

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-7
May 30, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-7 [4:22:31p.m.]

Status update regarding request for TPO membership for the City of Coral Gables
(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next is the status update regarding TPO membership for the City of Coral Gables.

City Attorney Leen: This item was put on by Commissioner Lago. I have good news, the Mayor and I met with several representatives of Miami-Dade County and the MPO, which they call the TPO now, and they indicated to us that they are interested in using something other than an inter-decennial census; and for those who weren't here on the Commission or watching at home, City of Coral Gables has over 50,000 people in its population, and yet we are not on the MPO, even though the membership qualification is 50,000. The reason why is because they look at the decennial census to determine what the population figure is for the City; and in the last census in 2010, the City did not have 50,000 people, we now do. So, one thing that came up last year, Commissioner Lago sponsored this, and my understanding is he goes to almost every TPO meeting and represents our City very well there, is that he raised whether we could possibly do an inter-decennial census. We looked into the matter, we contacted the census bureau and found

out that to do an inter-decennial census, which was possible and which the County would accept would cost something like \$1.2 million, it's over a million dollars; and the Commission decided that was too expensive to go forward with. Well, in the meantime, we are still very concerned, because both Doral and the City of Coral Gables, of course we are more concerned about Coral Gables, but it applies to Doral as well, both of those cities are over 50,000 in population and not in the MPO. So, we raised this issue with the County again and again, and apparently the County has indicated an intent to not use inter-decennial census, but instead allow us to use another number; and the question is whether the number will be a number from the State of Florida, actually the University of Florida publishes these population figures, which are used to distribute funds, state funds, there is that number, and under that number we are like 49,600 or 49,700; and then there is another number which is in the population estimate for the U.S. Census for 2016 where we are over 50,000, in fact, we almost have 51,000. So, the County wants to know which figure we thought should be used, obviously. I mean there is a practical answer to that, of course it's better for us to use the, but first, we were glad they are going to use either, because we are going to be over 50,000 on the state figure very soon, but obviously we'd rather have the one applied that we are already over 50,000, but also there is a very compelling argument to use the population estimate done by the U.S. Census Bureau, because the law that establishes the MPO looks to the decennial census, and the population estimate done by the U.S. Census Bureau is a real number and its used for things, which is discussed in the memo. I asked Special Counsel to look at why would you not use the U.S. Census Bureau's number instead use the state number is not recognized by the MPO. We think we have a very compelling argument to use the U.S. Census number. So, we presented that to the representatives of Dade County, we are waiting for their response. I did get contacted by Assistant County Attorney who told me that, look you know, the Florida number is coming out in October, and you may be over 50,000 then, so it may be mute; and I said, well, that's possible, but we think that the Census Bureau number is still the better number. So, we sent the memo and it would be useful, I believe to have a resolution from the Commission, basically adopting the memo and advocating that the County adopt the population estimate.

Commissioner Lago: I would love to, just really quick, thanks for the kind words, but I really don't do a really good job on the TPO, because I don't sit on the TPO and we haven't gotten onto the TPO, so I just sit on the fringe there hope somebody doesn't show up.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I sat on the TPO or the MPO before; before I sat there when I was a member of it and I'm the one, we're the one, they are the ones who gave us the funding to start the trolleys.

Commissioner Lago: I'll dovetail into that, but I'm happy that you brought that up, because just sitting there at the last meeting; first of all there wasn't a quorum. When one of the

Commissioners finally did show up, the meeting was about 30 minutes, because they had to go to another engagement, which I completely understand, people have busy schedules, but some of the items that they discussed in this hour long meeting, which is a smart plan, which you are supposed to a \$3.6 to \$4.5 billion transit system, the \$800,000 million bridge adjacent to Museum Park, \$200 million FDOT projects, so you are talking about a significant investment to the tune of billions and billions of dollars in South Florida, which is going to affect how we conduct business and our quality of life here in South Florida. So, I think it's important that we do everything in our power to continually attending these TPO meetings, but doing everything in our power to get, like Craig said sponsored somehow, somehow to have an actual seat up there, so when the money is divvied up we actually have a slice.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We got trolley funding.

Vice Mayor Keon: Do you want to make a motion?

Commissioner Lago: Make a motion.

Vice Mayor Keon: Your motion is to....

City Attorney Leen: Actually, let me correct something for the record, because I'm looking at the memo. Under the population estimate program, we have a population this indicates 51,177 as of July 1, 2015, and under the Bureau of Economic and Business Research and the University of Florida number, its 49,449; and what this memo basically does is it puts forward the case why the U.S. Census Bureau number is by far the better number to use when you are estimating what is the census number, it makes sense.

Commissioner Lago: What is the motion that you need?

City Attorney Leen: So, the motion that would be useful would be to adopt this report and opinion and to send a request to the County Commission and the TPO to adopt the population estimates per rim number from the United States Census Bureau as the number used to determine.

Commissioner Lago: I want to highlight that we send it to the entire Commission, but that we request that Commissioner Suarez or Commissioner Sosa be our direct sponsor on the TPO.

Vice Mayor Keon: Be given a seat on the...

City Attorney Leen: And, then be given a seat on the TPO.

Vice Mayor Keon: That would be part of the motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And seconded all those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Opposed? (No one opposed).

[End: 4:28:52 p.m.]