

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item D-1
April 22, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

Assistant City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Raquel Regalado, Miami-Dade School Board Member, District 6

Agenda Item D-1: [Start: 9:36:55 a.m.]

Raquel A. Regalado, District 6, Miami-Dade School Board Member, regarding Coral Gables school issues.

Mayor Cason: Then we'll move onto Personal Appearances. Today we have with us Raquel A. Regalado, who represents District 6, a Miami-Dade School Board Member regarding Coral Gables school issues. Raquel welcome again.

Ms. Regalado: Thank you very much; it's an honor to be here. I get to see all of you every now and then at events, and we start talking about schools, and the last event that we had, I want to thank Commissioner Keon for being there. We got talking about the bond initiative. So I thought it was time we touch base again. You were very supportive when we initially made this request of our community, as you know over a year ago; and today I wanted to talk to you first about where Coral Gables schools are in that bond project?- what are the changes that we are going to make?- and what are the opportunities for Coral Gables to participate more in that process?

Several Commissioners have asked me about the Interlocal Agreement that Miami-Dade County Schools signed with another city that I represent, which is Key Biscayne. It's not the first Interlocal Agreement. We have one with the City of Coral Gables also, but it was one that was a little bit different, because there is a trend at large in the County and one that the Village of Key Biscayne wanted to rectify for their residents, and that is that "magnet" as you know are becoming more and more countywide magnets, which is something that, I know I've spoken to the Mayor about on several occasions. In fact, I have to recognize that a week after he was elected we toured all the schools and talked about how many Coral Gables residents were actually being offered the opportunity to attend schools in Coral Gables. Coral Gables is blessed to have spectacular schools, all "A" schools. I graduated from one of them and there is an issue with under-enrollment at one Coral Gables school, which we'll talk about, which I think would be a great opportunity and that is Henry West Lab, but for the most part they are very well attended and very sought after schools. So one of the concerns has been in these schools how many Coral Gables residents actually get to be part of the greater lottery because they don't have any other privilege when they live in Coral Gables, and I know that the Mayor and I had spoken about this because of course one of the reasons that people move to Coral Gables is to attend the schools. So it's not a fun conversation when you break it to them that even though they live across from the school they have to apply to the general lottery, cross their fingers like everyone else, and we do not offer hardship transfers to a lot of these schools, if you happen to live in the neighborhood and there is also the issue of parents that work in Coral Gables as opposed to live in Coral Gables. The good news is the Bond is moving along as planned. We are actually on time and on budget. The Coral Gables schools are for the most part in year 3 and 4, so there is time to have this conversation. We will be having a Town Hall for District 6 coming up in the next few weeks where we are going to talk about all the projects and the different changes that can be made, and we hope to get input from residents regarding traffic, regarding accessibility, to the facilities. One thing that I can tell you that we have already accomplished is, in February we accomplished on time and on budget Wi-Fi for every single one of our schools, and that includes all the schools in Coral Gables. We will have a massive technology rollout over the summer, we purchased over 10,000 "Smart Boards" and this is part of the promise that we made to provide equity in every single classroom, that every child in Miami-Dade County would have access to the same technology. We've made a purchase of several hundred thousand Notebooks and will be rolling those out over the summer and early August too; and there obviously will be a change to curriculum that's technology based, based not just on the initiative by the State of Florida, that we have to comply with in the 2015, but also in the shift of Common Core, which now we call Florida Core. But those are all curriculum changes that will be seen across the board, but will also be seen in Coral Gables schools. As you know, many of Coral Gables schools already have some of this technology, some because they were recently made into a K-8 as in the case of Gables Prep, others because they are new schools in the case of ISPA (International Studies Preparatory Academy), which is one of the newest schools in the District, and other ones because

parents have contributed here and there, which is the case of Ponce, the case of West Lab, that they have very active P.T.A.'s that have made these purchases. One thing that is important to note about the interactive boards is that we did purchase them with a service component. We do not want this to be a drain on the student activities, budget for our principals, which is what it has been in the past, so this will come...an e-mail, a representative, anything happens to the "Smart Board" it doesn't have to come out of their activities budget. Lastly, there are going to be some big changes at Coral Gables Senior High. Coral Gables Senior High as you know, we entered into an RFP agreement and we are changing the famous baseball dugout, which was illegal when I was there in 1992. So that's good that's its finally going to be up to Code, but we also recently entered into an agreement with Ransom Everglades. Ransom is going to be redoing the Coral Gables track and is going to be using it, it's a large investment, we are going to make an Olympic track, and it's something that the District could not afford, but something that our partnership with Ransom has afforded us. As you know, I've made it really a priority to allow our residents access to our schools. It's something that is very debated throughout the District, but I think it's something that is very important, especially in cities like Coral Gables because of the density and the lack of public spaces. So, I'm very proud that our residents use the track, they use the facilities at Coral Gables, we don't have any issues. No one's renting a bounce house and throwing a birthday party at the Coral Gables baseball field, so I want to take the moment to thank our residents for being so thoughtful when they use our properties. So to the matter at hand, the first issue obviously is Coral Gables Senior High; Coral Gables Senior High is slated for year 3 of the bond project. So that you understand how the years' work, we've already touched more than 200 schools, we've done the under \$5 million, the under \$3 million, and the under \$2 million. Obviously, we started with the low hanging fruit, and those that we could take off the list without a lot of architectural and design planning. Coral Gables Senior High cannot be in year 1 or 2, simply because it's a hodge-podge and we have to figure out how to make it look more like a campus. What I wanted to talk to you about, because I know that the look and feel of Coral Gables Senior High has been an issue for a long time is to ask you to participate in that process, and also I think that it's an opportunity if the City of Coral Gables would want to make an investment to spend a little bit more on the auditorium and use it as a community space. We have two schools that we've done that at, we've entered into agreements with the cities, they've put in some money to help us do a little bit better than an auditorium so that it can get a little bit more use and what we can do is, it has a parking lot right next door so it actually has a lot of the amenities that a lot of other schools don't have. We can enter into an agreement so that the City can use it for community gatherings, for plays, depending on what you think is important and I think that that would be a good addition. As your School Board member not only would it provide our school with more use, which I think is important and provide another facility for the residents of Coral Gables that I serve, but I think it will also have, it will also be important to have residents that don't have children in schools physically at our schools. Mayor we talked about this before, it really is so important for residents to have a connection to our

schools and that's why I really tried at the District level to emphasize the importance of having people who do not children in schools use our facilities so that they see that there is a value. They know that they paid for it, they know that education is important that it's a necessary investment, but how many people that don't have children have physically stepped into one of our schools in the last decade or so since their children graduated. So that would be my first request, the second one has to do with Henry West Lab. Henry West Lab is one of the few schools in District 6 actually, not just in Coral Gables that is under enrolled and the reason for that is that it's a traditional elementary school that's found on the University of Miami campus, and even though it's not under enrolled at the Kindergarten, first, second and third grade, you have a lot of parents calling you telling you, I didn't get into the magnet, I couldn't get into West Lab and then you wonder how is it under enrolled. What happens is a lot of parents are pulling their children out in fourth and fifth grade because they want to get into other programs and they do not want to be left out. So for a long time there has been a conversation about Henry West Lab becoming a K-8. The K-8 at Gables Prep has been very successful. It is one of our most sought after schools in the District, not just in Coral Gables and we can talk about the repairs that are going to be made to that school. It is slated for some repairs, as you know its two campuses so we have it in the same year, they are actually in year 2, for some repairs to the general building and then some repairs to the Merrick building, which is part of the second campus of that school, and there is going to be a conversation during that planning period about the traffic and what we can do about the traffic which I know is a major concern. But back to Henry West Lab, there is an opportunity to make it a K-8, that would require that we use the bond money that has been slated to fix the actual facility and build another facility in the same property. We have the space to do it, we spoken to UM about it, it's not an issue, the issue obviously is an issue of money. We can't put more money into it, the idea of the bond is that it was going to fix existing schools, not build new schools. I have reached out to several community partners who are interested in renting the parking lots during the weekends and that can provide us a little bit of income long term, so that then we can put that money back into the original building. The parents not surprisingly don't care about the state of the original building, they just want a K-8, but the reality is that the promise was to provide equity, so we can't just turn a blind eye and say we are going to leave this one building without upgrades, because the parents want to build a separate building for the seventh and eighth grade, which is what we would be building; we'll be building a separate module for the seventh and eighth grade which provides a K-8 in the same campus, but also provides some separation in securities from the little ones and the older ones which is something that we've seen is very beneficial. In this case the parents would be dropping off and picking up at the same location, there is not a lot of concerns about the traffic. As you know, the lot that is owned by the University of Miami has not been developed, so we'll see what happens with that, but we have enough space on our property to be able to expand West Lab. What I would ask that you consider is the possibility of investing in that expansion and in so doing securing a certain number of seats for Coral Gables residents in the same way that Key

Biscayne and other cities have done it. I think that that's the logical thing to do and the reason that I bring it up now is because it's pretty much now or never. This is one of those situations once we fix the school and it's done there really is no tradeoffs there, because we will fix it to whatever capacity is and once it's filled it's really very difficult to change that paradigm. Interestingly, Coral Gables Senior High was the first school to have, as I've mentioned before, a residency pool, it has a specific number of seats and that was actually ironically the model for the Key Biscayne expansion that also provided that. So happy to take your questions and hope we...

Commissioner Quesada: When you say under enrolled for West Lab are you saying that they aren't enough children attending or is it....

Ms. Regalado: It's not at 100 percent, which means that children – the normally drop out in the third, fourth and fifth grades what we are seeing. They are at capacity for the Kindergarten, first and second, but then parents start looking at other options and usually the parents that leave West Lab have other siblings that have to go to other schools and if they get into a K-8, for example, they will take both siblings out, so we do see movement, but not at the K, first and usually second grade.

Commissioner Quesada: That's because of the limited offering of West Lab?- do you think if it would change to a K-8 it would make a difference?

Ms. Regalado: I think it would make an enormous difference. All the parents that leave have told us the reason that they are leaving is because it's not a K-8. Last year as part of our academic roll out we added a German program to West Lab and obviously that's another issue the parents would like more language options at West Lab, but we can't invest in the curriculum beyond what we've invested if it's under enrolled, so that becomes another problem.

Commissioner Lago: Just to give you an idea of what Ms. Regalado was talking about. I had a chance to meet with the PTA and also the staff of the school about six months ago, and their number one concern, like you said, is we want a K-8, we want a K-8, so what ends up happening is parents who have siblings what they do is they pull their children out because they don't want their children to make a jump from K through 6 and 6 through 8 and 8 through 12. You know they see three jumps that's a little bit too much for the children in regards to the environment that they are exposed to, so they'd prefer to have a K-8 and transition from 9th grade to 12th grade, so that's why you have that issue in regards to under enrollment specifically after third, fourth, and fifth grade because the parents are exercising their options to have both children in one school permanently and they don't have to drive to two different schools.

Commissioner Keon: I first met and spoke with Raquel when they had the roll out on the bond issue at Coral Gables High School and we have sort of continued our conversation about education and the quality and the availability of public schools for our children here in Coral Gables, and I actually along with Pat Salerno and Cindy Birdsill, we've had two meetings with the staff from our district, the senior level staff from our district to talk about the partnering or how we work with the school system as they are an independent body, but we feel that the quality of education in our community is of great interest to all of us. So what can we do?- and how do we work together to ensure that we provide the highest quality of public education to our children here in the City of Coral Gables and there were a number of things that we've talked about and some of it is this attrition even after fifth grade, at six, seven and eight there is a tremendous attrition into the private schools because they feel that they don't move at that time they don't get an opportunity to move later, and so we know that its every piece along the way is so important. We need to ensure that our high school, it's the appearance, it's physical plant and the quality of education provided there are essential, so that people can decide that, that is as good an option as any private school may be. If you chose to send your children to private school that certainly is your business, but we would hope that no one would ever not attend a public school because it didn't equal or was not as good as or your children were not as safe or your children were not as well educated as they would be in our public schools. I've been talking about this a lot, I kind of led this effort and I think that this is something that is of interest to every one of us sitting here, so going forward I know we have another meeting scheduled with them, if we can do those as Sunshine Meetings, if any of you would like to join us. I know with working with Commissioner Lago on some issues, we have done and brought some very good things to our City, so rather than have everybody working independently and going their own way and talking to people, it would really be a wonderful thing if we could work together as a Commission to move forward on some of the issues here within our school. I want to make it very clear that it is not our desire to change the boundaries to our feeder pattern. Our feeder pattern both outside of the City of Coral Gables and so fortunately for us that also gives us a very balanced, a very well balanced racial and ethnic mix of children in our schools, which is just reflective of the community that we live in, so it is a wonderful thing, so it isn't that we are just working, I mean we are working and our interest is in our City and the children that live in that are residents, but we also have the opportunity to improve those things for all of the children are within our feeder pattern and we know because we live in such a diverse district economically as well as anything else, that we really would like to look to what can we do at the very early years of education so that all of our children can at least come into school on a level playing field, you know that they don't come in at different levels and then have to small fall through the cracks, so David Lawrence has offered to also work with us with regard to early learning along with the City and I know the University of Miami has also asked to work with us also because they often are the recipients of our graduates and they understand too at that level what the needs are for the community and every one of us want to see an educated workforce in our community, if our

community is going to grow economically and people are going to bring businesses here, we have to have an educated workforce. So I am very, very pleased to be able to work with the school system to improve all the educational opportunities for our children that attend the schools within our City, and I really would invite everyone to join, and I will let you know when we are going to schedule another meeting that if you want to come, whoever wants to come we can do it as a Sunshine Meeting so that we can all be together and we can all speak with one voice.

Ms. Regalado: If I could interrupt – and I would echo that and thank you, that's one of the reasons that I'm here, first to inform you and second to ask you to participate as a body, because obviously what the district asked me is, is everybody on board?- and there is no way of really knowing that unless everyone is physically there and having the same type of conversation. One of the reasons that the Key Biscayne Interlocal Agreement was able to get done as well and as fast as it was done is because it was unanimous and they had all the conversations in the Sunshine, we negotiated with them pretty much out in the open about these things, and we were able to come to a conclusion that had the entire support of the Commission and Mayor, so that would be fantastic.

Commissioner Keon: I think that it would serve us well if – I know Cindy Birdsill had been working with us, she has a lot of the information. I know the Chamber has also offered their body to join us also, they know how important it is to bring businesses into the City that a big concern is – one of the advantages of our City of Coral Gables is that ability to work and live in the same neighborhood or the same community, and a big concern that people is where do we send our children to school?- so there are so many issues that we so look forward to working with that we know will improve our community if we work together, and I think you hear now that there is a commitment from everyone on this Board to work with you, so I really look forward to it.

Mayor Cason: Excuse me, one of the things that we've always been discussing again is relates to our ability to attract businesses, international businesses and continue to see if you can teach Brazilian Portuguese in at least one of our schools because it's one of the largest groups of investors, Brazil, we have a Sister City in Coraciva, Portuguese is only taught, I think, in three other schools in the County and if you can find a school where you can get Portuguese in would be very helpful for business executives from Brazil that might establish here to know that their kids can – they'll be learning English, but they also don't want to forget their Portuguese, and for other people it's an easy transition from Spanish to Portuguese having done it myself, I think it would be part of our attempts to make this a place that is very attractive to people.

Ms. Regalado: It would be a good fit for West Lab, like I said it's something that can be added; we added German recently. It also, when you look at the feeder patterns one of the things that we try to do is ensure that there is continuity, so because you have ISPA as a high school within the boundaries of Coral Gables, even though it's a countywide magnet, obviously you can only attend there if you have been studying the language for several years, so you find that the children that attend that school are the ones that went to Sunset, the ones that went to Ada Merritt, you know the ones that went to Carver, the ones that have gone to these, not just the language program, because we have a lot of language programs, but a dual emergent program because that's where you have the child that at 13 is completely bi-lingual or tri-lingual and interested in continuing that. So I think that, that's something that could be added to West Lab if the investment is made, it's something that I have found almost all Coral Gables residents are interested in, Mr. Mayor, the language issue comes up all the time, and it does receive some criticism at the School Board level because District 6, with the exception of two schools, has all the emergent programs, but the reality is that this is where the consulates are, this is where they want to make the investment, this is where people want to live, and this is where their middle managers want to bring their children, so that's where they've decided to make the investment as opposed to out west in other areas. Another request we get a lot for Coral Gables schools that haven't happened and you may also want to consider is more music arts that's something that parents mention all the time. Obviously, we have amazing schools throughout the district, but they are highly competitive and again, in order to get into a New World you must have been in a school that provided that early on. So there is in South Miami there are a lot of Coral Gables residents that go to South Miami for that reason because it has an arts program. There are also a lot of Coral Gables residents that ask about Fairchild and different programming at Fairchild, because even though it's not within the boundaries, it's close enough, close enough for them to consider it part of their feeder pattern. So maybe that's something that we can talk about as to where that investment is made. Fairchild is also one of the few schools that a program of that size could be added because it has the capacity, it's in year 3 of the bond program so that's something that could also be discussed.

Commissioner Keon: I can speak to Sunset myself. My youngest son – my two older boys were already far enough along in school when the international program came to Sunset that they didn't participate in it, but my youngest son did, and he is totally bi-lingual. He went and spent a year in Spain in a Spanish boarding school, in high school, and his....who is bi-lingual, and I think all of us recognize that we would like for every one of our children to be bi-lingual. All three of my sons are bi-lingual. My biggest concern for myself is that I am not bi-lingual, I can have a very sparse conversation, I can go shopping, I can go grocery so I can talk to people, but I can't go to a party in Spanish and I'd like to be able to go to a party in Spanish and I am really grateful for the program in the education that was provided to my children that have really served

them very, very well and I think there is a real demand in this City for language programming. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Bill?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Just a couple quick questions. Of course I'm a product of Coral Gables High, Cavaliers, like yourself. For many years I went through the public school system and for many years people used the public schools system and then in the City of Coral Gables the trend started going the other way when a lot of our residents were sending their kids of private schools, started at first grade and went all the way to high school then it started abating a little bit, as I saw it, I didn't really look at any statistics, kids attended to sixth grade and then they went to private schools. Have you seen any trending models from our residents about where their kids are now going to schools?

Mayor Cason: Let me say one thing on that. About a year ago, I had an intern call all the schools within 10-15 miles and we found that there were 20 schools to which Coral Gables residents. I have the statistics on the percent that go to each one. For example, Coral Gables, I think, only has 12 percent Coral Gables residents.

Ms. Regalado: Yes because there has been a proliferation of magnets, so we just past the magnet window, parents just got their letters and we look at high school, it's become very competitive and one of the reasons that I thought it was important for the expansion of MAST Academy is that we are turning away literally thousands of children from MAST Academy. So now with the MAST Academy expansion, will have more Coral Gables residents staying closer. The trend that we see is a lot of parents apply for the high performing magnets, if they can't get into the high performing magnets they will take a private option. Some parents do that sooner rather than later. which is why the MAST Academy expansion created a sixth grade and we started at sixth grade as opposed to waiting until ninth grade, so that we can capture a lot of these high performing children that would have gone to another school early on in this year that they can't get in, in ninth grade. The same with the Young Girls Preparatory Academy, several of Coral Gables residents attend there too, it also starts in sixth grade, that's a trend that we are moving toward that has been very successful; one, because it provides them with the opportunity to study the math requirement. We are not edging children out because they didn't get to the appropriate math; and two, because for parents who don't want a K-8 option, who then have gone through a regular elementary school, they just want to make that one choice and go 6 through 12 without having to worry about it, but the schools that are very popular, obviously Coral Gables AP-IB is very popular, but there are only so many seats there; MAST is very popular, TERRA has become very popular, although kind of far, but it has a lot of students applying to TERRA as an alternative to MAST, which is something very interesting. A lot of parents in the urban core that

are willing to go west in order to have a program like TERRA. Coral Reef is usually an alternative to Coral Gables, if you really want AB-IB. We see a lot of parents who have invested, for example, an AP-IB at Ada Merritt, for many years they wanted to continue AP-IB and if they can't get into Coral Gables they'll go to Coral Reef, which is another option; and then we also have a lot of Coral Gables residents who are interested in the arts whose children apply to DASH, apply to New World, apply to the one that we have now down south it's another arts program. So that's why I mention that the arts is something that's an important component. ISPA has been very popular, as you know; ISPA has been growing in the last few years. We also have a few Coral Gables residents that have been interested in I-Prep, which is a school that we have downtown, which is similar to TERRA; there is also an I-Prep magnet in Killian. Miami High, as you know, has just been completely redone, it's a beautiful facility. If you haven't gone to visit it, I request that you do, it really is spectacular. Now that we've changed the physical look of Miami High and now that its technologically state-of-the-art, it is the most state-of-the-art school in the district, now we are going to be looking at curriculum, because Miami High has remained a tradition public school for many years and as a result a lot of the children that normally would have gone there are going to these high performing magnets. So that's something that is going to come up also, what magnet program can we place there to draw higher performing students now that we have this beautiful facility. So that's something too that I think will provide another alternative for Coral Gables residents. There is also some conversations about an investment in the mid-town area that would also serve a lot of Coral Gables residents that work closer to downtown and they see the upper east side as not really that far when you talk about drop offs and pick-ups, so there are a lot of conversations there.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I think it would be good to see the hard numbers, if you have the hard numbers....

Mayor Cason: I'll update them and send them around.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk:....because I think that's measureable to a certain degree about how the success is measured by our residents of the City of Coral Gables, not the whole thing of course, but certainly one of them. Speaking to your other point, as far as the auditorium goes for Coral Gables High, I would be very, very interested in looking at the preliminary numbers for that and for the school, so that we can start thinking about what the opportunities are for the City of Coral Gables, because as you very well know and as the Mayor articulated, one of the biggest things that we provide for our community is a good school system and when people relocate into the City of Coral Gables that's the first thing out of everybody's mouth, what is the schools system?- where do their kids go to school?- and so your success is our success and being able to be definable in the measurement of those numbers helps us to find out how we are doing or how we are accomplishing that success. So if you could provide that to us that would be great.

Commissioner Lago: Just to go off what the Vice Mayor said. When I had the pleasure of visiting West Lab, one of the many teachers made sure that I was aware of along with the parents was, most of the students that go there, they may not be Coral Gables residents from parents of Coral Gables residents, but a lot of them work in Coral Gables. For example, a lot of the children their parents work at the University of Miami, so again besides it being a great school, it's very accessible and it's a great opportunity for parents who, like you said before, you open schools in mid-town there may be an option for mid-town in the future, but this school right now offers an opportunity for parents who work in Coral Gables, who work at the University of Miami to have something around the corner and provide safety and provide a great education.

Ms. Regalado: And I'm happy to provide whenever you set the next meeting, I'm happy to provide the numbers, the update on those numbers, and also some information. We don't have all the information on the people that work in Coral Gables, because obviously if we have the information of where they live, but for those that have applied for hardship transfers, we do have that information. Unfortunately, a lot of them are denied because hardship transfers from magnet schools rarely are given any credibility at the district, but we do have those applications, I can tell you, look this is how many people work in Coral Gables or have a grandfather or grandmother in Coral Gables that is one of the primary caregivers and is doing pick-up and drop off and would like to have their children in school in Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: We just need this because as you know most of our residents/homeowners pay school taxes and if we want to spend the additional monies of City taxpayer's monies we need to make sure that a lot of our residents are utilizing those. Now there might be different in an auditorium because the City of Coral Gables could utilize the auditorium, but if we start spending monies in other schools, which may be the best thing for our community in general, taking into account what Commissioner Lago says, our business community, but it's good to have those numbers so that when people come and ask me, hey we pay so much for the School Board, but our kids are not utilizing it, at least we can say yes, but we are utilizing it here for all these other people that are residents of the City of Coral Gables.

Ms. Regalado: Right. I agree with you. The other thing that I would add and why you should really consider the designation of seats is that to give them that option. Unfortunately, as we push forward with more and more magnet schools, we are seeing that academically we are providing our children with a lot of options. In many cases we are destroying neighborhoods because children are coming from the entire County and they are not creating that neighborhood network because they are kind of from all over the place, which is great when you look in terms of diversity, but you are losing some of that neighborhood potential that I think is very valuable, so I think it is something that you should consider.

Commissioner Keon: We talked about that.

Ms. Regalado: Right. One thing I want to mention about the auditorium. You went to Coral Gables; the spaceship is what the spaceship is. We can't tear it down, it was built, I think, in 1954 and it is what it is. The idea was probably to invest – again, we use it mainly as an auditorium, the idea maybe to invest in better seats, you know, little bit better acoustics so that it can be use more often and we wouldn't have to worry about wear and tear. We have a pretty slim budget, really the biggest concern at Coral Gables Senior is going to be the design, how to make the hodge-podge of the different buildings look like one campus.

Mayor Cason: And one other thing that some residents have brought up to me is the fence, that's not a Coral Gables fence.

Ms. Regalado: No, it's a chain-link fence.

Mayor Cason: Is there anything on the horizon, anyway you think that could be replaced; some kind of fence maybe could be art in public places or something that fence.

Ms. Regalado: The issue with the fence is the district will always push for an investment in the actual building as opposed to the fence, because the concern is not just how much the fence cost, but how much it will cost if the fence is broken, is our issue. I know that we've talked about landscaping in the past, but the issue with that again is the upkeep of that, whose going to be sort of responsible for that. I know that the City helped us with part of the fence, so there is part of the fence that's a little bit better, that's something that we can consider. Now that we're physically going out there and fixing the school, one of the things that we talked about is maybe a wall would be a better investment in certain parts, so you don't have so much fence and that's something that is not prohibitively not expensive, but we may be able to figure something out to decide on a certain area, maybe to help with the entrance. Again, if we are going to be using the auditorium for other uses other than school activities then it makes a little bit more sense to invest a little bit more in that part so that it looks a little bit better.

Commissioner Quesada: Mr. Mayor this might be a topic for our Executive Session related to the trolley issue, I think that's as much as I can say, an Executive Session, but food for thought for the next time we go into that.

Mayor Cason: Raquel, thank you again.

Ms. Regalado: My pleasure.

Mayor Cason: One of the things we did a couple of years ago was that interlocal agreement between the City and Coral Gables in terms of the use of Venetian Pool for the swim teams and polo and the use of the, when available, of the playing fields for soccer when we overflow, is that going well?

Ms. Regalado: Yes, it's going very well, and actually I know that you are having discussions about a soccer park and we are meeting with them about renting parking spaces at the prep....

Commissioner Keon: At Phillips Park.

Ms. Regalado: Right – we are going to be meeting with them to look at the hours. Again, it can't conflict with what we are doing there, but since there is no adult-ed at that school, I think it's going to be fine, we just have to ensure that there is security, and we may be – we are in conversation with them about a blended agreement, you know some use during the day so that the kids can use it because you know one of the issues with the K-8 is that you lose the field and you lose a lot of the sports activities that you normally would have at a middle school, so we are looking at some use of it and then they can use some of the parking. So, I'll keep you up to date on that because I know that they said that one of the things that – one of the issues here was the parking, so we are happy to oblige, and the same with Coral Gables Senior High, I mean if we can come to an agreement trolleys or not that has to do with parking and a trade-off for investment, again, we do have working area there.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much for coming – appreciate it.

Commissioner Keon: I'd also like to tell you that I have spoken to a number of people in this community that graduated from Coral Gables High School in the last 60's to early 70's, that have done very well and are very interested in getting involved again in their community and getting involved in the public schools because that was a day and a time when the vast majority of this community went to the public schools. They remember them, they were very well educated, and have become very successful in their different fields and really would like to work with us also to gain that back, so I think we have a large community of people, not only elected officials, but residents too that really want to see this happen.

Ms. Regalado: One of the things that will come from the bond initiative when we talk about the high schools is, once you fix the schools, as this has happened in Miami High, you really do get a resurgence of interest from alumni, which is important to capture, not just for the wellbeing of the school and its physical state and to have people interested and contributing and being part of what's going to happen to that school, but also for the students, they really are such a wonderful

point of reference for the students, they are very motivated and Coral Gables, as you mentioned, has a spectacular alumni. I know that they have some alumni are more engaged than others, but I think that this would be a great opportunity to sort of reignite that interest and create a long term investment from alumni. I know that a lot of alumni groups for many years got a little tired of the district asking them for money, so they are a little disengaged, but now that we are fixing all the schools a lot of people are coming around and having this conversation again that they'll be more interested in mentoring and participating and revisiting their schools, and ensuring that in some way or another they capture some of that history and that's something that I hope that we can do with the Coral Gables restoration project.

Commissioner Keon: I think that it's their class. So I would hope that you would allow me as a Commission to continue those meetings and talk to you about when we are going to meet and opening up, so we have Sunshine meetings and everyone knows what is going on and we are all working together to the same end.

Ms. Regalado: I'm happy to attend if you send me the date. What I can do is I can bring staff – I Chair Facilities and Construction, but I can bring staff from Facilities and Construction, I can also bring our representative from Intergovernmental Affairs.

Commissioner Keon: They were all at our meetings, that whole group was at our meeting that would be going to....

Commissioner Lago: Maybe we can bring somebody from UM; maybe have a representative from UM to give their perspective.

Commissioner Keon: And I know FIU has an interest in it also because we had a long discussion about academically to have a stem program at the high school.

Mayor Cason: OK. Stay tuned. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thanks – appreciate your time.

[End: 10:19:27 a.m.]