

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C – Mayor’s Comments
June 13, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz
Senior Transportation Engineer, Melissa DeZayas

Public Speaker(s)

Maor Elbaz-Starinsky, Consul General of Israel

Agenda Item C [9:28 a.m.]
Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Lago: Moving on now to Mayor’s Comments. I’d like to see if we can cover these as quickly as possible, for staff literally just two minutes, three minutes on each one of these. The first one is C-1, and update on maintenance responsibility for swale areas next to bridges. So, this is something that I’ve been working on for the last year with staff. It’s looking a lot better, but I just want to make sure, are we running into any issues with the neighboring residents assuming responsibility of addressing those swales?

Public Works Director Diaz: The biggest issue that we have is that in some of these areas, they are technically not our responsibility and it’s not so much the residents, but for example, there’s a bunch of these bridges, like both bridges on Blue Road, these are county bridges. Our code requires abutting property owners to mow and keep litter-free the area for the property. We don’t think it’s appropriate realistically when you start going to the bank that could be dangerous. The county

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doesn't do regular maintenance on those bridges, as far as – and we have a similar condition on Maynada, for example, which we don't really get complaints about, because we actually been mowing the lawn of some of those little landscaping in that area. Bird Road specifically, we actually have an agreement with FDOT, so we do that, and they pay us some money towards that corridor.

Mayor Lago: The reason why I bring it up and we have certain residents that want to speak on the issue, because we need to come to a conclusion on who's going to be responsible. The reason why I brought this up and we've been working on it was because, especially on Blue Road that I travel a lot; you have two different bridges, it was an area for illegal dumping for a while.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: Now that resident has started helping by cleaning it out. There are less trees in that area.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: Obviously, it minimizes the ability for illegal dumping, because it's not a haven for an area where people can dump and it doesn't get picked up and we're talking about chairs, beds, furniture that was being dumped. They are doing a great job. What I want to find out is, what do we need to do to make sure that every bridge in the city is a resident adjacent to it is addressing it. If they can't for one reason or another, need to come to some sort of agreement, just because they can't do it, just because the county is not going to do it, somebody's got to do it. Got to be taken care of.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, what ends up happening is in the county areas, we'll come in and address it.

Mayor Lago: But we've got to cut back some of those trees, like for example, we cut back some of those trees on Bird Road near Granada and it looks a lot nicer, it's a lot cleaner. Something that I think is important, plus it's also a safety hazard.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes. So, Bird Road specifically, that's a FDOT road, but we have an agreement, so it's being handled by us.

Mayor Lago: There was a lot of dead foliage there, a few dead trees that were pretty far gone. Let's say a car catches fire there, who knows what happens with the entire bridge and the entire property adjacent to that bridge. I just want to tell your staff thank you. It looks a lot better and let's continue pushing to see how we can get everybody into compliance. When I mean everybody, I mean just our area, all these areas.

Public Works Director Diaz: 100 percent.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk you have somebody that wanted to speak.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor we have members of the public requesting to speak on your items. However, since you haven't brought up public comments yet, do you want to do it now.

Mayor Lago: You can do public comment, whatever you'd like, its fine. You want to back step and then we'll go to public comment, and we'll come back to this item. How would you like to address that. I don't have a problem.

City Clerk Urquia: We can take public comments first and that way...

Mayor Lago: Let's do it. I'm fine. No problem.

[Note for the Record: The Commission went to Public Comment items and then returned to Mayor's Comments]

Mayor Lago: C-2, an update on pending sidewalks. If we could just do it as quickly as possible, because I don't want to take up everybody's time. Where we are in regard to, I think we talked about Alhambra already, maybe we can talk about University, Doctor's Hospital and Blue Road.

Public Works Director Diaz: Melissa, we have a very brief presentation.

Mayor Lago: Melissa, how are you.

Ms. DeZayas: Melissa DeZayas, Transportation Division Manager. You want the presentation.

Mayor Lago: Yes, that's fine.

Public Works Director Diaz: Billy, C-2, please.

Ms. DeZayas: Just a quick update on where we are. So, with University Drive, basically we are expecting that we are going to be starting construction this month, at the end of the month. There are some things that need to be done with trees and stuff before sidewalk actually starts getting installed, but we're planning on getting the project started.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Ms. DeZayas: Alhambra Circle, we already gave our update on what was discussed. We are working on getting that arborist report, but we're looking at starting construction fourth quarter of this year.

Mayor Lago: There's a few issues there – drainage, trees, everything we discussed already.

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Ms. DeZayas Yes, traffic calming.

Mayor Lago: And again, just for the record, once we have everything let's have a meeting with all the residents in the area.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: You can Sunshine the meeting so all my colleagues can attend.

Ms. DeZayas: So Blue Road, we are working with Miami-Dade County. They did have some comments regarding the existing guardrails, so we're trying to get a variance for that, but we're anticipating that construction would start if we got these approvals that we're looking for with the guardrails and everything in January of next year.

Mayor Lago: Okay. This is a critical – I don't know if you've spoken to my colleagues on the Commission. This is something that I've been working on to connect Blue Road, as you can see right there, to the two bridges that run up Blue Road and take you almost basically to Granada; and this is an easier project, not because of the constructability, but it's an easier project because you're dealing with not the frontage of neighbors, you're dealing with side yards. Again, this is something that is required in this area. Imagine when you are walking on Blue Road, you have to walk up a bridge, you are not even walking. Again, it's not conducive, I think it was Commissioner Menendez mentioned, I think it was an article he was reading that when you talk about quality of life, if you don't have sidewalks, you can't say that you're all about quality of life and don't have sidewalks. So, this is a major project and something that I would like to, I'd ask one of my colleagues to pick up the torch is, why don't we have sidewalks at least on one side all the way up Blue Road connecting to Alhambra. That is something that we should look at. We don't even have it on any side. So right now, the sidewalk ends after the Riviera Country Club, and you basically have to get on the street. I walk that area probably twice a week at night with the family, we walk the neighborhood, we have to walk on the street, and then go on Santa Maria to find, obviously sidewalks there, but that is something that is heavily traffic area that there's no sidewalks on either left or right side of the street. So that's something that I want to think about. I know we have our hands full, maybe one of my colleagues wants to take that on, but I think that's something that we've got to tackle and maybe we can find state funding for next year, because if you look at the amount of traffic that goes to that street, the fact that it's a cut-through that takes you from 57th Avenue all the way basically to Ponce to U.S.-1, think about it, just a straight shot, I think you make a right. But it could be an opportunity to find some sort of funding to address the issues. I know it's a very costly sidewalk.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Let's put it on our legislative agenda. I concur with you.

Commissioner Menendez: If I may, Mr. Mayor, that area starting at about 2 o'clock is when traffic begins. It's not even regular rush hour traffic. About 2 o'clock it's impossible to get around. When I was canvassing, I used by golf cart, sometimes I was waiting five minutes just to be able to pull out of somebody's driveway from the amount of traffic. So, there's really no safe place to walk in that neighborhood.

Mayor Lago: Again, not because it's my neighborhood, but I'm pretty sure Blue Road is a major issue when you talk about walkability, it's probably one of the worst, along with that other very small street that we went to in north Gables.

Ms. DeZayas: Venetia.

Mayor Lago: Venetia – we need to discuss also.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a quick question. Is there a ballpark figure sidewalk per block, you know the cost general, not specific.

Public Works Director Diaz: Its difficult. We know what the sidewalk cost. The things that we notice that are sidewalk projects, when you start getting into the details, depending on the topography or the geometry of the road, you end up with a sidewalk and now you have a...problem, you are creating a drainage problem somewhere else, and then you have curbing and we know what the sidewalk is going to cost us, but...

Commissioner Menendez: But if you were able to pull out just the sidewalk and I understand.

Public Works Director Diaz: What's the...

Ms. DeZayas: For Blue Road, it was coming out to about \$125,000 just for the sidewalk.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. You remember the length.

Ms. DeZayas: The length I don't have off the top of my head.

Public Works Director Diaz: It depends on the specifics, but the sidewalk by itself, you are looking at less than \$10 per square foot, and then some restoration. Its everything else that sometimes gets in the way that makes the price go up.

Commissioner Menendez: Sure.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, its \$50 for a five-foot sidewalk; \$60 for a six-foot sidewalk, assuming you don't have poles and everything in the way.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. It's not exactly \$10. I forgot exactly – the sidewalk, the base, but yes, more or less, yes.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Perfect.

Ms. DeZayas: So, Pisano, we are working on that one and it looks like we're probably going to be starting construction in the fall, because we are expecting to have our final design in our office by August.

Public Works Director Diaz: One thing I'd like to bring up about Pisano, based on the availability to the roadway and there was a concern because that area has significant parking needs, right. On that side you have 36 parking spaces.

Ms. DeZayas: On the north side.

Public Works Director Diaz: On the side that we're doing this work and it looks like we are going to be able to keep the parallel parking, however, I know there's an interest of adding trees and there is not a lot of space for trees. The only way to really put anything there will be to turn them angle into parallel and now you're going to lose about half of the parking spaces.

Mayor Lago: Again, the hospital has a parking garage, this is fully funded, from my understanding, because we negotiated the deal, I requested that they do all the sidewalks, and they pay for all the sidewalks around the entire hospital.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: Something that's important that will connect us to Blue Road, that will connect us to University, that will connect us the quality of the sidewalks. So, I don't have a problem losing parking spaces there. I know the hospital is going to have a problem losing parking spaces, but again, they have a valet lot, they have internal parking. So, they need to come to an agreement. The residential neighborhood is not going to suffer because of their inability to address this issue. You've got to move forward, and we have to deliver on sidewalks, deliver on landscaping. That street has not been repaved. University of Miami did a great job on the other side. I welcome my colleagues, they haven't been there in a while, to take a look at it. Sometimes it's a little street that not many people traverse through. I think it's important that, again, the hospital, which is more than willing, they were very gracious in making sure that they funded this significant project, but we need to get it done. So, speak to the Manager and to my colleagues and see what they want to do, but I think it's important that we do it.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, I just wanted to make sure that we get that direction.

Vice Mayor Anderson: There is a drainage problem there that you need to know to address at Doctor's Hospital, its extensive.

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Public Works Director Diaz: The issue that you have on Camposano, and this will be resolved as part of this job, the pavement is depressed in the middle, so you get a big ponding. The water is being trapped there. Really that water runs, the natural topography runs all the way south, so this will correct those issues.

Commissioner Menendez: Is that the corner that I mentioned to you, residents – corner of Camposano and Pisano.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: It's almost like a little pond, that's why we are constantly fixing potholes there because the water gets trapped there. It's not really big flooding, its significant ponding, and this will correct that.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

Mayor Lago: Anything else.

Ms. DeZayas: That's it.

Mayor Lago: You have anything on Venetia?

Ms. DeZayas: So, Venetia, we are working on the study.

Mayor Lago: Excuse me.

Ms. DeZayas: We're working on the study.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Ms. DeZayas: We have a consultant that's been working on the study. We've reached out to the county to let them know that this is coming, but that one, we would have to get the study because we're looking at the one-way conversion and once that's completed, we have to go to the county.

Mayor Lago: Have we had a conversation with the team at the county to see when we're going to get a response?

Ms. DeZayas: Well, they haven't reviewed it yet, because they were still completing the study. We should have the study soon within the next few months and then we will be reaching out to the county with the officials to get their comments.

Mayor Lago: We'll follow up in a few months. Thank you. Looks like we're making progress.

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Public Works Director Diaz: We are.

Mayor Lago: Great. I'd like to take a person point of privilege and invite our Consul from Israel who's here, to speak and first introduce himself. I had the pleasure of taking him to lunch yesterday and having a really good conversation in regards to how blessed we are to have your Consul here in South Florida and the relationship between the City of Coral Gables and the Synagogues that we have here, Temple Judea, Chabot of Coral Gables, an incredible Jewish community that we have here, not only in South Florida, but more importantly in the City Beautiful. I asked him to be here today, because I wanted him to talk a little bit about Israel and his post here in the city and how we can continue to strengthen our bonds.

Maor Elbaz-Starinsky: Thank you very much Mayor, Council, Vice Mayor, City Manager, residents of course. Thank you very much for having me here today. I'm very privileged to be Israel's Consul General in Miami in the past two years. Believe it or not, I'm also the Consul General for Missouri and Kansas, go figure, but obviously, they don't have maps in Jerusalem, but it works. I'm enjoying it, but of course Florida takes much of my attention, especially Southern Florida and I think for Jews around the world, other than Israel there's no better place to live in and to celebrate their Jewishness, our culture other than Florida and Southern Florida in particular now. You may know that this year is Israel's 75th anniversary. Israel was established in 1948, and this year we are, as we say, we are 3,000 years old and 75 years young, but we are proud to be one of the most developed countries in the world on all levels, economic and cultural and politically and socially and we've overcome, we've managed to overcome many, many, many challenges to really to establish a beautiful state, a great state which serves as a holy place for many religions, mainly the three main religions, Judaism, Islam and Christianity, and I would hope that all of you would have the opportunity, if you haven't had this opportunity yet to travel to Israel, to visit Israel, to travel Israel, to visit the holy sites, because this is really a mind-blowing experience. I started my tenure over here four days before the tragic collapse of the Champlain South Building in Surfside and Israel was immediately very involved. In 48 hours, I managed to bring the Israeli Search and Rescue team and we continue to support the community. One of the things that I'm completely committed to is reaching out to different communities, not only to the Jewish community, which of course I'm coming from, but other communities and I've had the privilege to have a few discussions with the Honorable Mayor Lago, who I can call a friend, a personal friend and also a friend of the Jewish community and I'm happy to see over here in City Beautiful, we should all fight together to end antisemitism, bigotry, hate and promote human rights and shared values of our society in our community, and I'm completely committed to doing so with you, with your help. So, whatever you may think that me, as an Israeli official can be of help with reaching out to community, reaching out supporting the men and women in blue. My wife joined the Miami-Dade Police Department just a couple of weeks ago, so I'm very honored to have a police officer, she's not sworn, but don't tell anybody that, but work in the Miami-Dade Police Department. We are very, very honored to serve here in Florida; and one of the things that I thought

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would be very, very nice to promote is Sister City Agreement between City Beautiful Coral Gables and the city and the town in Israel, so I bring it to your Commission of course. You will decide upon that in your time, but I'm completely, again, committed to foster the wonderful opportunities that we have to promote the connection between the State of Israel and Florida, in particular with the City of Coral Gables. Thank you very much for having me here today.

Mayor Lago: It's a true pleasure, like I mentioned. So, my colleagues on the Commission, we've had multiple meetings, yesterday we sat down for probably an hour and-a-half. We talked about partnerships, schools, police and fire, general employees. We are going to schedule some time, going to have maybe a breakfast or brunch for employees, police officers, firefighters, provided by the Israeli Consulate. I'll make sure that the entire Commission is available. We also talked about the opportunity of potentially having a Sister City in Israel. That was just a very brief conversation. He's going to start doing his research and present it to the Manager, and then we'll see how we can bring that together. I think that would be something important. But most importantly, the most critical thing that we can do is really build a strong partnership. Build a partnership that, again, is not just about an invocation, or a speech at a Commission, its about truly engaging with the Jewish community in one form or another. Its not just about lighting the Menorah once a year, its about really building strong bonds and sending a strong statement, like you said about antisemitism, but inclusion; and over the last two years, we had one incident here that I dealt with, with the Manager. The Manager remembers pretty well about the hate, some Jewish hateful antisemitic statements that were made that were put on a wall. Again, thank God that through the hard work of our Police Department and our Chief that individual was caught. But this Commission is very clear, its unacceptable in our community. We will stamp that out and we will say it from the dais, and we will be very vocal in regard to our position of being inclusive, being a safe haven for people to be able to come and enjoy this community. So, I want you to understand and be very clear, like I tell everyone who comes here to this Commission. You are welcome to come join us here, speak, come to the Commission meeting, send my colleagues e-mails, anything that you think that we can engage on together and partner, it's a breath of fresh air, I welcome it.

Maor Elbaz-Starinsky: Mayor, same again with my office and just a word. I truly appreciate what we have done against antisemitism. I also took part with you in a press conference, I think it was in December, antisemitism in general, but also other, and in particular about hate and bigotry endanger the fabric of our society, the fabric of our community, and we should all stand up and fight it together and I believe it all starts with education, start with empowering the law enforcement officers. And again, I'm committed to support and to engage with any possible project and initiative that you may have. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Consul General, I appreciate that so much. Moving onto C-3, very briefly. The reason why I put this on the agenda is because I'd like for my colleagues – I already did a site visit with staff, with the director, I think it was about two weeks ago.

Public Works Director Diaz: Something like that, yes.

Mayor Lago: Brought to my attention from a resident who lives on Valencia, the opportunity of potentially beautifying that street. Right now, its like a desert there; there isn't much landscaping, sidewalks aren't clean. We had a conversation with the manager of the hotel, and we had a conversation about proper maintenance and really sprucing up the area, but I would like for you, if you can, please to have a conversation with my colleagues to potentially discuss medians, traffic calming, something that will add value and beautify that street.

Public Works Director Diaz: Billy, could you put C-3, and its just one screenshot of the area, so that we can look at it. So, we're talking about the block of Valencia between LeJeune and Hernando. So, the discussion that we had in the field was about the possibility of adding some bump-outs, especially across from the city parking lot, so we're actually in the process of getting a survey for the area. At that point, we'll make a determination of what are the potential impacts, right. The reality is the sidewalks are too narrow for you to really put any significant tree on the sidewalk, so we need to put bump-outs. When you put bump-outs you interrupt the flow of drainage, the topography of the street will tell us where that goes. So once we have the survey, we'll put together some sketch for the Commission to tell us how many parking spaces are we willing to lose, how many trees do we want, and along with the drainage portion of the work, which every time you put a bump-out unless you happen to be right at the high point, you are going to have to put a drain there which is just part of it; and then the discussion will have to be done at that point, also where its going to be funded from, because this is not a funded project, as we speak right now. So, we can come back to you with some preliminary, is there a meeting in August, Billy? – so maybe in August we can come back, if that's okay.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, I'd like to put it on the agenda for discussion in August. I'd like for my colleagues, if possible, please visit this area. You're very familiar with this area, probably a lot more familiar than I am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: This was part of originally the drawings on the Bacardi Project and there was a vision of narrowing the lanes, putting in a narrow median, because it kind of creates that visual slow down. Plus, we have a problem with that circle getting plowed over by vehicles many, many times. So, I've been talking to residents in that area for a long time. They do want it done, absolutely, and we do have a city parking lot across the street that will alleviate the parking issues of losses, most of the time its not even half full.

Commissioner Menendez: I drove by last night and I noticed, I think there are townhomes there, multi-family units. So, I just want to be sensitive to their parking needs, on-street parking needs going forward. That's my...

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll come with an idea and then we can add or delete from that.

Mayor Lago: Its my understanding from the gentleman that I met with, his position, he lives in those townhomes. He's the one that's kind of calling about traffic calming.

Commissioner Menendez: Traffic calming, landscaping, I think is great, but I just want to make sure we...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Each one of those townhomes have parking, each one of those apartment buildings have parking through the alley, okay. I've talked to the building owners of one of the buildings on the corner. They have no issue with losing some parking, because they have adequate parking inside their building, and if we could stretch it to right around the corner on Hernando, just complete that, one or two trees would make a world of difference.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fernandez wanted to say something.

Commissioner Fernandez: I drive through this block quite a bit. There's something that's being employed in Europe as a traffic calming measure where your traffic is on the right side of the road and then it curves over to the left side with trees, so that its forcibly slowed down, because its not a straight line. Its being slowed down because both lanes of traffic will move from side to side. That may be something we can contemplate here as a test. There is a lot of traffic on this street. I take it a lot, especially traffic coming from the other side of, I guess heading westbound for the most part. Just something for you to look into, if you can, what they are employing in Europe because it may be something we can consider as options going forward, and it would add space for green space.

Vice Mayor Anderson: As long as it shades the sidewalk, it has to shade the sidewalk.

Public Works Director Diaz: We'll take the survey. It's a sixty-foot right-of-way and that's really the big limitation, right, its not wider. Once we have the survey we'll see, like I said, we'll come up with an idea for everybody to discuss, we can add, delete, change.

Mayor Lago: Alright. We'll see you in August. Thank you. Moving onto C-4. Discussion regarding TPO multimodal and roadway analysis recommendations regarding transforming US 1 into a boulevard. I sponsored this item when I was on the TPO, I requested a study to be completed in regard to accessibility to the Underline. We just got the report back. I think I sent a memo out to staff. I wanted to see if our staff has reviewed it and if there's any information or anything they'd like to add onto that.

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Ms. DeZayas: So, we've reviewed it, quick review and we've reached out to DOT. DOT last month hasn't crossed the desk of the Traffic Operations Manager, so this is something that will basically have to be implemented by them. There are some short-term recommendations and some long-term ones. The short-term ones seems like it would be feasible recommendations. The long-term ones, there were two that seemed like they would need to do some initial analysis because there was like some feasibility concerns with the elevated bike path, but one of them which was like a traffic circle on LeJeune seemed like it might be a good idea.

Mayor Lago: So, I just asked Gabby really quickly to forward the memo to the Commission. The purpose of this, again, the city didn't pay for this report. The study was done by the TPO. This is an opportunity, again, to see how we can figure out ways to have people use the Underline and how are we going to use the Underline, we've got to find ways to get there, and once you've got the Underline, how safe can we make it. So, I'd like for staff, if possible, in the next few weeks if we can talk about it in August, sit down with my colleagues on the Commission, once they've reviewed it. Maybe have a conversation with Matt, conversation with the Manager, have a conversation with anybody that deals with transportation, anybody that deals with ACM, any ideas, pass it along and see if we can come up with something that again, are we going to potentially move forward on this, is it too costly. What are the opportunities, do we need to partner up with the county over the next few years to budget this and see if the county will help us. What can we do to just make people use the Underline as much as possible and get to the Underline as safe as possible. I'd like some ideas from my colleagues on the Commission after this study. This is a pretty robust study and that the TPO paid for, and I'd like to see us take advantage of the fact that we have the study done.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Trying to find solutions. Trying to find solutions any way that we can. Thank you to the team, I appreciate it. C-5 – This is a simple one. So really quick, C-5, shopping carts. I met with Publix a week and-a-half ago. You probably noticed there are shopping carts everywhere. This was brought to my attention by Commissioner Ralph Cabrera a few months ago. He said, Vince, do something about the shopping carts, they are everywhere. So, I contacted Publix, they have a system in place that basically locks the shopping carts, but they are going to be working on making it even more technologically advanced. I met with Whole Foods yesterday. Whole Foods does not have a system in place. They are going to have it in the next six months. The nice lady who I met with, told me that she ordered 100 shopping carts a year ago, and she's down to 33 shopping carts, okay. She also said that it's been a major issue in regard to homeless which I spoke to the Manager about already. This is another topic that we will be having. I had a conversation with Commissioner Regalado yesterday. We are going to be having a meeting where she is going to invite the Mayor, the City Manager, and the Police Chief from every city, to have a discussion about homelessness, especially on the Underline and areas of concern. She told me that since the

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Winn Dixie closed in South Miami, they've been having more of an uptick in regards to homelessness there in front of Whole Foods, and the big issue there is, now she's got to figure out a way to be able to with the new technology, to allow people to use the shopping cart, get to their car and not move past one block, there's a limit and she's working on that technology. She said that within the next six months she's going to have that. Another issue that we're having now that we're going to have a meeting with Target. If you look at LeJeune and I send this to Gabby and Chelsea all the time is the issue of shopping carts. The shopping carts are all over LeJeune. They are dumped in the front of buildings, and someone's got to pick those up. I send them to Public Works daily, like I do with the graffiti and Code Enforcement issues, to try to resolve it. So, I'll be meeting hopefully with Target. Gabby is working on getting us a meeting. If you have any other ideas, if you see issues similar to this that need to be addressed, where a multi-national corporation that is not holding up their end of the bargain in regards to beautification, in regards to their properties that are not being cleaned, in regards to their parking lots that should be maintained, or maybe they are storing 18-wheelers, where they are doing things that again, are outside of the city code, we need to bring them into compliance, we need to bring them into compliance, because slowly this erodes the fabric of the City Beautiful, and if you'd like to get involved, please come to the meeting that we're trying to schedule with Target to try to find a solution. Whole Foods is well aware, Publix is doing what they can, and they are going to change a few things that they are doing, and they are looking forward to the new revamp of the store, which I've been working with the Manager. Mr. Manager, since we're talking about Publix, can you do me a favor, can you please share with my colleagues what we've been working on for the last few years with Publix. We've finally come to a really nice design where there's potentially going to be a 20,000 square foot park on the corner that we've been able to negotiate with them that will come to the city in the middle of downtown. That's something that I've been working on for a long time and I take a lot of pride in, because I think we are trying to put as many parks in the downtown as possible, and they are moving forward with that. So, think about different ways. I know people may think this is ridiculous, Vince, why we are talking about shopping carts, but it's not, it's not.

Commissioner Fernandez: I live close to Sodano's and Sodano's for years has had that issue, but Sodano's actually has a truck that goes around.

Mayor Lago: Whole Foods does it too. The lady who I met yesterday picks it up, but its every two weeks.

Commissioner Fernandez: Sodano's is on a regular basis; everyday they are going around town picking up shopping carts. So, I would say, sometimes we see the uptick, let Sodano's know, they immediately have the truck go through the neighborhoods that are seeing the impact, because most of the time its on the Miami side, not on the Coral Gables side. I don't know, is there any way that we can require that they check on their shopping carts on a regular basis?

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Mayor Lago: So, the issue with that and I'll let the City Attorney address it. We have some preemption law on the books, right.

City Attorney Suarez: Correct. We are really preempted as to what we can do in terms of citing or fining or assessing any costs, preempted by the state.

Commissioner Menendez: I live off of LeJeune and there was one weekend we had ten shopping carts. It seemed like, I learned quickly of all the types of stores we have in the area, and even City of Miami from the City of Miami side east, somehow, they were stacked. I have a question regarding preemption. What's that expression, finders' keepers, if shopping carts goes astray can we impound it?

City Attorney Suarez: So, what the state law says is that the rightful owner of any shopping cart with a registered name or mark on them public property shall be immediately notified of its recovery.

Commissioner Menendez: That doesn't mean...

City Attorney Suarez: To let them know that we found it.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, in the same line as what you're saying, I passed a piece of legislation with your support which now says that, if you put up a sign, MOT sign, maintenance of traffic sign, the city can go pick it up and fine you, that's different. We have that in the books already and we are employing that.

City Attorney Suarez: In this case, Mayor, we would be preempted from doing that.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Castro: There's an electronic system that locks the wheels and there's a designated boundary that after it goes to the boundary it locks the wheels. Is there any way we could enforce that?

Mayor Lago: So, what I was telling you was that I met with Publix, they already have that in the books, and they are just going to tighten up the geo-fence and the second one was Whole Foods. Whole Foods, when I met with them yesterday here with the representative, she told me that they are employing that same technology in the next six months, but what she tells me is, she's heard from other retailers that they break the wheels. Publix told me people just break the wheels and drag the shopping cart.

Commissioner Fernandez: If you lift it enough off the ground, it doesn't trigger the magnet.

Commissioner Castro: There's another technology that is a magnetic strip that when it leaves the store, it stops.

Mayor Lago: The issue with that is that they are trying to get people, they want to do something to their car, especially the elderly and the disabled and then stop it there. So, they are working on their geo-fence.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. So, I'm going to give you the real-life story. Four times over the past ten days, I have called Publix to pick up two carts, all the way within a block of...Spoke to the Manager two days ago. I'll see if it's picked up tonight. They've got to have some tagging technology to be able to find these things. I give them an address, I give them an intersection, but if they don't have tags on these things, just like we have on the motor scooters, so that they can find where their little scooters are to go pick them up and round them up and take them back, we are going to be talking about this for the next ten years. So, there's got to be a tagging technology rather than playing hide and seek and figuring out its behind the AT&T box, between the hedges, and this one and that one, because I shouldn't have to make four calls to get these picked up.

Mayor Lago: So, just wanted to put it on your radar and ask you to please help me out with that, engage if you have any ideas, I welcome it. I'll be meeting with Target, if you'd like to be at that meeting, we'll Sunshine it.