

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-2
November 18, 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

Assistant Director, Public Works, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

H-2 [Start: 4:04:44 p.m.]

Discussion regarding the status of City of Coral Gables Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Mayor Cason: Let's move on to H-2, that's your bicycle, that's the City Manager issue.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Which item?

Mayor Cason: H-2.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Oh, H-2, right – Jessica, please present where we are with the Master Plan.

Ms. Keller: This should be really easy guys.

[Laughter]

Ms. Keller: We'll get right through this – no problem.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Well I love the pin...

Ms. Keller: Thank you. I came dressed appropriately; I left my bicycle helmet at home. On June 10, 2014, the City Commission adopted the Coral Gables Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and we are here just to give you an update on the progress that we've made since June 2014. Following the adoption of the Coral Gables Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, we approached our existing continuing services consultants, and asked them to provide some proposals, what it would cost to move forward one of our recommendations for a primary route. As you know, right now we have approximately \$600,000 allocated for implementation of this plan. Once we had consultants take a look at it, we saw that the estimates that were identified in the plan were very low, so we needed to take a different approach.

Commissioner Quesada: Can I stop you for one second, let me just jump in for a second.

Ms. Keller: Sure.

Commissioner Quesada: I want to make a motion to designate Commissioner Vince Lago as the City's representative along with through the Manager, Jessica Keller, to approach Rebeca Sosa and finalize the \$1.5 million that was informally discussed with her.

Commissioner Lago: I have information in regards to that.

Commissioner Quesada: But I want to make you the Commissioner Representative to speak on our behalf to lobby on behalf of the City of Coral Gables to obtain that \$1.5 million from the County.

Commissioner Lago: OK. You want an update right now?

Commissioner Quesada: Hold on, I need a second.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'll second it.

Commissioner Quesada: I want to formalize this so that...

Commissioner Lago: Just give me more work to do.

Commissioner Quesada: You have a good relationship with her.

Commissioner Lago: Of course. It's all good.

Mayor Cason: We have a motion; Commissioner Quesada made the motion, Vice Mayor seconds it.

City Clerk

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: (Absent)

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 4-0)

Commissioner Lago: Quick update. Ms. Birdsill, Madam City Manager, our last meeting was two weeks ago, three weeks ago, we met with Chairwoman Sosa, her term expires I think within the next two or three weeks as Chairwoman. We discussed the issue of attaining the \$1.5 million and using it for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. We were made aware by the Chairwoman that, that was not a possibility, because it had to, number one, entail some sort of structure and that does not exist as per this plan. She told me that there are different options that we could use the money to, and she has pledged the money through the Commission, she's already gone through the County. As a matter of fact, Cindy could you do me a favor, could you write, who was the gentleman at the meeting?- can you give me an update tomorrow whether it's already gone to the Commission, the resolution that they were going to present to formally allocate those funds to the City.

Commissioner Quesada: But once it's in the City, then we can use it for the bike plan?

Commissioner Lago: No.

Commissioner Quesada: Hold on a second, there is a way to do it though – thinking out loud here, let's think out of the box. One of the requirements for the Jose Cuervo Agave Project is to have a public bike facility, bike storage facility, maybe there is something we can do there, we can apply those monies to that bike storage facility, maybe its \$1.5 million, whatever it is, and then we have a separate requirement having Jose Cuervo pay us back that money. Again, assuming they get through all the entitlements and that way, that \$1.5 million we are using it towards a bike facility, yet we get that money back through them and we apply it to the bike plan in the plan. Again, I just came up with that right now, I don't know if we can do that or not.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Cindy was working with the County to provide language as to where that money was going to be allocated. I'm not exactly sure where in the process they are, but...

Ms. Birdsill: The Chairwoman, as Commissioner Lago was saying, it needs to be a multi-purpose center. She wants the money only if it's a multi-purpose center, so we had discussed...

Commissioner Lago: If I could interrupt just for my understanding, correct me if I'm wrong. It's not her language, it's what's required as per the GOB (General Obligation Bond), as per the GOB language, and that's what I understood.

Ms. Birdsill: OK. Yes – alright.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Yes, that's my understanding.

Ms. Birdsill: So we discussed a couple options, but she was not – the bike lanes did not seem to work into the needs for them.

Commissioner Lago: But let me tell you, I want to see if you get a chance, maybe first off follow up with Manny and find out if those monies have already been allocated through the County Commission; and number two, why don't you, I know you are busy, but why don't we take maybe a few moments, not today, one-on-one per Commissioner and explain to them the idea that we had in reference to where we would allocate those funds, and maybe that project that we are discussing could have some sort of component that deals with biking – bike storage, I'm not sure what it could be, but something that maybe incorporates biking so we can include it in the Master Plan. This idea we are talking about it, hasn't been formalized yet, we met with some developers, who has a piece of property adjacent to a City property. Bring them together and build a cultural center, but obviously that's an idea that's going to be brought forth to every single one of you, maybe you agree with it, you agree with it, you don't, you don't, we'll move forward to another idea. All my biggest concern is, you have \$1.5 million has been sitting out there for, I think, four or five years now, it was promised to the GOB funds, we haven't done anything about it. I've wracked my brain with Assistant City Manager and City Manager to do everything in our power to find something which is in Chairwoman Sosa's District which can be applied and we haven't been able to find a multi-use facility which will accept these \$1.5 million into it.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Commissioner Lago: You know what that's called when you haven't eaten since 9 this morning.

Mayor Cason: Anything else on the Bike Plan?

Ms. Keller: Well, I can stop now...

[Laughter]

Mayor Cason: We have several more things and I've got a 6 o'clock.

Ms. Keller: We'll go very quickly.

Commissioner Lago: Take your time.

Ms. Keller: OK. So it cost more to implement than we initially expected based on the Master Plan, so what we are going to do is put out an RFQ, look for good design firms who will develop the north-south corridor that will be a Coral Gables high-end bicycle facility, and what we'll do is we'll have those north-south corridors packaged so that we can apply for significant grant funding.

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you a quick question. You said North Gables facility?

Ms. Keller: South bicycle facility.

Commissioner Lago: It's going to be a facility?

Ms. Keller: When I say facility, it could be a bicycle boulevard, bike path, a shared use path, so it's a very general term.

Commissioner Lago: It's not an actual structure?

Ms. Keller: No.

Commissioner Lago: OK.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: It's a term that is used.

Ms. Keller: It's a general term. So, ideally we want to connect downtown to Coco Plum Circle. That's a very important corridor; Coco Plum Circle connects -- it's a regional hub for bicycling, so we'll package that around an RFQ. In the meantime, what we'll do is we'll take a look at smaller, the low-hanging fruit. We have heard from the County, the County is interested in having us put in bicycle lanes on Sevilla, so one of the examples would be Sevilla, from Red Road all the way to the east side of the City; Country Club Prado, it just needs striping, there is no roadway -- so we are looking for things that do not require roadway widening or signal modification, and we can move those forward very quickly. So we really want to start to see something on the ground. So then I'll just go on to some of the things that we have done, which are kind of like the soft nice things that we've been working on. We talked about, Commissioner Quesada talked our web page, and I think he used Chicago as the example...

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Ms. Keller: It is a very good web page and we're working on -- these are some of the content items that will be on the web page: our local bicycle laws, any maps that we are developing, bicycle parking, all of our programming, becoming a bicycle-friendly district. I'm going to talk about that a little bit near the end, but one of the things that we are going to be offering to our

businesses is basically they would come to me and I would walk them through the process to become a bicycle-friendly business, and a national recognition by the League of American Bicyclists. We had been working with the Museum and also with the Cinema to start that process. Also, we will have all of our projects listed there, directing people to bike shops, any bike rides in the program, bike organizations, bike events, and also links to Transportation Advisory Board, and anything you can add that should be included, please let us know. Also, we've been talking with our Traffic Advisory Board who I meet with at 5:30 tonight, but we've been considering revising their purpose. Right now they are very focused on traffic calming and we want to expand it and include bicycling, walking and transit elements. The bicycle, the Master Plan had made a recommendation that we have a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, and rather than creating another Board, we just want to pull in additional resources for the Board and we are walking through that with the Traffic Advisory Board right now. I want to talk a little bit about Bike 305. I'm sure you've heard a lot about Bike 305, but what I'm proud of is that Bike 305 has already recognized Coral Gables as leading the developing bicycle culture in South Florida and they asked us to be Executive Committee members, and those are the real doers in South Florida, so I'm proud that we are part of that. Recently Coral Gables staff participated in bicycle rodeo training and that is where we...training and we learn skills that we can teach people of all ages, we learn the laws, and also we teach people how to go through courses, they are actually pretty neat, it was a lot of fun. I was dreading the six hours that I was going to be spending on a Saturday, but it was a really good time. One of the other things that we've done is we've incorporated plan review. Right here I have, I know it's probably not very clear to you, but this is an example of a plan that was brought to us by FDOT, that's the intersection of LeJeune and Alhambra, and they are doing a safety improvement at this location, as you know, and they did not incorporate our bicycle plan into their plan and so we are working and we are catching those kinds of things as they come through, and we weren't looking for that before. Bicycle parking – Fourth of July we had bicycle valet, which I thought was very successful. We had nearly 100 bicycles parked there and this year we are hoping to get at least 300 through more marketing. We also had at special events, we are requiring any special event that's over 1,000 participants expected that they will provide bicycle parking, and all sponsored events, City sponsored events, they too, bicycle parking now. Recently, we had \$10,000 allocated for bike racks throughout the City, and we are working on a program called "Bicycle Racks for Businesses;" Businesses will be able to come to us, request a bike rack and we'll install it.

Mayor Cason: I'd like you to see me at some point on bike racks because I have some ideas that I brought back from Europe, really interesting whimsical bike racks, not just the standard old aluminum metal thing. I think we can do some beautiful things with copying some things I've seen in Slovakia and Budapest.

Commissioner Quesada: We had a meeting, maybe more than a year ago, we called it....design competition and we just never met about it again.

Ms. Keller: I have actually talked with the Museum about it and they are interested in reviving that.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes, I'd love to do it. The idea we came up with is a design competition for each block or each location so that when you drive up and you park your bike, it doesn't look like a simple circle, but it's a design competition and the award winner and it gets built and it gets done, and something funky.

Mayor Cason: I like funky and whimsical.

Ms. Keller: These next couple of pictures really are – I took a walk, I was looking for pictures for the presentation, and these are just businesses where we have bikes. I was outside for about five minutes and I came across these pictures in downtown where bikes are just parked, not attached to anything, they tend to walk off that way. Here is right across the street, around the corner, they are attached to the poles.

Mayor Cason: There's a good film for the Art Cinemas, a famous film called the "Bicycle Thief" and we need to show that when we do this.

Ms. Keller: And these are just more examples of what was out there in a very short period of time; and the last thing I wanted to talk about was a program that we have coming up in January and we are working with the Police Department, Parks and Recreation, and it's for active adults over 50, and we want to reintroduce them to bicycling. It's not to teach anyone how to ride a bike; it's just to make people feel comfortable. So there will be a classroom session, there will be a bicycle rodeo session, to be held at the Youth Center, and after you complete that portion of the training, we will guide tours to the Farmers Market. So the whole program is tied to the Farmers Market so that participants can be shown that you can actually shop on your bicycle and then of course there is the social relations aspect as well. That's what we have.

Mayor Cason: Just one thing just to let you know that I've seen some move for people wanting to put bicycle paths down Miracle Mile. I can tell you, I'm 100 percent opposed. I think it's a safety issue. I'll be very hard to be convinced on that. I think there are streets along each side that would be much better, but I don't want to see people sitting in restaurants, finishing drinking their martinis, getting up going to their car, and getting hit by a bike. So I think that needs to be rethought, but I will oppose it, the bicycle plan, if there is a bike path down Miracle Mile. OK. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Lago: One last thing. When do you think we'll see some sort, the commencement of the implementation of the Master Plan?

Ms. Keller: I'm sorry.

Commissioner Lago: You said you were looking for some of the low-hanging fruit, when do you think we are going to have the implementation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan?

Ms. Keller: Well, to actually start seeing some stripes on the ground?

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Ms. Keller: We have already started in-house design. I was waiting for you guys to say yes, you are ready to support us with that and we will be ready to move forward very quickly, but we will also want to make sure that we notify residents in the area and get that feedback, but we're ready to go and move the process along, particularly with Sevilla from Red Road to the east side.

Commissioner Lago: Have you been looking at any other grants that are potentially available?

Ms. Keller: Yes – and we want to match the big project with the big grants that are out there and that's really...

Commissioner Lago: Are those more county or federal or state?

Ms. Keller: County and federal.

Commissioner Lago: If I can help you at all in regards to the County or the state or federally, please count me in for presentations or to use any of my contacts, this is something that I'm very passionate about.

Ms. Keller: OK. Good. Thank you. Thank you for your hard work.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

[End: 4:22:27 p.m.]