

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-4
January 28, 2025
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 Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Alberto Parjus
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Jackson Rip Holmes

Agenda Item F-4 [10:50 a.m.]

Discussion regarding temporary speed tables.
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: We'll move onto item F-4.

Vice Mayor Anderson: F-4 – I've been in conversation with our esteemed director about the costs and possibilities for providing some additional relief for residents. We spoke briefly this morning, and he was going to come up with some numbers here and share with us his findings.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Director, good afternoon. Good morning, excuse me.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good morning, still good morning. Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director. So, we originally intended to purchase 130 new locations for speed cushions at a cost of \$160,000. The actual price came out a little bit below that. So, at the direction of the prior Manager, we ended up purchasing a few extra ones. We believe that for us to complete the ones that are pending with the temporary speed cushions and at least the number that we think right now,

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because we are getting extra ones, right. We already finished the ones...we are almost done with Sun3. We are getting additional requests, another 15 for the time being. I think will bring us to that number. The speed cushion price has gone up a little bit since, so we think for \$90,000 that will no longer include the speed cushion itself, but also, we've been doing it in-house with our crews, somewhat in overtime. So, we think that will cover that. And there is Ponce available in traffic calming to cover that if that is the decision of the City Commission.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'd like to hear from my colleagues because I think that's probably one of the number one thing that we hear from residents about people racing down their streets. I think now we're putting the 25 mile an hour speed limit along major thoroughfares so at least people are better notified that this is not a speedway. So, I'd like to hear your thoughts on adding an additional 15 speed tables to our inventory to be able to provide faster relief for residents.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, my question was, can you go over that again. You said 130 locations.

Public Works Director Diaz: No, no, no. 30 – Originally, we were extending by 30, not 130.

Commissioner Fernandez: Got it. Got it. This will be an additional 15.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right, but we managed to buy more than 30 because the price ended up being a little lower. We ended up buying and the previous Manager, Amos, mentioned that he asked us to buy, so we ended up buying a little bit more than 40 in total. So now with this extra 15 that will allow us to, and obviously we get new requests all the time, so if this becomes a thing that we need to come back, obviously at your discretion we can always continue to.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, what do you need from us.

Public Works Director Diaz: Your direction.

Commissioner Fernandez: So do you need a motion to allow you to purchase the additional 15, I'll move that.

Public Works Director Diaz: Obviously, the traffic calming money.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm happy to move it, I brought it forward. I wanted to hear everybody's comment because there is a cost to everything, but I also value the safety, the safety to our residents, their pets, everything that gets run over in our community.

Commissioner Menendez: I want to qualify for the temporary speed tables, are you in the pipeline for a permanent or how does that work.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes. You still have to qualify. You have to go through the same process that the county put forth. We still have to get data, you have to qualify, we have to ballot you. So, you still have to qualify for that process, but we are almost done with like the first three zones in the city and now people who originally didn't express interest now are wanting to. We've tested them, so we see a lot more coming down the pipeline.

Commissioner Menendez: They've been very effective.

Public Works Director Diaz: They are helpful, absolutely.

Commissioner Menendez: And by the way, I'm completely in support as many as we need, because it just takes one car and I want folks to know its not a nuisance of cars speeding, it's a life safety, as we all agree. So, the fact that it is a life safety issue, if we can address sooner rather than later. I'm in support of what my colleagues are discussing.

Commissioner Castro: So, Hermes, stage one is the ask; stage two is the accumulation of data; stage three, qualifying; and stage four, vote of the residents. Are they being installed between stage three and stage four, or after four.

Public Works Director Diaz: No. We collect – The concrete street cushion, they take a little bit to be installed.

Commissioner Castro: The temporary ones.

Public Works Director Diaz: The temporary ones with the city staff, we basically put them down – sorry, the temporary ones with the city staff, we put them down in a day, basically. It's a matter of diverting them. We've been doing about two per week; one during the regular week and on Saturdays. As opposed to the other ones that take significant amount of time.

Commissioner Castro: So where in the process are the temporary ones being installed.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, we are installing them in the locations where eventually they are going to be the final ones, right, eventually they'll be removed and potentially put somewhere else if necessary.

Commissioner Castro: Right, but is it right after the ask or is it after...

Public Works Director Diaz: No, no, we need to ask, we need to pull the data, you need to qualify, and we need to ballot you. We still have to go through that process.

Commissioner Castro: After the fourth step is...

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Commissioner Castro: I'm in full support of this.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I just want to interject. I did have also a discussion with staff regarding particular people test driving vehicles, they go very fast in our community. A cease and desist letter is going to be sent to that automobile dealer by our City Attorney's office to stop test driving those vehicles, they are electric vehicles and they can go from zero to like 75 in the blink of an eye and they are using Segovia, they are using 39th Avenue, they are using anything that provides any type of straight-away.

Mayor Lago: Using Bird Road.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Bird Road.

Mayor Lago: And we sent them a letter already before and I've been involved with that.

City Attorney Suarez: A different dealership. It was years ago, and we sent a couple of cease-and-desist letters for speeding basically in our residential streets during these test drives.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's coming too, so I want to let you all know that.

Mayor Lago: They'll comply, they'll comply. They are just going to contact the salespeople and put them on record and tell them, put them on notice, excuse me.

Commissioner Menendez: In the past, I've dealt with it as a father with car dealerships and the test drives and the mechanics testing the cars that they are repairing. I know one dealership had a particular map of streets that the staff was supposed to use, but they would cut through residential. One time there was a very, very powerful V-12 engine, the car stopped at one end of the block, and I was trying to figure out why it was doing that and all of a sudden, I know it went to like warp speed. If anybody is pulling out of their driveway it's a recipe for disaster. So, I'm glad that the city is taking action. It's about time.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, the other area that staff was working on is the intersection of Riviera and Segovia, an area where we've had a number of accidents for a long period of time. There needs to be some additional record gathering and staff will get back to us as to when something more can be done, whether it's a four-way stop or traffic circle, but I just want to let you know that that is in process.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do we have any public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Rip Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: Greetings. Sorry for talking so much today, but I think you might be interested in what I'm about to say. So, first of all, the speed tables of course are an issue of life and death, and

so we have to protect life. So this is obvious, but what's interesting and I think perhaps especially to Mayor Lago is that, who is our former Economic Development guy who is now head of penny sales tax, his name is escaping me, but he and Mayor Lago pointed out that money that was devoted to solving our traffic problems entirely, that is to expand Metrorail and to put rapid transit buses on all of our highways, that's the solution, right. And that penny sales tax fund got raided by the county during the great recession, they said Well, we promised that this would never be raided by the great recession, and they raided the money, they took most of that money. So, talked with our friend, he'd be glad I can't remember his name, because he gave me an update, right, and I said look, they are talking now about raising more taxes for solving the traffic problem, and I said, obviously that's needed, but the question is, will they raid it again, right, and steal the money, and I said what we need is a guarantee written into the law that this money is in a trust fund that cannot be violated for any reason by the County Commission. They can't steal the money again. You follow me. And what he told me, which was embarrassing for him and shocking for me is, look, the County Commission will never approve it. They'll never sign off on saying that taxpayer money strictly devoted to solving our traffic problem cannot be raided and stolen by the county for other reasons. Its crazy, right, that's the world we live in.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Moving on. Anything else for the good of the order.

City Clerk Urquia: We need a vote on this item, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: We do.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We do.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Let's take a vote. We have a motion by the Vice Mayor.

Commissioner Fernandez: And a second.

City Clerk Urquia: And a second.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)