcome of all this public engagement was. And then have a City Commission public hearing later in April, with a backup of May 12, with an eye towards, if it were to go to a vote, there's time. So, if the City determines at that time to say, well, we're not going to take this to the electors. Well, that's, you know, the end of the process. If the City determines to proceed to a vote, that would be August 18 of 2020, which is the primary. As I mentioned -- I'm sorry -- there's going to be project reports available on a twice monthly, or twice per month, basis that'll be prepared by the project group, presented to the City Manager, and then he'll make it available to the Commission. And the purpose of the reports is accountability, you know, full transparency, gather, you know, all the information that's been received back and report back to you on progress and schedules moving forward.

Vice Chair Lago: Would you do me a favor? Could you get me a copy of this presentation?

Mr. Castella: Yeah, absolutely.

Vice Chair Lago: As long as we're okay with staff. I'd like to make sure I can include it in my next newsletter.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me ask you a question. What criteria was used to form the lead group? Can you go back to the first slide?

Mr. Castella: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, City Manager and City Attorney.

Mr. Castella: Yeah. You can see the lead group from last month included the City Manager, the City Attorney were leading the process, the Assistant City Manager, Deputy City Attorney, Public Works Director, Finance Director. We've added the IT director and Kivvit, as well as Stantec and Jeff Bartow.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Who's Kivvit?

Mr. Castella: Kivvit is a public relations company that the City...

City Manager Iglesias: That's our -- the friend that we retained, Mayor, for...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. And who's Stantec?

Mr. Castella: I'm Stantec.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no, but what do you do?

Mr. Castella: Oh, I'm sorry. Our company, we're a full-service engineering design firm, construction administration firm. I'm a civil engineer. I've worked, as you know, for the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What about the Hamptons Group?

Mr. Castella: Hamptons Group is a -- they deal with issues having to do with -- in this case in particular, Jeff used to work for the utility. He knows, you know, the rate structures and how utilities operate.

City Attorney Ramos: Another City consultant, sir.

Vice Chair Lago: What is...

Mr. Castella: Another City consultant.

Vice Chair Lago: More importantly, I would like to know, just dovetailing off the Mayor's comments, Kivvit, give me a little background on Kivvit. Maybe this is more directed towards the Manager. What are they -- what function are they playing here?

City Manager Iglesias: Kivvit is going to help us as far as the website and outreach to the public. They're a -- from that perspective. They're currently on contract and we've been using them for -- specifically for this kind of project.

Vice Chair Lago: But they're -- are they working on other projects for the City, or is this the only project they're working on?

City Manager Iglesias: They are working on some other projects for the City.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me -- if Hampton's worked...

City Manager Iglesias: When i...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: for the utility, is Hampton's the right company to have in that lead group?

Mr. Castella: I think so. I mean, you know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Mr. Castella: I believe -- I mean, I don't want to speak for the City Manager or the City Attorney, but Jeff has been very instrumental in pushing this forward and working with the utilities to get things...

Vice Chair Lago: I think Mr. Bartow has an extensive history and knowledge of the industry, and I think he brings, you know, a lot of information that his firm provides to the city, which I think

will pay dividends in the future if we -- as the process moves forward and if we finally enter in this to -- this is the largest -- this could be possibly the largest undergrounding project in this state's history, so...

Mr. Castella: It will be the largest...

Vice Chair Lago: It will be.

Mr. Castella: Of an existing city going to underground. This will be the largest. The largest to date is Palm Beach. I'm sorry -- yeah, the Town of Palm beach. If Coral Gables were to move forward, Coral Gables would be the largest by far.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Chair Lago: I'd like to...

City Manager Iglesias: But I think we need Kivvit, I think, to go out and make sure that we properly -- we have outreach to the stakeholders in a way that they understand. Because sometimes we can be too technical, and I think we need to let the residents know exactly what's going on in a more -- in a, let's say, less technical, more...

Vice Chair Lago: I just want to be...

City Manager Iglesias: Personal way.

Vice Chair Lago: I want to go over this later with you, consult on this. We've had this discussion before. Not -- not with you as the manager. But I want to be very careful when we're hiring consultants. I know there's a threshold for the Manager to have at his discretion, but I want to be just careful that, you know, money starts adding up very quickly and then at the end of the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And I'd like to opine on that too.

Vice Chair Lago: And then at the end of the year, we don't have money to do, you know, something that's critical to the city. And I know this is important, but I just want to be careful for every dollar, every dollar that we spend here because...

City Manager Iglesias: And this is something that we -- I have send to you to let you know. Every contract that I've signed, whether large or small, has come to -- has been noticed to the City Commission.

Vice Chair Lago: Perfect.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Chair Lago: No problem.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

City Attorney Ramos: If you'd like, for this project, we can have -- there's three consultants on staff. We can have you -- we can have it come to you when you give us a ceiling in terms of fees because they are going to add up. There's no question about it.

Vice Chair Lago: No, I understand that. I mean, again, this is a 200 -- this could potentially be a \$200 million plus endeavor and I know there's going to be fees. I just want to be careful, and I want to be careful in regards to outside consultants and the monies that we're spending. Just...

City Manager Iglesias: But Vice Mayor, this is such a major project, not only in money, but also in the fact that every street will have to be affected. So, every...

Vice Chair Lago: I know there's significant outreach.

City Manager Iglesias: It is very significant.

Vice Chair Lago: But this is not only geared towards this conversation. It's geared towards every consultant that we have. So, I just want to be -- I'm not picking on this project.

Mr. Castella: I'm standing here, so I'll take it.

Vice Chair Lago: I am not picking on this project. I just want to be careful, you know, just be prudent. That's my only effort. That's it. And I understand completely that as we go further into this project that there's going to be costs associated with that. I mean, I've been in this business for too long to know what it entails. Okay. Can you give me a copy of this? Maybe send it to my colleagues? Yeah, she gave me a copy, but I'd like...

Mr. Castella: The City has...

Vice Chair Lago: Perfect.

Mr. Castella: The City has...

Vice Chair Lago: Just, I wanted an actual -- maybe a PDF, if possible.

City Attorney Ramos: I just sent it to you.

Vice Chair Lago: Thank you. Okay, I appreciate it. Alright.

Mr. Castella: Thank you very much.

Vice Chair Lago: Thank you, sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Chair Lago: Great work.

City Attorney Ramos: Thank you.