

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-2
October 14, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Jackson Rip Holmes

Agenda Item E-2 [Start: 11:37 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2, "Administration," Article III "Boards, Commission, Committees," Section 2-83 "Citizen Input; Addressing the City Commission," to add additional rules of decorum for public meetings; providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: Mayor Lago: Coming back to E-2.

Staff Speaker 7: Mayor, can we just note for the record that E-1 was deferred to the October 28th commission meeting for purposes of notice. E-2 is an ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2, Administration Article III "Boards Commission Committees," Section 2-83 "Citizen Input; Addressing the City Commission," to add additional rules of the quorum for public

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meetings providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification and providing for an effective date.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Good morning, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, Stephanie Throckmorton, Deputy City Attorney. There has been one small change as requested by the Commission since first reading. The addition of the following prohibition and a rule of decorum that the smoking of cigarettes or cigars and the use of nicotine dispensing devices as defined in Florida Statutes or vapor generating electronic devices as defined in Florida statutes is prohibited in Commission Chambers or meeting rooms. There's also been the direction given regarding the cameras that were discussed at the last meeting, which is included as well in the ordinance. Just for the record, I know it came up last time, the provisions and rules of decorum have existed in some form or another in our city code since 2006 is my understanding.

Mayor Lago: Yes. Just so my colleagues are aware because I don't want them to be taken off guard on the next Commission meeting, I've asked the Manager, and I hope you'll support it that media should be located adjacent to the City Attorney. There's a desk and chairs there available. It's been there before. I just want to avoid the constant chatter in the back of the room. I think it's important to keep the decorum here as much as possible within the Commission Chambers. So that's something that I hope that you will support. I think it makes sense. It provides the necessary infrastructure, table, chairs, and outlets for media and they can sit here adjacent to the Commission, just like multiple other municipalities have it in the same fashion.

Commissioner Fernandez: I think it's a welcome change. I think in the past, when I was a Gables Insider, I tried to use that area to sit and I was told it was closed off to the media, but I think it definitely is a lot easier. You have the access to the Wi-Fi, it's easier to connect and it's probably a better location to sit and watch the meeting.

Mayor Lago: And since you brought that up, I want to just give credit where credit is due. I talked about bringing the media forward and having them sit where our Zoning Director's sitting or adjacent where our legal team is right there in the front row. The Manager brought it to my attention. I completely forgot an oversight that that barrier was available and that we could use that area for media. And then we're going to put a sign there, a formal sign, something like this that says media and they can sit there. We'll have two or three chairs. There's more than a room for two or three people to sit there and I think it's a great opportunity. Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: Well, I think that both of you are making great points. And in fact, I recall that there are times when you actually have a more formal media appearance where they have cameras, where they have a boom mic and so forth. And it's kind of chaotic if you don't have a segregated already ascertained location. So, I think that that just makes sense for efficiency and for the better quality of whatever the media is trying to capture. I agree on all those points.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: And one of the biggest challenges, through the Mayor was access to electricity. So, this solves that problem too.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, I'm sorry, you want to add something Commissioner?

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, no, no. Yeah, I think we're done on E-2, right.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do you have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor. Mr. Rip Holmes.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mr. Holmes: Okay. So, I didn't rehearse anything because-

City Clerk Urquia: Sir, Mr. Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: My name is Jackson Rip Holmes. I live at 35 Sedona Avenue here in Coral Gables. You're going to be voting on whether we have a dictatorship by the Chair in Coral Gables. And I think it's oriented towards trying to rig the election in April, which is an effort to make a dictatorship of developers enshrined in the government of Coral Gables. Dictatorship should be in Cuba, not in Coral Gables. And what is the dictatorship? It's the ability of the Chair to take sides to break the law when they want to, or to enforce the law when they want to, depending on whether someone's pro-development or anti-development. To the extent that if someone is speaking and they fail to end their comments within three minutes and are then directed by the Chair who is totally pro-development to cease speaking and fail to do so for whatever the reason, then this becomes an arrestable offense. So, we're criminalizing people who oppose excessive development. It's a dictatorship.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: All right, we'll close public comment. Can I have a motion?

Vice Mayor Anderson: Move it.

Commissioner Lara: Second it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

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Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)