

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-2
January 9, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
Assistant City Manager, Frank Fernandez
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Police Chief, Ed Hudak
Major, Brian Lawrence

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item C-2 [10:04:16 a.m.]
Discussion regarding Red Light Cameras.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, next item is red light cameras. I have received -- since Miami eliminated red light cameras, I have received inquiries, proponents of red light cameras and opponents of red light cameras. And, I wanted for the City Manager to report to us on red light cameras, in a brief report, please.

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City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Absolutely. And so, Director Fernandez, if you'll come forward. Red light cameras for Coral Gables was never looked at as a money earner. It was looked at as a lifesaver. And, I think if you look at the dangerous crashes that have happened prior to red light cameras, you'll see that red light cameras are one of the few things that actually challenge or change South Florida behavior as it comes to red lights. We can point to specific intersections that have shown, with the introduction of red light cameras, that what previously had had a site of fatal crashes that we no longer have them. So, I know acting Major Brian Lawrence is the head of the specialized enforcement and can speak on that with specific numbers. And, I know that also the Chief and the Director also have additional information.

Assistant City Manager Fernandez: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, and members of the Commission. Thank you, Madam Manager. We have studied the red light cameras. Chief Hudak and Major Lawrence are prepared to provide you with an overview of the locations and the accident analysis that we have that is quite preliminary. But, we do believe these red light cameras. We haven't had a fatal accident in quite some time, as we briefed all of you. And with that, I'll pass it over to Chief Hudak and Major Lawrence.

Chief Hudak: Good morning, everyone. In 2009, we installed the first set of five cameras. These locations that were picked were Jefferson and US 1, Riviera and US 1, Alhambra Circle and Le Jeune, as well as two at Almeria and Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The analysis that was done was these were very high accident rates and not necessarily geographically contributing factors to why it was. So, some of it was speed. What we've seen -- and we look at this every year through ATS, who was our first provider -- has been not necessarily a decrease in the frequency of accidents, but a definite decrease in the severity of accidents. Riviera and U.S. 1 is probably the most astounding, where we had very many broadside accidents. Again, this is as we talk about congestion, pass-through traffic, true numbers. That's the constant way where people from the central part of the City actually try to either cut through and get to go southbound on US 1 in the mornings and northbound in the afternoons and blocking the boxes.

The citations themselves -- I mean, although we can track them, a majority of the tickets that were issued by the red light camera, individuals are not necessarily -- and the majority of those were not necessarily residents. They were people passing through of the 800,000 plus cars that pass through our City every day. A majority of those tickets were issued to people that were, in fact, passing through the City. We believe, in the police department, that we don't -- we haven't picked these locations to gain funds. Again, it's a \$158 ticket that comes to the City. If that's not taken care of in 30 days, it is then reviewed by a police officer, a part-time police officer that reviews the camera lights. And, then we issue what we call the uniform traffic citation. Just last month, the total revenues from the red light cameras back to the City from the uniform traffic ticket was about \$3,000 that we got from the County. So, it is not about a money-making situation. It is about the conformance of people that are driving through our City. You've seen the Shield 12s. You've seen us put up signs. Those red light camera signs do help slow people down. What we have seen is the law-abiding people that stop for those now get rear-ended for people that are going through those lights. Ideally -- and we looked at the numbers. We were like, okay, why are our accident rates still not declining. And, it's because people that are obeying them are getting bumped in the back, bumped across the side from people that are trying to beat the light. So, we have -- on the books, we have five more cameras, five more intersections that are to go up this year with a different provider. So, this isn't somebody that we are relying on just the data from All Traffic Solutions, who is ATS, the provider. Our new one is RedSpeed, a vendor that we had brought before the Commission. And, the reason why we did that is because it does also assist us in our ALPR technology of telling us who's coming through the City as well, where we didn't have that from the other vendor. And, the new intersections -- although we will advertise it when we put the signs up -- we're going to have two cameras at Le Jeune and Bird Road, two more cameras at Granada and South Dixie, and then one more camera at Bird Road and Red Road on the westbound side. Again, this is where -- acting Major Lawrence looks at this every year. We have had about a 60 percent decline in traffic fatalities. I will tell you that...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: That's a really impressive statement.

Chief Hudak: Over the last year, we've had a 60 percent decrease in fatalities. So, we had how many this year?

Major Lawrence: Zero.

Chief Hudak: Zero this year, and we had...

Major Lawrence: 2017.

Chief Hudak: 2017.

Vice Mayor Keon: 2017.

Chief Hudak: As opposed to we had three...

Major Lawrence: You had two the year before.

Chief Hudak: Two the year before. So, two more lives were saved. I can't put a price on what these traffic cameras can do. It also gives us valuable information when we do have to investigate that unfortunate accident. Along with the bicyclists, our job through enforcement is to make sure that we can get pedestrians, bicyclists and cars all working in unison and try to get them through our City and around our City safely. So, we -- again, this is our motivation. It is truly traffic safety. It is managing the flow that comes through, along with the mitigation plans and everything else that you've discussed.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Thank you very much. I just wanted to -- for you, for our staff, for the police, for the Chief, for the Public Safety Director to present this information to the

people who have asked. And I think it's very revealing. And, we haven't had a fatality in 2017, so I thank you for -- thank you very, very much, everybody.

Chief Hudak: Thank you.

[End: 10:10:43 a.m.]