

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-4
July 13, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias (Absent)

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Miles Maronto

Agenda Item G-4

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, waiving the City's park-naming policies and procedure and designating the park located in Kings Bay at 6540 Marlin Drive, as James H. Smith Park.

Mayor Lago: It is G-4, Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida.

City Attorney Ramos: G-4 is a Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida, waiving the City's park-naming policies and procedure and designating the park located in Kings Bay at 6540 Marlin Drive, as James H. Smith Park. Ms. Levi-Garcia.

Mayor Lago: Naomi, thank you.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Of course. Good evening everybody. Actually, we have Miles Maronto here, a long-time board member of the Kings Bay Homeowners Association. He
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personally knew Mr. James H. Smith, the individual who the park will be named after, hopefully. So, I'd like to invite him up to say a few words and kind of share his memories of the late Mr. Smith.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Naomi. Miles, first off, sorry about this. You've been here for like 6-7 hours, you're a trooper.

Mr. Maronto: You know it's because people care, because you guys listen, and people care and much appreciated. Miles Maronto, 6230 Dolphin Drive, Coral Gables. And it's worth it because Jim Smith is a special guy, was a special human being in our community in many regards, served on the board for about 30 years. We took a unanimous vote four years ago in Kings Bay to name the park after him and it was unanimous, everyone fully supported it. His wife, widow...

Mayor Lago: And if I may vouch for you and I'm sorry to interrupt you really quickly, because of time constraints. I was in the meeting, I can vouch, all the community leaders there, I was present, they are all in favor of this and they spoke incredibly highly of the work done by this couple.

Mr. Maronto: Yes. Keeping it simple. Unless anyone has any questions.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Mr. Smith, you might want to mention that he was pivotal in the annexation of Kings Bay to the City of Coral Gables, probably one of his greatest accomplishments, right.

Mr. Maronto: Yes. I didn't know what you had before you, in terms of what you were able to read. So, Jim had started in about 1993, I was on the board then, organizing an opportunity for Kings Bay to annex out of the unincorporated abyss, you know. We can tell you all these stories of not being listened to, having to go downtown continuously into that whole scenario and we wanted to be part of something special. So, Jim put together a civic group and we evaluated our three options, Coral Gables, Pinecrest, and Palmetto Bay. Over time we discovered, and Jim lead this and through his guidance and a lawyer that he had hired, we all conclusively wanted to go into Coral Gables. So, we got officially approved by the Commission in December of '95, then the county moratorium went up, just like what we are experiencing with High Pines and Ponce Davis, right, they put up the moratorium. So, he had the lead again, about another seven-year duration of persevering through working with, meeting with all the County Commissioners to get that thing lifted and working, again with the new Coral Gables City Commission. So, Jim was the one that spearheaded that selflessly, gave of himself. He was just a very special person in the community and that's why we all support naming the park after him.

Mayor Lago: With that being said, I pass the gavel over to Commissioner Fors, who's now the Vice Mayor and the chair of the meeting, I would like to make a motion to support this great renaming.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll second it.

Mayor Lago: Billy, can we get a roll.
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Commissioner Anderson: Yes
Commissioner Menendez: Yes
Mayor Lago: Yes
Commissioner Fors: Yes

Mayor Lago: Done deal. Got one more thing and I haven't forgotten what it is.

Mr. Maronto: And if I could just – I want to thank you for having this evening meeting, because a lot of these folks and I know one of the Commissioners mentioned it, well it's the old Riviera, its not. Our community is very involved with the neighbors, with the Coral Gables Neighbors Association alliance, and having the meeting in the evening, I know it requires a lot of staff, requires a lot of you to come here, but what it does is it increases participation, because a lot of people work, and have to travel and can't get here in the morning. I've been doing a number of the Pinecrest, and Palmetto Bay Council meetings and I can tell you the participation is quite a bit, because they start at 6 (p.m.) and actually they start the constituent's business more like at 7 o'clock in the evening, even though they start the meetings and get some of the other stuff out of the way. It's been a positive experience for dealing with zoning issues and I would be a huge advocate as a resident of Coral Gables that any kind of zoning hearings, any of these discussions going forward that they are in the evenings, so people can participate fully.

Mayor Lago: Thank you sir.

Mr. Maronto: And I thank you.