

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item F-5**  
**September 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 Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item F-5 [9:36 a.m.]

Update regarding the Coral Gables Courthouse  
(Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: We'll move onto item F-5. It's one of the items that I brought forward, and I wanted to give a little quick update of something that I've been working on with the incredible staff from Miami-Dade County. So please join us. Come up here. Item F-5 is an update regarding the Coral Gables Courthouse. So, every day as we drove by the courthouse over the last few years, we've noticed that it had seen better days, it had seen better days. So, I got a contact from a mutual friend of ours and we reached out and we started having conversations about how can we bring it up to a certain standard, a Coral Gables standard. So, I wanted to say thank you for joining us. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you, thank you for your hard work, thank you for listening, thank you for engaging and also the county, all the individuals that were involved in the process, and I'd love for you to give us a quick update in regard to where we stand in regards to the upgrades that we're seeing currently at the courthouse.

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Speaker: Will do. Thank you, Mayor and members of the Commission, thank you for allowing us to be here and to give a little update on this, and as the Mayor noted, he did reach out and was concerned about the appearance of the courthouse, rightfully so. I myself had recently started in the department at the time and some of the sequencing on that project was out of sync and so we had the opportunity there to move stuff around and not wait on some of the aesthetic improvements, but in addition to aesthetics, there's also other improvements that have taken place. So, without going into too much detail and I have, I believe an attachment to your item that shows the listing of these projects. So, what we set out to do was to advance the façade work so that the appearance would look better immediately. There were cracks and other work that needed to be done. So, it has been painted and cracks were repaired. Part of the sequencing included the roof; the roof project was a major project, that got caught up in all of that supply chain stuff and delays, but over \$500,000 worth of work on that roof, plus design. So those are improvements you really don't see, but they are there, right, and it was a major significant improvement. The building, I believe, is from 1950-1951. In addition to that, now you'll start to see some of the more aesthetic improvements that have to do with the parking lot, and so, we're working on those – drainage, signage, that is significantly needed, and then finally landscaping, which is in permitting here with the city already, and we're working on making sure that we comply with everything that's required by the city, and it's something that we definitely want to do and I think the landscaping will be a significant improvement. That's what's really needed due to that building, so the landscaping is something we're definitely looking forward to; and also new lighting, which is going to help and rework the interior of the alignment of the parking and the curbing in there as well. We might have worked on it hard, but it's our responsibility to do that. Our Mayor as well supported this and making sure that we moved it quickly, so Mayor Levine Cava was informed and we made sure to move it up as much as possible, and we'll keep working on it and if there's anything else we need to address, we're happy to take a look at that as well Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Listen, I asked you to come today because I just wanted to share with my colleagues and share with the city that even though this may be a county project, the Mayor and I work collaboratively. We had dinner, we talked about issues that are facing the city. I wrote a memo to my colleagues on the Commission asking for them to get engaged and to also address and find any other concerns. I don't catch everything. Trust me, far from perfect. We all are far from perfect, but this is an opportunity with five members of the Commission and our staff to address issues, for example, that we talked about the landscaping, talked about the bridges, painting bridges, cleaning bridges, streets that are responsibilities of the county that are seeing issues with asphalt, issues under the Underline. A litany of different things that we outline in that memo from my office, and this is one of those examples; and I just want to say thank you to the Mayor and thank you to you, your team. I see Danette, your friend who's here from the county who was involved a long time ago here in the City of Coral Gables and she's an incredible asset, so congratulations. This is for us, very important. It's a main thoroughfare in the city. Just addressing the cracks,

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painting the building, you don't really see the roof, but now the money that's being spent there and the upgrades in regards that's forthcoming for the landscaping and a few other issues are going to pay huge dividends and that continues to really set an example of what we expect here in the City Beautiful. No matter if it's the county, if it's the city's responsibility, or a resident, or a business owner's, you have certain standards here and we need to continue to elevate those standards to hold up our property values. At the end of the day, the higher our property values are, the City of Coral Gables benefits, but also the county benefits. We pay the county over \$100 million dollars a year in taxes. So, I think it's really beneficial and it's a great thing what you did, and I look forward to seeing the outcome of the exterior work. Do you know when the landscaping is going to go in?

Speaker: It's a matter of just getting the permit approved.

Mayor Lago: Not from us, right.

Speaker: Yes, but it's working, it's fine. We have a meeting scheduled. It's no complaints. We have a meeting scheduled next week on the 19<sup>th</sup> to sit down with your purviewers to go over the actual plan. We're fine.

Mayor Lago: So, if I may, if I may ask on behalf of the Commission, Mr. Manager, will you do me a favor, will you assign somebody from your office to make sure that they attend that meeting, maybe the ACM or Anamy or anyone to make sure that somebody is in that meeting so we can push that forward.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, we will, Mayor.

Speaker: Additionally, the permit for the parking is also in the works too, so we want to sequence that parking first, so it doesn't mess up the landscaping. So, parking first and then the landscaping, but yes. So, we can reach out to your staff as well and coordinate on that.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much for being here.

Speaker: Thank you so much. Good luck today. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Thank you.