

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items F-4
June 10, 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

Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Chief Information Officer, Gee Chow

Public Affairs Coral Gables TV, Michael Rocha

Public Affairs Coral Gables TV, Rodolfo Roman

Public Speaker(s)

F-4 [Start: 3:51:19 p.m.]

Discussion and/or action for a City of Coral Gables mobile app.

Commissioner Vince Lago

Mayor Cason: The next item that we are going to be addressing is Item F-4, which is Commissioner Lago's item.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you Mayor, Commissioners, Vice Mayor, staff, a few months ago I had the pleasure of meeting with Mr. Machado in the hallway and after hearing prior to my election that Commissioner Quesada had been working for a few years in reference to possibly getting a mobile app for the City of Coral Gables. We decided to maybe sit down a month and-a-half ago, two months ago and really start hopefully putting something together with a goal in

mind to deliver an app which had multi-functions and could deliver what the residents and the business community were seeking. So with that said, I asked our IT staff, which is here today, to put forth a simple synopsis of what we are looking at in reference to a citywide mobile app. So with that Gee take it away.

Mr. Chow: Thank you. Good afternoon again, Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, for the record, I'm Gee Chow, Chief Information Officer for the City of Coral Gables. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share with you the City's mobile app. The mobile app is a software system that is on one and it will allow the City to enhance its citizen's services. So the mobile apps as you can see, it's all in one. It has the icon simple use, it's downloadable through the app store, free, and will allow the citizens to submit requests and also allow the City to communicate with the residents with news, alerts, and information. Also, will allow the City to promote our community, providing local businesses, information, sports, activities, and events, etc. So the features and functions: The mobile apps will work in different types of smart phones, specifically Apple, Android and Window devices. It will allow for anonymous requestors and/or registered requestors to submit their requests to the City and also allows the individuals to upload pictures, files, with their requests, and they will also allow them to search for information and also frequently asked questions, and receive City notifications, that's the important part, that way we can provide communication back the citizens and residents, will also allow for mapping, location, routing, and so on. The initial implementation: There are three modules; customer relation management is one of them, Code Enforcement, and the work order system. The cost: the first year is going to be \$14,600, with a second year and then on recurring charges of \$9,600. The schedule: We are planning to implement the CRM and Code Enforcement piece during the Fiscal Year of 2014, and also the work order system beginning Fiscal Year of 2015. In addition, and if we are allowed to, we can expand the features and function of this system. We can also include the trolley system, the path, the routes, the stops, and also what the citizens were talking about the bike routes and the locations, and this will allow for social media enable features to allow us to post and update citizens with mobile apps. The information provided by the City's website also, can be pushed to the mobile devices, such as news and alerts, access to City permits and to some of the building functions to allow the citizens to pay online through their local smart devices. In addition, we can also provide local information about restaurants, businesses, attractions, historical sites, and cultural events, etc. In addition to all that, we can also connect to other institutions, such as Miami-Dade County, University of Miami and so on. So the expanded cost and scheduling: The expanded cost is going to be the first year is \$6,000, and the year two recurring is \$3,500, and the projected schedule is going to be December of this year 2014. With that said, I can answer some questions.

Commissioner Lago: Well first off, thank you for the presentation. I would love to take credit for this, but this is something that I think that we are in the stone age when it comes to technology

and I also want to hear from the gentleman who runs a little bit of our social media campaign if there even is one, or how much is the social media campaign?- but just give me one second. To me I think you've got to give a lot of credit here to Commissioner Quesada, who has really been at the forefront of pushing this item and I really took an interest in it because he mentioned it to me and I know that he's been swamped with a whole host of other issues, so that's why we got together and we met. You know when I think of this app, I think of something that is at the palm of your hand where you have immediate access to the City history, immediate access to events, which will benefit the restaurants, it will benefit the business community because it will be able to disseminate information to thousands of residents and non-residents in regards to events that are going on, restaurants that are opening, parties, charities, whatever maybe going on. It's an incredible tool in regards to Code Enforcement. For example, a few days ago I received, on Sunday I received notification that a gate in the Coco Plum circle was open. That's a hazard for children, they could fall into the water, could fall down the embankment. I handled that via e-mail to our Code Enforcement and to our staff here. That was sent to me by a resident, by a concerned resident. Having this app will give us a moment when we could just take a photo, they could take a photo of whatever Code Enforcement issue is pertinent to them, send it into the City, a ticket is written and someone is responsible for that and it must be addressed. The trolley routes, bike routes, something we didn't mention here which just came to my mind, hurricane preparation...

Mayor Cason: Available parking spots.

Commissioner Lago:...available parking spots, instead of driving around block after block after block you could literally be at a stop light and find out, OK, what parking lots are full?- what parking garages have availability? City announcements, alerts, and like I mentioned before restaurants, businesses and special events, so I think that my only question for you is, first off thank you for putting this together. I really want to acknowledge your staff who has done an incredible job, some that are here, some that are not, Mr. Machado, I met with him on several occasions. I want to make sure that December 2014 is truly feasible, because I want to roll this out and bring it to the public, so you think it's feasible?

Mr. Chow: Yes sir.

Commissioner Lago: OK. Perfect. Gentlemen could you stand up? Talk to me a little bit about social media. What's the City doing?- or what is the City not doing?

Mr. Rocha: For the record my name is Michael Rocha, I run the production department for Channel 77. I do other work behind the camera, so this is the first time that I'm basically in front of the camera. We don't have a social media right now, except for YouTube.

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you just a quick question in regards to that. Are we the only City out of Dade County that does not have...?

Mr. Rocha: Unfortunately, yes, we are.

Commissioner Lago: I'm sorry I'm laughing, but is there a reason why we don't have it, can you tell me?

Mr. Rocha: We wanted to do it before; unfortunately we were never authorized to do it, except for YouTube, so....

Commissioner Lago: What do you foresee as something to catch up with the other municipalities in Dade County?- what would you recommend for our City the direction that we are headed?

Mr. Rocha: First of all, we would definitely need man power, at least one staff member. Right now my department is run by me, a full-timer, and then another seven part-timers, but we would need someone to be fully dedicated to this project.

Commissioner Lago: OK.

Mayor Cason: I think one of the things – I went to the Conference of Mayors and they were talking about certain, like Tampa, they use Facebook a lot, but I also understood that there was a lot of time involved, they actually had staffs that did nothing – because once they knew people started sending all kinds of questions and if you don't answer it, it's worse than nothing. So it would be worthwhile looking sort of the pros and cons of choices that we might make in the future about social media.

Mr. Rocha:...is actually – he works for us now part-time and he's also part-time for the Miami Herald and he's actually very knowledge in the social media and how it's being run out there.

Commissioner Lago: From our discussions it seems that you are pretty proficient when it comes to social media.

Mr. Rodolfo Roman: To what you guys have said – here's the good and the bad. The bad is yes, we are a little behind, but the good is we can learn from other cities that have been on this thing, so we can learn from their mistakes, which is a very important thing, but the important thing about social media is transparency. That's the number one thing. You want to hear about transparency, what is your government doing for yourself?- when are the City meetings?- what

happened in the City meetings? For right now, for example, you passed an ordinance I can instantly find out on my phone, if that ordinance passed. I don't have to wait later for the newspaper, for the news, I don't have to wait till 6 p.m., 5 p.m. I can find out instantly. I don't have to hear the entire Commission meeting; I can just look at it. Now the good thing about this is like I said, you'll always be informed, and you could always engage and inform everyone else. For example, it goes back to the basis of reaching out to the public. If I have a question, say my roof has a hole and how do I fix this? Who do I contact? I've called already, I e-mailed, I never got a response. Go to social media and we said you can contact blah, blah, blah, you write it and you get contact right there. So it's just another form of communicating with people and they'll always be up to date. Not only that, it's great for tourists, families in Coral Gables for the first time. I didn't know City Hall existed here. If we go on Instagram, they look at the picture, and they say, Oh wow, that's a nice place, where is it located?- we could put the address, we could say it's open from such time to such time. It's such a great ability to inform people, you are always up to date. Not too long ago you guys went to the church, 90 years I think it was, so much history and we have so much history in the City of Coral Gables, people aren't even aware of it, and this is a great way to find out, and it's just a perfect way to do it. Like I mentioned, we do have YouTube, we have about 200 files in views, 211 subscribers, and over close to 1,000 videos. What happens? Now that might sound OK, it's not, why?- well because we haven't had a force to push these videos out there. What do we use?- Facebook, Tweeter, Instagram, that is our key to push these videos out there to inform the rest of the people, and the best thing about it is we always incorporate our City website no matter what. If we have an event, if we have a Commission meeting, we always make sure to use the link off the website which will bring traffic to our website which can again, people could be informed by everything that's going on, so there's your key. What you can do with social media is endless, it really truly is.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That's awesome.

Commissioner Lago: Well thank you. Just one last question in reference to all the cities in the county, how many of them would you say have an app which would encompass everything I mentioned before?

Mr. Chow: I can't say I know exactly how many, but I do know at least three in the county that is using this product that we are referring to as an on one, and the three cities are Apopka, Mandora, Oakland Park. Obviously, other cities like City of Miami and Miami-Dade County they have their own apps, not necessarily this specific one, but maybe like a hybrid, but at the end of the day we are trying to treat it like a photo in your hand held device, so all the social media events like the Instagram and Tweeter and so on can be all incorporated.

Commissioner Keon: I thought I had just read or I was just listening to something where Miami Beach, did they just institute their own app or maybe it was a parking app or was it a general app or a parking app?- or something?

Mr. Chow: I think maybe their bus route.

Commissioner Keon: It had something to do with parking, I didn't know if it encompassed more than that, because it was where it told you in the availability of parking what garages were full and if that garage was full it told you, it came up with where the closest garage was to the one that you could ask about that was available or whatever, and I don't know if that's their own.

Mr. Chow: We recently met with someone from there, but he didn't mention that, but that said, we can use something similar, not necessarily how many spaces we have available at that moment real-time, but the locations of the parking lots.

Commissioner Keon: OK, but theirs was real-time. The one from Miami Beach was real-time, so it said if you are going to the beach and you are going to, I don't know, wherever one of those parking things and it tells you that parking lot is full, but the parking lot at two blocks away, nearby parking is available and it diverts you to the nearby lot, its real time, we don't have that though, we don't have real-time?

Mr. Chow: At this moment, no, that's something we can look into with the parking...

Commissioner Lago: Especially since we are going to be having hopefully new parking garages that we can incorporate that. Another thing I was thinking about too that I just conferred with our City Clerk, something that we can do as you see more and more tourist buses that are coming to the City of Coral Gables, let's incorporate the Talking Book which the City Clerk has been working on for two years. Can you imagine if you get off one of those tour buses and you can immediately go to the City of Coral Gables app, open up and it will say OK, it would basically be a tour of the City through the Talking Book?

Mr. Rodolfo Roman: And I'd like to add to that, we have an opportunity for video on demand and also like a pod cast. So for example, let's say if you go on these tours, you can just download that file and then you can just listen to it wherever you are from, and it's not just for tourist, but if I'm working out at the treadmill or something, and I need to catch up on my Commission meeting, I can just hear it or watch it right there because of video on demand and we are able to do social media.

Mr. Chow: One more thing to answer your original question. This company has approximately 500 customers, 450 are government sites, so that gives you a little flavor of what we are talking about.

Commissioner Lago: In closing, I just want to say one last thing. I'd also like to recognize my appointment to the Communications Board, Leslie Pantin, who is a Coral Gables resident who has been to two meetings in regards to this and he's been one of the driving forces, at least with me, to help me put this together with Mr. Machado and Mr. Chow.

Commissioner Quesada: Question for you. When I first got elected, I was working on this with the City Manager and you found the e-mail, one of the first e-mails when we started this conversation, and actually if you go to our webpage now we were able to create a request of service, which you helped me do that at that time, because I was told because of our EDEN system it was really going to work because the idea that I had for an app originally was if you see a cracked sidewalk or if you see a pothole, you can take a picture of it, there is a GPS tag and then it gets either e-mailed out to someone in the Public Works Department, depending what the issue is or also for our inspectors to be able to take pictures and it was sort of more comprehensive thing, and I was told that our software system was not compatible with any type of app, what's changed?

Mr. Chow: The citizens services product you are referring to originally, it's still current actually, is the EDEN system and it's not meant for mobile devices for that type of service, it was meant for PC's with a browser to submit requests.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mr. Chow: You could do it from a smart phone but it's not going to be....

Commissioner Quesada: What's the difference now with a new app from what I saw in the PowerPoint, you are still going to be able to do those kinds of things that were the ultimate goal?

Mr. Chow: Correct. Correct. So with this new app that we are implementing in the very near future, this one is specific for mobile devices. This will allow you to do the function like C-click...product, and it allows you to take a picture, submit it, and type in your comments and will route through the appropriate department for action.

Commissioner Quesada: Perfect.

Mr. Chow: And then will update the citizens.

Mayor Cason: And will allow people to send something to the police anonymously if they wanted to – send something to the police anonymously, a tip or something.

Mr. Chow:...All registered users.

City Attorney Leen: If I may interject here. I would like the Commission's permission; I'd like you to give us lead to put together a social media policy in conjunction with the City Manager's office. I do have some materials from a while ago when this came up, so we have something started and I've talked to City staff about it a while ago, but now that this is coming up I think it's important to get that in place and I'll work with Carmen and Cindy and Elsa and we'll get that put together very quickly.

Commissioner Keon: Can I just confirm. You said that we can do, they can do inspections by taking a photo and I know that someone came and talked to us about that, but I would think that it would help.

Mr. Chow: For the Code Enforcement folks...

Commissioner Keon: Well no – how about for building inspections those sorts of things? Go ahead, I'm sorry.

Mr. Chow: For the permit inspectors, they are currently – what they do they use their smart phones through EDEN do the inspections now. They can take pictures and then submit the files, but it's not part of this system.

Commissioner Keon: But they can do that currently, do they do that currently?

Mr. Chow: Yes, they can do the inspections out in the field now with their smart phones.

City Attorney Leen: One other thing. If you are going to have anonymous complaints, it needs to be clear that anything where they put their name or an e-mail address or something. It's all going to be a matter of public record, we have to keep snapshots of those and we are going to develop that as part of the policy, but you could create something where someone could submit it without putting their name, that's permissible but then you are not going to be able – it's going to be hard to get back to them, so that's the trade-off, but we do under the public records law have to keep snapshots of the different things that we do and then if we do have a social media policy, one of the things if we have to be careful under the Sunshine Law, we are not having discussions on the Facebook page or whatever we end up doing that each Commissioner can have their own page

and they can deal with the public directly, but it can't be Commissioners and the same ones having discussions, but that would all be part of the policy and we'll get that in place right away.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Commissioner Quesada: I'll make the motion.

Mayor Cason: Alright. Commissioner Quesada.

Commissioner Lago: I'll second that motion.

Mayor Cason: And Commissioner Lago. City Clerk.

Mr. Rocha: I'm sorry, I just wanted to make sure that Maria Rosa Higgins who happens to be out of town this week, she says that the Communications Department is ready to go, so just give us the go ahead and we'll put this together as soon as possible.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much – appreciate it.

City Clerk

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Quesada: When does it kick in?

Commissioner Lago: December.

Mayor Cason: December.

Mr. Chow: This Fiscal Year.

[End: 4:12:40 p.m.]