

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-3
April 12, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-3 [Start: 2:51:37 p.m.]

A Resolution approving the process for a neighborhood initiated enhancement program to add lighting and/or sidewalks to neighborhoods.

Mayor Cason: H-3.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You can have additional details, if you like this presentation; Jessica how long should this presentation take?

Ms. Keller: Fast.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: It's an important one though. You all have asked the question of how do you create sidewalks where no sidewalks exist?- and how do you develop a program citywide for residents that want residential street lighting?

Ms. Keller: I'm Jessica Keller; I'm the Assistant Public Works Director, good afternoon. This is a resolution approving the process for a neighborhood initiated enhancement program to add lighting and/or sidewalks to neighborhoods. Sidewalks and well-lit pedestrian paths provide the opportunity for pedestrians to move about safely throughout the neighborhood, it can contribute significantly to enhance sense of community and improve quality of life. Throughout the City of Coral Gables numerous neighborhood streets do not currently have well-lit sidewalks for pedestrians. It's estimated that the City has approximately 243 miles of streets with only 150 miles of sidewalks. While the cost to complete this on both sides of all streets throughout the City will cost tens of millions of dollars, it's recognized that a program of this magnitude would need to take a long term continual effort. In many cases, it may not be practical to add sidewalks and it may not be desired by homeowners. Staff is recommending to move forward with an initial program with practical limitations that would provide the opportunity to add sidewalks and/or improve pedestrian lighting in neighborhoods and locations where they are most desired. Now the process. What we are recommending is that any property owner may contact the City with a notification that they would like to add sidewalks and/or lighting to their neighborhood. We'll make sure that GovQA reflects these requests and our website is updated with the appropriate contact information. The requesting resident will be provided a program brochure which will describe the overall program in detail. Additionally, staff will provide the resident with a Map Face Location form designed specifically for that location and the types of enhancements that are requested. This will take about two days. So once we get the request, two days later we will provide the program brochure and the mapping. Upon receiving the completed location form, staff will review and determine if a specific location requested is feasible and communicate back to the resident within two weeks. Either approving the request as feasible, or working with the resident to modify. The requestor will then be provided a Neighborhood Interest form to share with their neighbors. The form will include a map depicting the specifics of the desired enhancements and the specific addresses of all the properties included within the enhancement zone. The owners of the identified properties will be provided the opportunity to vote yes or no, to further pursue the discussion on the proposed enhancements. Each property will receive one vote. It's the responsibility of the neighborhood to circulate and get Interest Forms completed by the property owners or designee. In order for the enhancement process to continue into the next steps, we recommend that at least 50 percent of the owners of the properties affected be required. Upon receipt, a 50 percent or greater support, staff will initiate a neighborhood meeting to discuss a proposed project in detail, including the funding requirements. The community meeting will take place within six weeks. This allows three weeks for us to prepare our mailings and three weeks notification, which is typically our policy for transportation. After the neighborhood meeting, an establishment of project costs, staff will circulate a formal ballot to determine if residents are agreeable to propose an assessment needed to implement the enhancements. It's recommended that a vote of support equal to or greater than two-thirds of the residential properties in the enhancement zone is required for the project to

proceed. This is how Miami-Dade County is the same as their procedure for traffic modifications. Property owners have 30 days to return their ballots. Upon receipt of the neighborhood support, a formal assessment commitment, staff will develop a project schedule and proceed with sign and construction. The total planning time from the time that we get that initial request is 72 days, or two and-a-half months. The funding. The collector streets that serve larger neighborhoods, the City shall proceed our recommendation that the City shall provide 100 percent of the funding. These would be streets like Ponce de Leon, up to Southwest 8th Street, Granada Boulevard, Alhambra Circle, Anastasia Avenue, University Drive, San Amaro Drive, Riviera Drive, Maynada Street, and Biltmore Drive. For local streets serving only immediate neighborhoods, the City shall provide 50 percent of the funding and the remaining 50 percent shall be shared by property owners based on linear feet of frontage to the establishment of an assessment district, in accordance with the City's Capital Assessment Ordinance 2014-07. It's recommended that in order to begin the sidewalk program next fiscal year that a capital improvement project in the amount of \$200,000 is added to the 2016-2017 CIP Program Budget. This will allow for approximately two miles of new sidewalks and initiation of the program. This is consistent with the Draft Strategic Action Plan objectives to improve mobility, mobility options throughout the City and enhance the pedestrian experience, safety, and connectivity in the City for improved lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks, and wayfinding. Speaking of sidewalks, I'm going to make sure you are listening. I wanted to let you know, I want to take the opportunity that we have 1.1 miles of new sidewalks in the City of Coral Gables, since we just started the expansion process. So just through the extensions alone, we have 1.1 miles of new sidewalk that we didn't have just a few months ago.

Mayor Cason: I've seen some of those in my neighborhood. That's great.

Ms. Keller: That's great. See this is good stuff. Funding for the lighting enhancements. There would be assessments of all properties included in the enhancement zone that we talked about through the mapping, through the process. The assessments would be based on a guaranteed not to exceed construction cost, which would be provided to all property owners within the enhancement area. In order to distribute funding equitably throughout the City, it is recommended that funding be utilized to cover design cost and electrical service cost associated with the enhancements. It is recommended that in order to begin the lighting program next fiscal year that capital improvement project in the amount of \$500,000 be added to next year's program budget. This is also consistent with the Draft Strategic Action Plan objective to enhance a pedestrian experience, safety and connectivity in the City to improve lighting, crosswalks, sidewalks, and wayfinding. The sidewalks included in the program will be traditional Coral Gables beige and the lights will be the traditional acorn style with energy efficient LED fixtures. Staff is currently working to develop, there was no way I was going to get up here and not talk about LED, that wasn't going to happen. Staff is currently working to develop an RFP for a

contractor to convert the existing acorn fixtures throughout the City to energy efficient LED, and as part of that RFP, the contractor will be required to provide unit prices for installation of new fixtures that would be included in this enhancement program.

Mayor Cason: Couple things. When you say homeowners, some are owned by LLC, some have two people that could be divorced, separated, how are you going to decide because ownership documents could be all over the place? What do you mean by the owners decide?

Ms. Keller: Our current process for transportation, like traffic calming projects is, we contact the actual property owners. So if it is an LLC that's where the mailing goes to.

Mayor Cason: If there is a husband and wife are divorced or separated who prevails?

Ms. Keller: I have not encountered an issue of that nature. Typically when we are aggressive enough or the neighbors are, persistent enough, aggressive is not the right word, persistent enough we do get responses back, but I haven't encountered a situation where there is a divorced couple.

Mayor Cason: So the NRP (Neighborhood Renaissance Program) covers the lighting part 50-50, the 50 percent?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Except the NRP is expiring June 15, so...

Ms. Keller: So this would be a capital request.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Correct.

Mayor Cason: Separate from that.

Ms. Keller: Yes.

Mayor Cason: And then there are a lot of cost-savings if you can sort of bunch these. To go out and suggest to people that want to have the sidewalk, do it so that you can have the...scale, buying the lights. So rather than have them drag out over years and do one block at a time, it would be a lot more expensive. Any way you could sort of encourage people in an open way.

Commissioner Lago: I think the best way to do it, once we move forward on this resolution and we take it to an ordinance and they flush out these ideas, which we've been working on for some time – the lighting, the sidewalks. I think the next logical step that you are mentioning is go to

the associations, go to the big associations and have them sit down with staff and say, OK, are you interested in potentially having sidewalks?- defining those areas that are missing sidewalks, because some people will tell you, obviously – the people in my neighborhood will probably say they don't want lights and then the adjacent street over will probably say that they want lights. So again...

Commissioner Slesnick: So on Granada, you are talking about doing both side of the street and the City would pay 100 percent of that, if the Granada homeowners...

Ms. Keller: If the community supported it, yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: OK. Because it's a wide parkway, so the sidewalks would come up much closer to the houses. So the one block on streets between like Alhambra and Red Road there is a lot of them, could you have sidewalks down on one side, or if you had the lighting would it go back and forth?

Ms. Keller: Well, I think that we would have to work with the community on that. There could be the impression well, why should you get the sidewalk and I don't or vice versa.

Commissioner Slesnick: But the owners pay 50 percent.

Ms. Keller: 50 percent, yes. Where the owners are paying for all of it, we have to work with the community.

Commissioner Slesnick: But the lights would go back and forth across the street, acorn-type lighting, so it would be very attractive white-way-type lighting.

Ms. Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because those streets are very dark at night.

Ms. Keller: Now what I want to make sure you understand is that, we would not be paying 100 percent of the lighting, it's 100 percent of the sidewalks.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: In certain locations. The idea is, how can we join with our residents, so that they more sidewalks in an affordable way and they have more lighting, and so that's the program that we are working with. If there is 50 percent of the neighborhood wants to continue to work on it, and then once when we order an assessment district, we have two-thirds of those neighbors wanting to do it, then we move forward with an assessment plan.

Commissioner Slesnick: And they will pay 50 percent?- the City will pay 50 percent?

Ms. Keller: Of the lighting.

Commissioner Slesnick: Of the lighting.

Ms. Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: And do you have to have the sidewalks or you could just have the lighting?

Ms. Keller: Its ala-cart.

Mayor Cason: Whatever you want.

Commissioner Slesnick: A-la-carte – I like that.

Commissioner Keon: And so we are paying 50 percent of the lighting? I thought we were paying for...

Commissioner Slesnick: On non-busy streets.

Mayor Cason: Remember that's under the NRP – I mean the concept was 50-50, that's for historic lights, but this is sort of taking it a little bit step further.

Ms. Keller: This is decorative lights; 50 percent the City would pay for under this program; sidewalks on the other hand, if you are on one of the streets that I listed, obviously you pay 100 percent.

Commissioner Keon: If you are on a collector the City would pay for the entire...

Mayor Cason: If all the neighbors agree two-thirds in the end, right?

Ms. Keller: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Mayor Cason: Alright. So do we have a motion on H-3?

Commissioner Lago: I'll make the motion.

Commissioner Slesnick: Second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago makes the motion, Commissioner Slesnick seconds. City Clerk.

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Absent

(Vote: 4-0)

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Is it district?- I mean it's not like one block at a time. It would be like from Bird to Blue, or something like that. It stretches over a number of blocks or its one block?

Ms. Keller: At this point in time, it could be one block. Ideally we would get a much larger area. If a community reached out and they said that they wanted to pursue this on their block, we could definitely take the initiative to reach out and see if others would want to join.

Mayor Cason: Good.

Commissioner Lago: Exciting. Great work. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

[End: 3:04:44 p.m.]