

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-1
November 14, 2023
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 Kirk Menendez**

City Staff

**City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant City Attorney, Naomi Levi-Garcia
Police Chief Ed Hudak
Finance Director, Diana Gomez
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz**

Public Speaker(s)

**Jorge Duyos
Maria Cruz
Dough Mayer
Lynne Blustein
Kayla Riera Gomez
Christina Villamil
Jessica Keller**

Agenda Item H-1 [10:30 a.m.]

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Agenda Item H-1 - Update regarding annexation process for Little Gables.

Update regarding annexation process for Little Gables.

Mayor Lago: Moving on to H-1, 10 a.m. time certain. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, we have here Mr. Jorge Duyos from JRD Associates and our annexation team to answer any remaining questions prior to formalizing the City's application to the County. We are planning, if everything moves forward, for the -- for -- to bring this up on the December meeting. And Mr. Duyos will have a brief presentation and we're all here to answer any questions -- any remaining questions concerning the annexation of Little Gables.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir. Thank you for being here with us.

Commissioner Castro: Morning.

Jorge Duyos: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners. And if I could have the presentation up, please. My name is Jorge Duyos with JRD & Associates. I've been working with the City for a little under a year now on its annexation efforts and have a brief presentation for you this morning on the efforts to date and the path moving forward. So, over the last year going back to August of '22, there have been several resolutions passed by the Commission moving the annexation efforts forward for both High Pines/Ponce-Davis and Little Gables. As you know, High Pines/Ponce-Davis did not have the requisite number of petitions returned to the City so that annexation effort is not moving forward. We're here to talk about Little Gables. We also, in the last few months, conducted analysis with the City departments that would be providing services to the residents of Little Gables as well as the associated financial requirements for providing those services. The City Manager had internal meetings with each of you to brief you on those efforts. Subsequent to that, meeting notice flyers were mailed as well as petitions to all registered voters in the Little Gables area. There are 1,661 registered voters with a deadline of October 9th last month to return the petitions. The City hosted a community meeting which I facilitated on September 27th for residents of Little Gables to be informed on the annexation process, the services to be provided by the City and the financial impact of annexation. We had over 100 residents of the Little Gables area attend, 105 residents attended. So, very good turnout for that meeting. Subsequent to October 9th, the City tallied the petitions to determine if the process could go forward to the County for annexation. Minimum 20 percent of registered voters was required and a total of 356 petitions were received. That was 21.43 percent, so that exceeded the required 333 or 20 percent to initiate the process and then so we're here today to brief you and give you an update on where we are in the process moving forward. So, as you all are very familiar, this is a map of Little Gables bordered on the west by Cortez Street, Southwest 47th Avenue, on the north by Southwest 8th Street, on the east by Salzedo and Southwest 40th Avenue, and on the south by Mendoza, Southwest 16th Street. With respect to the services that would be provided by the City to Little Gables -- and this information was provided at the community meeting. I'll just go real quickly through each of the departments. Police services would be three officers, essentially one patrol unit, staffed 24/7, and the addition also of a neighborhood service aide. Fire rescue services

would be six firefighters, which is two additional firefighters on an existing truck to provide 24/7 coverage. There would be a new waste pickup route established for the Little Gables area, so that would be the addition of 11 operators between waste collectors, supervisors, et cetera. With respect to community recreation, the expenses related to upgrading San Jacinto Park, there would be an initial investment in the first year to bring it up to Coral Gables standards at a minimum. And then landscape and infrastructure services, several staff as well as associated expenditures, again tree trimming, Public Works type services for Little Gables area. And then Building, Permitting and Zoning and Code Enforcement, you see there's additional staff. I outlined there these wouldn't be dedicated completely to the Little Gables area, but these departments are experiencing some shortage right now in staffing. So, the addition of an area such as Little Gables would require the department to be brought up to where they need to be brought up to from a staffing perspective. With respect to a timetable for providing services, this is very variable. This would be worked out in the interlocal agreement with the County should annexation go forward, but the City would anticipate a timeframe of somewhere between 9 to 12 months to provide service from the day annexation is approved. and ideally, October 1st would be a start date depending on when the referendum would take place by those voting for it, if it goes forward in Little Gables. October 1st would allow for a full year of property tax revenue to come over from the County to provide all the services that are needed to be required. Cost estimates for providing services, you see here a summary of projected total revenues and total expenditures. The expenditures in the first year are significantly higher than other years because of the ramp-up, the addition of the new staff, equipment, vehicles, et cetera. I will say that the revenue was determined based on how the City budgets and does its financial revenue forecast. It is probably a conservative number because it does not take into account any revitalization or significant turnover of residential property in the area which in the last couple of years has gone up, but these numbers are based on the budgeting process by the City. The tax load on Little Gables, again, this chart was demonstrated in the community meeting in September. These are some examples of what the incremental additional tax costs would be to residents. So, as an example, if the taxable value is \$350,000, the additional tax paid by current Little Gables residents would be \$767 per year and you see the different examples we laid out there. The next step would be, if this goes forward, to bring a resolution, the City Commission passing a resolution basically authorizing the Manager to submit the annexation application to the County. These are the contents. The application requirements are required under County Code Section 20-3 and you see the requirements here. There's already a draft of the application should it go forward, but these are all of the contents that are required by the County to move the application forward. As far as the annexation process going forward, I believe Naomi recently made a presentation to the Commission on all of the steps going forward that need to take place. It's a lengthy process. There's a lot of steps. It's a timely process. It's probably a year once the annexation resolution goes forward to the County. It has to go through several processes throughout the County, several public hearings, has to go to their Planning Advisory Board for recommendation to the County Commission, and finally, it would -- at some point if it goes all the way through the process -- be on a ballot for the residents of Little Gables to vote. Upon that vote, if in the affirmative, then an interlocal agreement is executed with the County for transference of service, revenues, and any other considerations that might be included. So, there you see all of the

lengthy steps. So, a brief presentation, just wanted to bring you up to date and answer any questions you may have.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Are there any questions from the Commission before I open it up to the public?

Commissioner Menendez: I have a couple questions. Just, I saw that -- I mean, in the past we've had presentations going back, I think when I started as a Commissioner, were the presentations in the past dealing with the numbers, you know, the expense, the cost, were those, at that time, did we separate High Pines/Ponce-Davis and Little Gables numbers or were they combined? Did we just take everything into consideration and then come up with a projected cost?

Mr. Duyos: They've always been separated because they're treated as two independent annexations. So, yes, Commissioner, I believe in the past they've also been separate.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay, good. And the cost estimate, the chart you showed, at -- from year two to year five, the cost estimate, I think it was -- yes, the cost estimate, from year two to year five, it looked like the cost was increasing as opposed to what we, I think a lot of us would prefer to be decreasing. Is there a point in time where at least we break even? Because it showed year one, obviously, you mentioned why the number was high. Year two and then year three just kept on escalating. You know, I'm trying to figure out at some point do we at least break even in terms of the City.

Mr. Duyos: Right. So, there's a couple of ways to answer that. The first one is the expenses over exceed the revenue increases per year. There's a point -- and we show up to year five here -- because there's a point that eventually there's economies of scale, everything gets integrated in the City. So, the -- as you know, the City doesn't budget by neighborhood. This is a snapshot of the best projection at this area, but there would be a point where everything is integrated, expenses, revenues into City operations. And the second point is that, as I mentioned, this revenue projection is very conservative because it assumes basically a 4 percent property tax revenue increase per year that doesn't include any revitalization that might take place in the commercial district or any -- over the last couple of years, the sales and the property values have increased significantly in this area, but we didn't take kind of that exponential growth in our projections. The projections are based on how the City budgets from year to year.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: If I may say, Commissioner, it was treated just as the City budgets normally for the entire City. We assume there will be a revitalization of the area. As the 35 commercial properties, various multifamily properties on the on the east side of Lejeune Road and the medium value for Coral Gables is 513, medium value and the average value is 287. So, we expect some revitalization. However, it's very difficult to predict that and it was a conservative estimate based on how the City budgets internally without looking at what the future could be for Little Gables.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay.

Commissioner Castro: I think the Coral Gables residents would like to know what would be the total investment that we would have to put out to have Little Gables up to our standards? How much money are we actually putting out all together to then just make it part of Coral Gables and then it's considered all of it, right?

Mr. Duyos: Right.

Commissioner Castro: But how much money are we going to have to put up? And is it five years or maybe is it six years or seven years? How long is it really going to take to have Little Gables up to our standards?

Mr. Duyos: Well, I think the idea of bringing Little Gables up to Coral Gables standards would be as, you know, as immediate as possible. There's expenditures in the budget for Public Works expenses, sidewalks, lighting, as I mentioned, you know, bringing San Jacinto Park up to snuff. So, these expenditures, these startup expenditures, to answer your question, year one is 5.2 -- \$6 million. That includes these startup kind of one-time costs. So, again, you know, the projection here from a revenue perspective as to when that break-even is, it's hard to tell. You know, there's no crystal ball as far as when they're going to be integrated, but I think, you know, probably within the first few years, there's the economies of scale that, you know, a Public Works crew that's working right outside Little Gables is working in Little Gables. So, there's those economies of scale, and as I mentioned a couple of times also, and as the Manager just mentioned, revitalization is not captured in these numbers. We would anticipate at least, you know, on the commercial side on the 8th Street corridor that these businesses go through some revitalization. So, these are numbers, as I mentioned, you know, we just take a snapshot. If we were just to look at Little Gables, what are the expenditures, what are the revenues, the reality is the City doesn't budget that way, so -- but we had to for this exercise do it. This is also a requirement for the annexation application to show what the expenditures and revenues are.

Commissioner Castro: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: As Mr. Duyos referenced, we are budgeting the same as Coral Gables. Revitalization has not been included. As we mentioned in the budget, our mean value, our mean property value is 513; the average value in Little Gables is 287. So -- and plus the 35 commercial properties and some multifamily. So, I think there is room for revitalization. The reason we limited to five years is we feel that after five years you're just part of Coral Gables at that point and that's why we limited our -- that budget to a five-year period. There's also -- and we have the Police Chief here. There's also a public safety aspect of it, which I would like our Chief to also address because it takes care of that enclave, so it just provides just 8th Street as the entry into Coral Gables instead of three sides from that enclave.

Mayor Lago: Hey, Chief, how are you?

Police Chief Hudak: Good morning. Yeah, and looking at just the geographical location of what it does, and with the patrolling, we would augment our patrol zones along -- and we took this into consideration with the creation of the downtown unit. So, we'd be able to move our resources, which is why our required staffing is just three positions and an NSA. Again, the issues that we would be able to address probably more cohesively would be the cut-through traffic issues, things like that. So, we're able to do more enforcement in this little area, which is now touching on the Coral Gables boundaries of these three sides of what that is. Again, the 8th Street corridor, even though we have an interlocal agreement with the City of Miami, it also helps us kind of patrol that area and with situational awareness is what we call it for ourselves, that now we have anybody in that area that we would be able to obviously police and protect, but the ancillary issues that come out of that neighborhood, we really just keep it on 8th Street, and it's easier for us to patrol that side. That being said, you know, our bigger concern is just the cut-through traffic, and I think that's a quality of life enhancement for our current residential neighborhoods around there that we're able to do more enforcement along just those three areas. And I think that helps us with the current situation of our residents and what we can do with a minimal impact on our staffing issues.

Mayor Lago: Chief, also, would you mind talking a little bit about the LPR cameras and being able to expand on those LPR cameras? Since we don't -- since we have that current enclave there, it's an issue and a concern.

Police Chief Hudak: Right. The LPRs -- and again, we haven't put this in the budget yet because we're getting into -- actually our assessment process is the speed cameras first, and then we're going to look at our ALPR system. We have what we've always referred to as the geofence around the City. And as cars come in, we're able to check that. That has been a successful program, obviously, with the technology in our CIC Center. To give us more of those checkpoints along 8th Street is important for us. Because right now we kind of have a blind spot where we might check people coming in from Le Jeune Road, but I can't put cameras at Le Jeune Road because that's not our jurisdiction. So, if we were able to move that, we clearly would reinforce our geofence, if you will, of the City. You know, we have it on 8th Street, but we don't have anything again until we get closer to Ponce and that area.

Mayor Lago: So, we have a hole?

Police Chief Hudak: We do have a hole. I mean, we have a hole in -- I would say we have a dent. I don't know -- because to put those cameras in, we would have to put them on certain neighborhoods, which is not something I'm in favor of, just for privacy issues and things like that, and actually the minimal return on putting the investment in those cameras there. So, that's why our position in the police department has always been square it off. And the more squared off it is, there's a benefit to the current residents that are there and also anything that would -- any neighborhood that would come in would obviously be there.

Vice Mayor Anderson: While the Chief is up there, I was just going to catch him on a couple of questions if you're done.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah. At the end of the day, I'm here to represent the best interest of the residents. So the question is, is it a good deal, right? And do we want it? The residents, do they want it? And is it a good deal? And when would it be a good deal? How long do we have to put up for it, right? Let's talk about the trailer park. I saw an article yesterday that came out saying that we're not going to touch the trailer park. Let's be as candid as possible. And I don't want to be responsible for things that are happening and then something happens to the trailer park and the City's saying -- how much jurisdiction do we really have or say what happens to the trailer park in reality?

City Attorney Suárez: So, what the City's position is that from a zoning perspective, we're not going to cite them from a zoning perspective because trailer parks are not currently allowed in our Zoning Code, but we will allow that use to continue. But of course, the City does not own the trailer park, so if the owner decides to do something with the trailer park, that's -- you know, that would be up to the owner.

Commissioner Castro: So, there's always a possibility that the owner wants to sell, which is not, it's not going to be on us. It's not our responsibility. I just want to put that out there very clear. Just in case something does happen, there's some transparency there.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, we don't want to change -- we are not changing any uses within the area, but again, as the City Attorney said, what people do with their private property is something that we can't control.

Commissioner Castro: Absolutely, and I want to put that message out there, that it's really not up to us.

Vice Mayor Anderson: If you're done?

Commissioner Castro: I'm done. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. So, just a footnote on the trailer park issue. There are several articles that I've seen in the Herald over the course of years where trailer parks in Miami-Dade County have been rezoned and made into, you know, high-density areas. You know, it's an unfortunate process that happens sometimes. There are provisions within the state laws to require assistance for relocating folks. I'm not going to -- I don't have the laws in front of me. I'm going to leave this to the City Attorney to deal with. But there's another contingent issue regarding the borders of the area that we haven't talked about and that is our ability to control speed and our ability to change speed limits and our ability to do traffic calming. All three of which are impacted on Cortez, on 16th Street, Madeira area. We are limited because everything has to be done with the County. So, I know there's a section of Cortez where we have a County speed limit at 30, and

then it goes down to 25. With a contiguous jurisdiction, we'd be able to control the speed throughout the area, correct?

Police Chief Hudak: That's correct. I think, and again, I would put this, the speeding is definitely a quality of life people -- quality of life issue for the people that are currently in the County. I think that also, if we were able to address those issues as they come up, because I'm happy to announce that some speeders or criminal elements really know when they're in Coral Gables as opposed to when they're someplace else. So, you know, if in fact this is approved, I believe we can really get on the ground level to slow everybody down in this area as opposed to our border, which is Cortez. You know, it's similar to what we see on Red Road. People obey the speed limit if they're coming north on Red Road because they know that's the Coral Gables side, and you can see a freeway on the other side, not understanding that we can write tickets on both sides of the street. And that has come up over my tenure. So, I believe that we would also be able to affect not just our residents but as -- from the get-go, help establish some of the safer driving patterns within the area that would be annexed.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right, right. I mean, Commissioner Fernandez and I were out there and you were as well on, was it Madeira 16?

Mr. Duyos: Right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And the frustrations of trying to deal with the County and get this traffic calming put in for both sides of the street is difficult, very, very difficult. And that's why we have pockets where the traffic calming wasn't done yet because you always have to work with the County and get approval on both sides for the traffic calming. So, I have no further questions for you.

Police Chief Hudak: I'll be right over here.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You can, you can. And correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe this Little Gables area, based upon both my husband's recollection as well as mine, and we've been married 37 years, it's been over 40 years that they've been seeking annexation and it's never come to a vote yet.

Mr. Duyos: It has not.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It has not.

Mr. Duyos: It's never gone all the way through the County process where it gets to a referendum of the residents of the area.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right. So, I think it's high time that the -- they get to go to the ballot box and express their wishes. So, go ahead.

Commissioner Fernandez: Had a couple of questions about your presentation. If you could put up the slide on the new personnel the City would be hiring.

Mr. Duyos: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright. So, we're talking about 27 and a half to 29 and a half positions because there's a part-time position in there. So, that number is factored into these annual operating costs for Little Gables, correct?

Mr. Duyos: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Are we using --? In the cost for new equipment, are we using our current -- and I guess this is a question for our Finance Director really. Are we using our matrices or is this full cost going into the numbers that we're seeing here today?

Finance Director Gomez: Good morning. Diana Gomez, Finance Director. So, full cost of what we know today based on the estimates that we have today and then there is an escalation factor that we do put into normal for the out years.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, so new police equipment, fire equipment, garbage pickup is all into these numbers.

Finance Director Gomez: So, it was based on the fiscal '23 budgeted numbers. So, it was not updated for fiscal '24 numbers because of the timing of when the original spreadsheet was done, but it is based on the information we have on fiscal '23.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. Regarding -- I guess go to the slide on the annual costs. Okay, so like Commissioner Menendez was saying, we're seeing the price goes up year after year and I know you did say it is a conservative number using a 4 percent increase, but we have heard here and the property appraiser has said at times that we may not get to a 4 percent next year. So, realistically, these numbers could be not conservative, but really more loose on what we're going to be looking at.

Mr. Duyos: Yeah, Commissioner, there was a study done by an independent real estate appraiser for the City that looked at all these properties, looked at the historical sales, looked at the tax roll and his opinion was that 4 percent was a realistic number going forward.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: Which, Commissioners, is what we normally use. However, this is not Coral Gables right now. As I mentioned, the median price is 513. The average price in Little

Gables is 287. So, we're using the Coral Gables number, not really a number that includes any revitalization of the area.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. So, we're using a Coral Gables number in these numbers?

City Manager Iglesias: It's 4 percent increase.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, the 4 percent increase, but we're not using -- we're using it based on Little Gables property valuation, correct?

Commissioner Castro: Correct.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay, alright, just wanted to make sure.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, that is correct.

Mayor Lago: And you're being extra conservative.

Finance Director Gomez: So, we only have the information that we have, so we're using the taxable values of Little Gables that were provided by the property appraiser for fiscal '23. We did not upgrade them to fiscal '24 numbers. And we used the millage rate that would be the City of Coral Gables millage rate against those taxable values to come up with that number, and each year we're increasing the property tax number by 4 percent. Other revenues are not being increased by 4 percent. They're being increased by what we would normally increase those type of revenues in our normal budgeting process. So, it's not all revenues are being increased by 40 -- 4 percent. It's just the property tax number is being increased by 4 percent. The other revenues -- going off the top of my head, CST maybe we're only increasing it by 1.2 per -- 1.5 percent, something like that, but it's just based on the trends of how we budget for revenues and then the rest of the City budget.

Commissioner Fernandez: Now, following up on Commissioner Castro's point, sidewalks, new sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, tree canopy, lighting in the streets, this is not factored into these numbers either, correct?

Mr. Duyos: It is, Commissioner. We met with the Public Works Director and all the divisions under Public Works and there are numbers, expenses associated with routine expenditures that would go as if it were part of the City, so sidewalk repairs, lighting, those kinds of...

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, but...

Mr. Duyos: Expenses are in these numbers.

Commissioner Fernandez: But for example, we have that in our current budget, but we're about \$6 million off on fixing the sidewalks we currently have in the City of Coral Gables. If we're

taking on a new area that has additional sidewalk repairs, that's going to add to basically the projects we're going to have to start funding as a City.

Mr. Duyos: Right, these expenditures that are in here for repairs, like sidewalks and lighting and such, were based on feedback provided from Public Works as to what the cost for that area would be.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. I saw that you put lighting in there was contingent on FPL. How does that work? On the slide where you have the graph -- I think it's the next slide over.

City Manager Iglesias: We -- Commissioner, we're no longer putting our own lighting. We're using a new tariff from FP&L that is very effective and it provides the maintenance and the repair by FP&L. So, if we do get a hurricane, we're not in the pole business at that time.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay.

Mayor Lago: So, if you go -- if you want to see an example that it's already been installed and it's actually beautiful, you go on Campo Sano and San Amaro and it was just done probably about a month ago, all the new light poles in that area.

City Manager Iglesias: And all our -- we also did Cocoplum.

Mayor Lago: Yep.

City Manager Iglesias: So, we have a number -- so, I think it's -- I think it gets it out of the pole business which really is not -- is not something that we do, and it provides for maintenance, repair, and so forth by FP&L.

Commissioner Fernandez: But I don't think it -- I guess that's a separate conversation. I did see one that was put up by the country club and the pole is a lot taller than the poles that were there before. It's a different color and it's literally inside the tree. I guess that's a conversation we can have, but I think we need to find a way for FPL to work closer with the type of lighting system that we currently have in the City because you're going to have these poles that you have the nice gray pole and then you have a tall black pole that's about eight or nine feet taller.

City Manager Iglesias: We are working with them on that tariff and what is available. But if we have a major hurricane and we have to replace a thousand poles, that would be a major problem for the City, a major expense, and that's what we're trying to avoid that kind of liability for our residents.

Commissioner Fernandez: Understood. Long term -- and I don't know -- the Public Works Director is here. What are we looking at as far as cost for sidewalks that need to be -- new sidewalks that need to be placed in the area, our tree canopy that's nonexistent in many of those

blocks? Basically, following up on Commissioner Castro's question, to bring it to what the nearby Coral Gables neighborhoods are.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, when we did the assessments on this area, we actually took a look at what was existing there, and we looked at the level of service that we have for the entire City, and we applied -- we assumed we were going to provide them exactly the same level of service that the rest of the City is going to have. You know, eventually, capital projects are a different story, right? Those are things that could be decided to be done at some point or another. But when it comes to sidewalk repairs, sidewalk maintenance, electricity, we looked at the number of lights in the neighborhood, which we're going to be taking over. Well, we're going to be paying the bill to FPL, not necessarily taking them over. And you know, we assumed that it was exactly the same level of service we do the rest of the City, and that's how we came up with those numbers.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right. But new capital projects are not factored into these numbers? Other than fixing the park?

Public Works Director Diaz: Landscaping -- there's some landscaping. We assumed that there was going to be some tree planting that was necessary, so that's built into that as well. And there were some assumptions about pavement, new pavement, alleys, and traffic calming. So, all that was actually built into the estimate. If there's an additional desire to do something beyond that, then that's a whole separate conversation, but we looked -- all that is built into that. And it's actually -- you know, I think there's a document in the -- there's a sheet that includes all that. We're making some assumptions about traffic calming, alley, paving, so we built all that into those estimates.

City Manager Iglesias: We also looked, Commissioner, at San Jacinto Park, which is 40,000 square feet, and we thought that could be a major benefit to all the South Gables area, which is -- it's about four times the size of the park that's on Alhambra. It's 40,000 square feet. And so it's -- if we were to buy that, it would be millions of dollars.

Public Works Director Diaz: And in fact, we actually -- we even included estimates for the street markers to be done in front of the first year. We'll actually put on the street markers and then we make some assumptions as to the price of maintenance moving forward the year after that. So, all that is built into that estimate.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. This money would come, I'm guessing, from our capital improvement funds, I guess, moving forward because we do not have any other...?

Finance Director Gomez: Right, so depending on the timing -- so it would be part -- let's just say it's going to -- we're going to take it over and during a new fiscal year, we will have gone through the budgeting process and we would have allocated the amount of money that we needed for those areas. Yes, I guess you can say that, at the end of the day, what would not have been used might have gone to capital, but that's not necessarily saying that we're going to take it away from capital.

We're going to budget for the needs of the City with the available funds and then -- and it'll be part of the budget.

City Manager Iglesias: Also, at that time, Commissioner, the -- Little Gables will be paying Coral Gables taxes.

Finance Director Gomez: Right, so for that year that we get it in...

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct.

Finance Director Gomez: We would -- we would know that we would be getting the revenues associated with it, so then it would be just the incremental increase in that year one for the most part, that startup cost, that we would have to find funding within the budget as we're going through the budget process.

Commissioner Fernandez: I think the largest issue that we have here is one that we have had many conversations about over the last few months on our City side is septic to sewer conversion. We're talking about \$15.3 million dollars for septic to sewer in Snapper Creek for 150 homes. Here we're talking about how many homes?

Mr. Duyos: There's 632 single-family residences.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, and there's a lot more snaking of piping in order to convert this area. So, this is a cost that we would be bringing on to the City, which would be pretty astronomical. We're probably talking, what would you estimate ballpark, septic to sewer for this specific area?

Public Works Director Diaz: It's really hard to tell. Every neighborhood is different. Like, for example, doing a septic to sewer conversion on King's Bay is a lot cheaper than doing it at Snapper Creek because of the densities and the topography, right? There are actually some houses in Little Gables that are -- not too many -- but there's a handful of them that are actually already connected to City sewer because they're abutting the City sewer on the side. They actually pay -- since they're outside of the City, they pay a 25 percent markup on that. So -- but it's just a handful of them. I will say that it's certainly a lot less than what Snapper Creek would cost, but I couldn't really tell you. You know, it depends on where the closest pump station is with the County, what's the -- how easy can it get connected to a system, how many of the houses that remain can just have a -- because the ones on the boundary, some of them, it's as simple as connecting a lateral, for example. So, it's very hard to come up with a number.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, I think that's a very difficult thing to say because, to look at -- because if we do Coral Gables -- if we do that and we're doing Coral Gables, it's probably \$250 million to \$300 million to do this city. So, I think at that time, we're going to need probably federal funding in Dade County to do a major sewer issue. We're working with other cities in our

perimeter, and there's so much work that has to be done. So, I do think that if we are going septic to sewer, I think we are going to need some major funding. And at that time, I think that's going to be -- that really probably is going to be handled separately.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

Commissioner Fernandez: I agree, and I think that's something you and I spoke about, and like I told you, I think what we'll end up doing if we annex this area is we're taking a problem away from the County because they won't have to deal with septic to sewer conversion in this area, and we're assuming the full cost of this project. I understand we're going to have to seek federal funding for a citywide septic to sewer conversion, but now we're adding to that cost. We're not saying, okay, this is what we're going to need for the City. Now we're adding an extra area that we're going to have to be focused on. I think realistically...

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Commissioner...

Commissioner Fernandez: The conversation should be had with the County, as South Miami has had, where the process should be the County should pay for septic to sewer conversion or at least give the funding to the City to take care of septic to sewer conversion before annexation of Little Gables.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Commissioner, since I've been working on septic to sewer for much longer than you were even working on Gables Insider, I'm going to give you a -- and I know you were at the Snapper Creek presentation, but the portion I think that you've missed is there are special assessments that are paid by the residents, every resident, whether you're in Hialeah, City of Miami, et cetera. It's not that we're not going to go out for grants, et cetera, but you pay for the pipe going in the ground and you pay for the connection to the house. Now, you've seen that there's been some efforts, some things that I've brought forward to try to alleviate some of the costs through grant programs for residents that are funded by the state or funded by the federal government and that we've made, you know, a grant request for Snapper Creek and we plan to do a grant request for every single section of our city. It's not an overall tax burden for people that already are connected. You know, my house is already connected, but the homeowner that was there, you know, 40, 50 years ago, paid for that pipe to go in the ground, paid for the connection to go to their house. I remember when I was a toddler, my father digging the hole in the trench to connect our home in Hialeah when it was there. And it is a burden on the house, but it's also a benefit for the house. So, the homeowners themselves each -- on each basin -- because the City is going to be divided up in basins -- will have a special assessment for doing that connection. The purpose of the grant program is to help those folks out that are having difficulty paying. You know, and we'll have a discussion at a future point as we flesh it out with our Finance Division as to what that criteria should be. Is it supposed to be, you know, the median income, a certain amount? Do we include health-related issues, which, you know, is the number one cause of bankruptcy and -- for many folks. Income is not the only factor that you have to take into account, but it would be incorrect to say that we, the rest of the Coral Gables, is going to shoulder the cost

of septic to sewer conversion in the Little Gables if it's annexed. It's the residents themselves in each street, in each home, that shoulder the cost of it. But they also shoulder the benefit from it. It increases home values. It increases the area of buildable space. Maybe they can put a pool in if they want to or add an extra bedroom, put a driveway where they couldn't put it before. There's all these benefits to doing a septic to sewer conversion that inures to the homeowner themselves. So, there's choices. Maybe they want to plant a tree there. You know, there's lots of different options. That's way down the road because this is a fairly high elevation in our City. So, the areas that are going to be prioritized are going to be along the waterway and areas that are impacting water quality for our city and the bay first. And then we'll get to the higher elevation areas.

Commissioner Fernandez: And I think I would add to your point, we're -- you're saying it's not going to be something that Coral Gables residents are going to pay for. I disagree, because if we do get a grant at the present moment, that's going to go entirely to those most needed within the City of Coral Gables. We're talking about an area with the average property value is almost half the average property value of the City of Coral Gables. A majority of those funds are probably going to go to this area just because of the financial standing. This isn't Snapper Creek where people can -- many people can say, okay, you know what, this is something I really want to take care of and I have the money to do it. These are hardworking people who many of them have even said they can't afford Coral Gables taxes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, let's take this one thing at a time. We'll do a separate Sunshine meeting to talk about the grant program. You're making a lot of assumptions. The grant has to be requested to be spent within a year, okay? We're not even making the grant request yet for the Snapper Creek area for the one or two homeowners there that need the assistance because it has to be spent within a year for their individual hookups. Let's do a separate meeting on that because I've spent a lot of time on this. There's an over 1,000-page document that you need to be looking through. Tallahassee had a grant program. Let's not remake the wheel. The wheel has already been made. I'm just trying to fine-tune it so it's not a first-come, first-served basis, so it's more directed at the people that need the money the most, a section, a basin of our city at a time. Okay, and Little Gables will have to be added at a point in time when they can be added to the master plan, you know, to see...

Commissioner Fernandez: If we're talking about taking this area in, it's something that we as a Commission who are entrusted with the finances of the City really need to look into as well because it is going to be...

Vice Mayor Anderson: So...

Commissioner Fernandez: An expense to the City of Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, you're assuming that if we annex Little Gables that the rest of the taxpayers in the City of Coral Gables are going to pay for their undergrounding of their sewer? Is that what's...

Commissioner Fernandez: Based on the numbers...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Your assumption?

Commissioner Fernandez: Based on the numbers -- based on the numbers that I've seen here today, we're going to be paying for a lot of things for Little Gables in perpetuity. Just because of the...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Commissioner Fernandez: Of property values based on the numbers that were shown...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, so...

Commissioner Fernandez: By staff today.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, that's not sewer that we're talking about.

Commissioner Fernandez: We're adding sewer to those numbers.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, you're not.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes, we are.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You don't under -- you don't understand it, clearly.

Commissioner Fernandez: Clearly.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You clearly don't understand.

Commissioner Fernandez: I will never question your intelligence. Please don't question mine. Back to my question.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, just if I may, just let me step in here one second, okay. So, I think that we're here to discuss something that we're going back and forth in regards to septic to sewer. I've been working on this with the Vice Mayor and Commissioner Menendez and dealing with Tallahassee on a litany of different issues. Whether the City of Coral Gables annexes Little Gables or not, eventually all of Miami-Dade County has to go -- move in the direction of transitioning from septic to sewer. It's going to have to happen one way or another. I mean, am I wrong, Mr. Manager?

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: It's the same thing that happened in the Keys. We're talking about a serious hazard to our drinking water, to the bay. And as the Vice Chair of the Watershed Board for Miami-Dade County representing our city, it's a pleasure for me to serve on that board. You're seeing the degradation of our waters here in South Florida across the board. And I'm not a scientist. I build for a living. There's a lot smarter people in regards to water quality than myself who are sitting on that board. And they point at obviously septic to sewer as one of the many reasons along with water runoff from the streets, agricultural, a litany of different things, a lot of different things that are affecting our bay. But this is something that has to happen. Just like you've seen when there's been a transition, I don't have the numbers, I didn't know we were going to be talking about septic to sewer today, I would have brought them. When you look at the numbers from when the Keys transitioned from septic to sewer, there has been a significant increase in water quality. So, one way or another, this area called Little Gables is not going to be salvaged from having moved -- to transition to septic tanks -- from septic tanks to sewer, excuse me. It's going to happen, whether it happens in 5 or 10 or 15 years, it's going to have to happen. And again, I mean, I don't know if you want to provide a little bit of information, if you have any idea or any -- what you're seeing out there in the state of Florida in regards to septic to sewer. My biggest reasoning for supporting this is very simple. I trust the Chief. I trust the police. And when I've had multiple conversations sitting down with the Chief and we talked about public safety, we talked about traffic calming, we talked about -- I think the number is over 700,000 cars that are driving through the city every single day. We need to make sure that there is -- we elevate the quality of life of the neighboring community around Little Gables. We slow down traffic. I wrote legislation that requires in the neighborhoods that the traffic be 25 miles an hour. We continue to move in that direction. We add traffic calming. What is --? Who is this for?

Commissioner Castro: For you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Alright, we're going to have to take that in a minute. We may have to take a break. So, my point is that addressing issues of LAPRs, LPR cameras, addressing issues of closing off 8th Street, there are benefits and the number one benefit and the number one job of everybody sitting up here is public safety. So, while cost is an issue -- and I am the biggest advocate for ensuring our financial viability, triple-triple bond rating, ensuring that we don't touch our reserves, that we continue to overfund our pensions so we pay down our pension, as we've done over the last 10 years. I'm a huge advocate of that. But to me, there's nothing more important than public safety and ensuring that all our residents can enjoy having the best police department and expanding our borders to where they should be, which is finishing off that border on 8th Street, which pays a significant role. So, I understand what you're concerned about in regards to the finances, but like Jorge said, Mr. Duyos said, who is a resident, and our staff said before our Finance Director, we're very conservative on the numbers. They're very conservative, as we always are as a city, to ensure that we're on solid footing. We don't want to make an assumption and then turn back and say, hey, you know, we're upside down. But we know that this is going to be a process and it's an investment in the future of the city. Every good investment does not bear fruit in the first year or two or three or four. It takes five, six, seven, ten years to get things done

the right way. And this is an investment worth making based on the simple fact of public safety. If I may, if I may, we have a F-11, and I just want to ask the Commission to support me in just one second. There's a speaker who has to leave one second. If I can just -- just -- if I can just take one minute so that we don't miss out on F-11, which I think it's important to have that speaker come. It shouldn't take more than five minutes if the Commission is willing...

Commissioner Fernandez: I was not done asking questions.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You can resume.

Commissioner Fernandez: We always push things back until whenever we're done with everything else.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Commissioner Fernandez: We're having an important discussion.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The day that you have a speaker that has to leave at a time certain...

Mayor Lago: Which is a common courtesy.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Please keep in mind this is normally done in courts when you have a witness that has to fly out of town. He has to leave by 11:30. I'm going to have him speak and we can resume right where you left off.

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright, go ahead.

[Later...]

Mayor Lago: Now, we'll move back to our agenda item, which is H-1.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you for accommodating.

Mayor Lago: Sir?

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright.

Mayor Lago: So, I think that you had some other comments that you wanted to make. Go ahead.

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright. I guess -- I'm just trying to -- there are a lot of concerns regarding the finances, I think. There's a lot of question marks regarding the finances. During my campaign to be a Commissioner and Commissioner Castro and my first town hall, which is our first act as members of the Commission, I promised residents of Coral Gables that they would have

a say in this matter. And what I would like to see is for Coral Gables residents to vote first on whether they want to proceed with annexation. During the campaign, I can tell you there are a lot of people who have a lot of concerns regarding the annexation process. And the one request that everybody made was Little Gables residents should have an opportunity to vote, but so should we. And as I discussed with staff, the consensus in the room was this should be a process that should be held first prior to moving the application process along. So, those are my thoughts. I open it up for any thoughts the Commission has on that.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah, I couldn't be more on board. I think he just said what I was trying to say prior in a better sentence structure, I would say. I have a question. From the 632 homes, how many of those homes are homesteaded?

Mr. Duyos: I believe it's about 60 percent.

Commissioner Castro: 60 percent, okay, that's something we -- that's an important question so that we can establish the percentage, as Commissioner Fernandez was saying, the 4 percent, right? Another one, what is the crime rate in Little Gables? Because we keep on talking about safety.

Mr. Duyos: This is from the County's police department. Last year, they had 1,134 calls for service and of those 136 were emergencies and 998 were non-emergencies for the total of 1,134, and they are -- that area is served by the Doral police station, which is the same building as the police headquarters on Northwest 25th Street and 92nd Avenue.

Commissioner Castro: Another concern that I have is the unequal service distribution. Little Gables will require more attention and resources than the other parts of Coral Gables, and I think that would be more of a concern. That's why let the people vote, let them decide, is kind of important. As far as historical properties, is there anything there? Any gems?

Mr. Duyos: Not that I know of.

Commissioner Castro: Besides the park, anything that -- a selling point that from a Coral Gables resident that I would say, yes, I would love for them to be part of us?

Mr. Duyos: Well, I mean...

Commissioner Castro: The park?

Mr. Duyos: You have San Jacinto Park, you have the, you know, the homes if you drive around, you know, you could picture them being part of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Castro: Is there anything as far as like historic preservation or...?

Mr. Duyos: I'm not sure if there are any historic properties there. That would have to go through the City's, you know, historic preservation assessment and process.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. Thank you.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a quick follow-up question. There was a discussion or mentioned that like, I guess, a grace period for the trailer park. Does the City talk about a grace period for property owners in terms of their building, their home, maybe not meeting code? Has there --? Have we talked about that? Because, well, let me see...

City Manager Iglesias: The Zoning Code, yes, yes, Commissioner. If there's a life safety issue in the building code, that's different. That has to be addressed anywhere in the County.

Commissioner Menendez: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: But from a zoning code perspective, yes, there would be time to -- we would look at that, and for instance, if you had a chain link fence, you would -- that would still be allowed. But if you have to replace it 20 years later, then that might be a different issue. We have to look at zoning issues versus building code issues.

Commissioner Menendez: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: Building code issues are life safety issues, and those have to be addressed.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah. So, with regards to non-life safety, perhaps violations that, in terms of matching what we do, we're not going to go in there -- we wouldn't go in there and just...

City Manager Iglesias: As long as it was approved by the County.

Commissioner Menendez: By the County, okay. My only other question is to ask, I guess, the City Attorney, if we wanted to gauge -- because I have received calls and emails and you name it from residents of Coral Gables, just, you know, I guess, wanting to know where they stand as residents on this issue. What are their --? What options are out there to sort of get an understanding of what Coral Gables residents, how they position themselves? I mean, Little Gables has gone through every step, followed the process that the County, I guess, lays -- has laid out. But what options are there for Coral Gables residents?

City Attorney Suárez: So, the next step to proceed with an application for annexation would require that we have a public hearing. And I'll wait for the sirens. So, per the County Code, we're required to have a public hearing for the Commission to approve the filing of the application. So, obviously, that would be a hearing here at the Commission. Notice is mailed to the property owners and -- in Little Gables as well as 600 feet beyond of the annexed area. So, they -- all those residents would receive mailed notice, as well as anyone else who just, you know, becomes aware

of the meeting and the hearing can come and speak at Commission whenever -- if the Commission so -- you know, wants that hearing to occur and if and when that does occur. In addition, there are multiple opportunities before the County for public hearing and for residents or anyone interested to make their comments. Commissioner Fernandez mentioned, you know, putting it to the voters of Coral Gables. You could, if the Commission so desires, put out a ballot question to the residents. Obviously, that takes more time and there's an expense associated with that. If that were to occur -- if that were the will of the Commission, that should occur prior to the annexation application being filed simply because, you know, if the Commission's going to decide not to do it, then why proceed if we're going to decide not to do it, in other words.

Commissioner Menendez: Besides, I guess, a referendum vote, didn't we send stuff directly to property owners, yes, no, you know, like if you don't turn it in.

Commissioner Castro: In Coral Gables or...?

Commissioner Menendez: No, we did that in Little Gables and we did that in High Pines/Ponce Davis.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: We sent petitions pursuant to the County Code, yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Right.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Naomi Levi-Garcia, Assistant City Attorney.

Commissioner Menendez: But I'm saying, is that something we could do with Coral Gables residents? Instead of -- I mean, I'm just looking at what are the options.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: I mean, I think you have a fair amount of flexibility as to the options. So, you're asking whether we can send petitions to registered voters in Little Gables or to all households in Little Gables?

Commissioner Menendez: No, the focus is Coral Gables.

City Attorney Suárez: Coral Gables.

Commissioner Fernandez: Coral Gables.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: I'm sorry, in Coral Gables, right. So, you'd have to identify who you'd want to mail those petitions to, and then I guess it would be kind of like a survey, like are you in favor of annexation or not?

City Attorney Suárez: Yeah.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Yeah, I think we could do something like that. We'd have to -- there would be a cost associated with it. You'd have to target who would be the recipient, whether it would be registered voters or all households, or you know, is there a specific segment of the population you're looking to get feedback from?

City Manager Iglesias: The only issue with that is if we'd want to have some type of control -- and we already looked at this -- then there would be the Freedom of Information Act that everything that is provided to us would be available to the public, so if we want to have...

City Attorney Suárez: But it -- Mr. Manager, in this case, I think -- I think what the Commissioner's suggesting is like a -- like a paper survey, or like an actual paper document. And it would just be like, I guess, one question arguably or...

City Manager Iglesias: But then we would have no control over who sends it. So, if we -- one person could send a hundred. So, if we do want to have some control, then we go back to the issue that all that information is going to be public, has to be publicly available.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Public record. It would be subject to...

City Manager Iglesias: It would be public record.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Public record like anything else.

Commissioner Menendez: But what we did with Little Gables and Ponce-Davis/High Pines...

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Subject to public record, but it's -- so with that mailing, it went to registered voters, so they had to provide a signature. So, that's a verification process. The signature is associated with their voter registration number, and that's how you can perform some kind of validation to make sure the petition that you're receiving is linked to a specific person that's actually registered to vote in the area.

City Manager Iglesias: And that's a petition process, a specific petition process.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: That's a petition -- correct.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah, no, like I said...

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: So, you can do a referendum with a non-binding question. You could do a survey. You could mail petitions. I think there are different ways to try to ascertain feedback from Coral Gables residents. None of them are necessarily like scientifically sound, per se, like you're really just kind of putting out a question and trying to get feedback.

City Manager Iglesias: We already looked at this for this and the problem is because of the -- because of the public record, then if you don't -- if you don't ask any information, then you could receive 100 from one person, right? So, in order to really quantify it, then there's that public record requirement. And so we felt that we could really not provide something that was accurate because we either make it accurate and put a public record or you have the chance of petitions coming from -- multiple petitions coming from the same source.

Commissioner Menendez: I mean, if they -- if a resident sends us an email, that's a public record automatically so...

Unidentified Speaker: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Whatever they say to us in an email, it's open to the public. I just -- you know, I think that we're missing...

Mayor Lago: But if I may add something to that, Commissioner. You know, the issue is that sending an email is voluntary. It's voluntary. I think that when you have somebody who may want to engage in a vote similar to the discussion that we had about moving the elections to November, if you -- if someone wants to make a decision to vote yea or nay in regards to annexation, but they realize it's a public record, they may not want to engage in the process. So, it's -- I understand an email is a public record, it's perfectly fine, but that person is willfully engaging in the process of reaching out to a member of the City staff or a Commissioner or the Mayor or the Vice Mayor so...

Commissioner Castro: But it's the same thing we just did with Little Gables. Did we put a little disclosure saying it's a public record?

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: No.

Commissioner Castro: Okay, so what's the difference? If we do it here then we do it there.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: I mean, it's obviously the will of the Commission, you know.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, let me ask you...

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: We'll try to figure out a way to proceed based on your direction.

Commissioner Fernandez: I mean...

Commissioner Menendez: I just think the missing piece to the puzzle is, you know, based on what I -- the feedback I've been getting is we've asked everybody, but we haven't asked the residents at least the opportunity to express themselves. I think everybody wants to feel that they're part of

the process. And I know we have the town hall meetings, but they're really focused on those particular areas. I think at least if we show the courtesy of allowing, you know, the Coral Gables residents to express themselves through a -- you know, through that scenario, I think we check off all the boxes, and at the end of the day, make a decision based on what we think is right.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: I think something else to keep in mind is just when you're posing the question and you get the results, right, you're taking a general temperature of the residents, but like you may get 100 people in favor and 105 people against, and then you'll be presented with that information and you'll have to make a call, right? Like it may not be...

Commissioner Menendez: Well, as long...

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: An overwhelming response in one direction or another.

Mayor Lago: I just think that, again, it's the will of the Commission, we move forward. We had a plan moving forward and now there's a change. When you're elected, you're put in this position to represent the residents. You have full faith and confidence in regards to your ability to make a decision. So, I don't -- you know, we've already voted on this multiple times. I think moving forward, this is a pretty simple scenario. The benefits -- and we have some concerns, but I think moving forward, there's still a very long process. There's still a very long process that has to come before. I don't see the issue of why not allowing the process to move forward, allowing for a vote. You know, you've seen that there is support in Little Gables. We've met the threshold as required by the County. We keep following the process and we move forward. You know, I've -- just like you can say that you've spoken to residents, I've received one individual told me that they're not in favor of this from the City. I received, to be respectful and honest to the people who are here, a handful of people who are not in favor of annexation who live in the area, and I've also received 30 emails in favor of annexation from people who are here. So, I think that, you know, you -- if you're going to put this out to the residents, I think it's a mistake because the level of information -- you have to build a website, you should put everything out there, the finances, the benefits of the public safety, traffic, all these kind of things. I think that we should trust in ourselves as elected officials to move the process forward and make the right decision. We can't vote on everything based on referendum. That's not why we're here. We're here to make decisions and move this forward or vote against it if that's the case.

Commissioner Fernandez: And I agree with you, but this was something that residents of Coral Gables asked over the last year that they be part of the process. And that's the reason that I'm bringing up an opportunity for the residents we represent to take a vote on this issue and give their opinion on what they want happening. This is going to cost the residents of Coral Gables. At the end of the day, it doesn't matter how conservative our numbers are, Coral Gables taxpayer dollars from current residents are not going to go to fix their sidewalks, fix their potholes, replace the tree canopy in their streets, tackle historic preservation. They're going to go now towards making up the difference of Little Gables because we can't tax Little Gables differently than Coral Gables until they break even. They're going to have the same taxpayer -- millage rate as the rest of the

city. So, I believe, and I will make a motion to direct staff to formulate a plan to bring up to us in the December meeting on how to get -- gauge the input of Coral Gables residents, whether it be by a formal ballot referendum or a -- an informal survey, but so the Coral Gables residents can voice their opinion in a form that can be tracked by sending it to the tax -- to the voters, registered voters, which are the ones that we know and can be signed and bring it back to us at the December meeting for a decision.

Commissioner Castro: I'll second that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I have a few questions, you know, because some statements were made here that that process can -- has to happen before the Little Gables votes. And I mean, we're -- we're talking about putting additional steps in before we even know whether or not these people even want to join us. So, it would be my preference, let's take the -- let the voters in Little Gables vote. And then, you know, if it passes that Rubicon that they want to join us, then we go through the additional expense and time and effort that it would take to ascertain the viewpoint of the residents. Because otherwise, we're just spending money on something that's not going to happen.

Commissioner Castro: I don't...

Commissioner Fernandez: We are spending money.

Commissioner Castro: I wouldn't want to move forward -- I wouldn't want to move forward and waste...

Vice Mayor Anderson: I couldn't hear you because you...

Commissioner Castro: Me?

Vice Mayor Anderson: Talked on top.

Commissioner Castro: Me?

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, you talked on top.

Commissioner Fernandez: No, I said we are spending money. He's not free.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, I know, but you're not talking about spending additional money that may be for naught if the folks in the Little Gables don't vote in favor for this. So, now we're wasting money. Okay, this process started before you were elected. I've heard from one person as a Coral Gables resident that, you know, has expressed that desire to vote. I am in favor of hearing from Coral Gables residents, but I think it's a waste of time and a waste of money if we do it before these folks in the Little Gables have an opportunity to even cast a ballot.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Vice Mayor, I'd have to look into that. I would have some concern about having an extra step after the referendum process in Little Gables because I believe, according to the County Code, that is the final step and that's like the operative point at which the annexation becomes effective. So, you go through the exercise of passing all the necessary resolutions, passing the ordinances, they're contingent on the outcome of the referendum, the interlocal is agreed to contingent on the outcome of the referendum. So, the referendum of Little Gables becomes that last step that either, you know, effectuates the annexation or not. So, I don't know that we could have another step after that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, you could research this and bring it back to us in December?

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: And by the way...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Is that...

Commissioner Menendez: I'm sorry.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The purpose of the motion, to research it and bring it back to us in December with options?

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, to bring us options in our December meeting, and we can make a decision there.

Commissioner Menendez: And I'm open to, let's say, the other option other than referendum, what we did with Little Gables and High Pines/Ponce-Davis, even if it's non-binding results. I'm okay if it's non-binding. Maybe down the road we come up with a set -- new rules with annexation going forward, but I'm okay with non-binding, but I think the community just wants to have a voice. So, if we can do something so that we gauge the interest of the community without making it binding, I'm okay with that as long as we consider that.

City Attorney Suárez: So, I think, Commissioner, you need like a -- instead of an actual ballot question, perhaps like some kind of survey, something...

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

City Attorney Suárez: Or something in between.

Commissioner Menendez: I'm open to that.

City Attorney Suárez: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: I think it's fair.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Lowest cost denominator here.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah. I mean, at the end of the day, whittle it down until you find something that everybody can agree to.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Yeah, we can work with the Clerk's Office to research different options and what the cost associated would be and what the timing would have to be and bring that back to you.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yeah.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: And Naomi, I think we have -- all of us have some marching orders. Do you need anything else from the Commission or direction?

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: No, we have the direction.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: So, we will not be preparing any public hearing for next meeting, and we'll just kind of bring back that information and get further guidance.

City Attorney Suárez: We did have a motion and a second, but I guess we have consensus.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, we have consensus. Mr. Clerk, we have a public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: We're moving in a different direction, so one second. What is -- how many individuals do we have for public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Five.

Mayor Lago: Five, okay, please.

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker is Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I hate to say this, but in all the years that I've been involved in Coral Gables, it has never failed. If we pay the study, he who pays the study gets the result he wants. Normally, traffic, whatever it is, the result of every study that I've seen shows what the person that paid the study wanted it. So, this business of, you know, the study this, the study that, doesn't wash, number one. Number two, words have meaning. The consultant, who I respect, he seems to be a professional consultant who is getting paid to get this done, said something that really made me cringe. Because you know what? He could not say the right word. He said, High Pines does not move forward. No, no, the attempt to annex High Pines failed. That's the word, that's the right term. Does not move forward doesn't show. If we ever want to do High Pines again, we have to start from scratch again. The word is failed, okay? And I want you to know that High Pines is organizing a -- an independence from Coral Gables Day, okay? That's how seriously they've taken it. That's the second comment. The third comment, we've spent all -- we have spent money on consultants, mailings, printing, our own staff. That's a lot of money that we've already spent. And now we're worried about spending pennies to let the residents opine. If we were to go with this, the taxpayers of Coral Gables in the five years, and this is very hard to believe, will be paying only \$4,364,000, only, from our pockets, from a city that claims that we're in financial -- you know, we have to cut money from your park. We have to -- there are things that the residents want that we cannot do this year because we have problems with finances, but yet we have money for this. No, no, no, no. The residents, the taxpayers have made it very clear. We want a say in the process. And I think you all, the residents, the taxpayers, the right to tell you what they want. Then you vote. Because you know what? If you don't vote the way they want, guess what? Elections have consequences, and we will boot everybody who voted the wrong way out. That's a definite thing. Enough is enough. This is not an ego trip. If they -- if we, the residents, the taxpayers, are going to have to invest money, we need to be heard. And that's the bottom line. And that's what they've been saying. And I thank you all for saying it. And please don't talk to me about money because we have a lot of things in this agenda that cost money, and we're not worried about that.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Doug Mayer.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir.

Doug Mayer: My name's Doug Mayer. My wife and I live at 1101 Cortez Street in Little Gables. We're proud to live in Little Gables. Today I'm here speaking as a member of Neighbors for the Preservation of Little Gables. So, our organization is interested in remaining independent from the City. The first question I think you should ask yourself is, you've just conducted a petition drive, and you got 21 percent of the vote. You're all politicians. None of you would be sitting here if you're -- if you got 21 percent of the votes for an election. And the City mailed that out twice, not once, twice, and they just barely got 20 percent. I can tell you, I know the people in my neighborhood. We do not want this. There are a few that do, but I think the majority of the people in Little Gables, they live there because they didn't want to be in Coral Gables, they didn't want

the additional tax base that they -- taxes that they'd have to pay. A lot of them don't like all the rules and regulations that the City imposes. You know, the -- when you look at the higher taxes, that's part of it, but it's not the whole thing. A lot of people just don't like all of the additional rules and regulations. One of the concerns that we have is regarding the trailer park and what's going to happen to those people. I do affordable housing, and I've been doing it for 30 years. And when I walked through that neighborhood, it hurts me to see people living like that. And what our proposal is, is to have the County -- because the County has the resources -- you know, either work with the owner, buy the land, put out an RFP, get developers who do affordable housing. And if you do it in the right way, you can rebuild that community, make it a decent place to live, keep it low rise, you know, one-, two-story buildings, and people can come back and live there paying about the same amount that they're paying now. I'm a numbers guy. Your own consultant just told you that your costs are going to go up year after year. I saw the five-year projection. It's \$4.6 million for five years but run it out for 20 years. You know, yeah, maybe you're going to get a little more income at some point, but maybe you're not. So, you know, it's just a situation where we feel the imposition of the City on what we're -- our lives, and we just want to be left alone. We just don't want to be part of Coral Gables. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Lynne Blustein.

Mayor Lago: Good morning -- well, good afternoon.

Commissioner Castro: Hi, Lynne.

Commissioner Menendez: Welcome back.

Lynne Blustein: Good morning, Lynne Blustein, 4330 Southwest 15th Street. I've been imagining the future of Little Gables and my own personal future of this area several years into the future. I hear promises being declared of grandfathering in not only the Little Gables trailer park, but all the many visual differences of the homes in Little Gables and Coral Gables, including roofs, fences, boats, RVs, and architectural styles. I would be willing to wager that not only will the trailer park be gone and its hundreds of low-income residents forced to immediately seek affordable homes made homeless, but also the fate of the many fixed income residents who will suffer at the hands of this likely unkeepable promise. I'll put it to you this way instead. Would any of you be willing to wager your future reputation and legacy by promoting these promises? I believe these promises of the grandfather clause will not and cannot be guaranteed by either this Commission or any future Coral Gables Commission. Commissioners and Mayors come and go. Things change. Will you be willing to draft an ordinance today to secure the future of keeping the trailer park? Perhaps that's what will be necessary to ensure the future of the park and its residents. And by the way, after speaking to many of my little Gables neighbors, I've heard the same

sentiment about such promises of guarantees being unenforceable in the future. And one more thing, for now. What is the reason you don't want to allow the residents of Coral Gables to have their say and vote on whether or not they want Little Gables to be annexed into their city? This is the real heart of the matter. I love my neighborhood, but simply put, Little Gables should never be forced into being a part of something that many people cannot afford. It's just wrong. Coral Gables prides itself as having lush green treescapes, winding boulevards, and uniform architecture, which Little Gables does not have. You can say it or think it, but the truth is that Little Gables does not look like Coral Gables. It was never meant to look like Coral Gables. It is not Coral Gables. Your city is spending lots and lots of money, including legal fees, to push this ill-begotten, decades-old imposition on residents who purchased their homes in unincorporated Dade County and never wanted to live in Coral Gables. The changes in zoning, building permits, fees, and higher taxes, which are inevitable, are not economically feasible for Little Gables residents who could not and still cannot afford to live in Coral Gables. Let there be an election and let the people of Coral Gables decide. That's the only fair solution for an issue that has been vexing us for far too long. Several years from now, I can see myself and many of my neighbors having to uproot ourselves from homes we have loved and tended for over 30 years because we can't afford Coral Gables taxes, fees, and to deal with Coral Gables regulations. We love our homes and we love our neighbors. Let us live in Little Gables in peace. Thank you.

Commissioner Castro: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: Kayla Riera Gomez.

Mayor Lago: Good morning -- good afternoon.

Kayla Riera Gomez: Good morning -- or good afternoon now. My name is Kayla Riera Gomez. I live at 4321 Southwest 16th Street. I've been here before. As you're well aware, we very much want to be part of Coral Gables. I bought in Little Gables at a time when we were told that there was an annexation process coming. We've been waiting for that. What I don't understand and is very frustrating as I sit here today -- because I've been to many of these meetings -- is the residents were told, if there's an interest, you do the petition. We met the number. And all we're looking for at this point is to have an opportunity to vote. If Ms. Blustein is correct and it is not the will of Little Gables to be part of Coral Gables, let's see that at an election. And at that point I think everyone can move forward. You know, there were a couple things that were addressed today. Chief Hudak's no longer here, but I know it -- some of you addressed the speeding issue. I live on 16th Street, which is also Mendoza, it's the dividing line. There were some traffic calming devices that were put in at Hernando and that has been phenomenal, absolutely phenomenal. We used to have accidents there very regularly. That has stopped. The table that was put between Hernando and Segovia, as well as the one between Le Jeune and Hernando, have been amazing in terms of slowing people down. But if you go west on 16th Street to Cortez, you will see your own residents who have put out little orange men with flags trying to get people to slow down because

there's not one there. There's an issue. I totally appreciate the fact that because Mendoza/16th Street is shared between the County and the City, it makes it challenging. You know, this would resolve that issue. There is lots of speeding that happens. When you're coming from -- on Venetia, crossing all the way through to Le Jeune, if you're coming from Red Road, that's a big cut-through street. People use it all the time. They're nice and slow in the Gables, and then they speed through. So, we would very much like the support that would be provided by the police department in helping keep our neighborhood safe on a traffic calming -- from a traffic calming perspective as well as a general public safety. Many of us who are in favor of joining Coral Gables understand that as soon as we become Coral Gables, our property values increase. We're very excited about that. If it means I pay a little bit more in taxes, I'm okay with that. That's my choice. That's my view of it. I understand that's not everyone's, which is why we need a vote. We need to see where people are. But, for example, when my house gets reappraised, when, you know, my husband and I were going to do some construction, the house across the street is not my comp because it's not Coral Gables. As Commissioner Castro, you're well aware of how that is. It's not fair. One last item, the sewer. There is a sewer line on 16th Street. The only reason we have not connected to it is I don't know how long I'm going to have a 25 percent surcharge. If you want to do a surcharge for a small period of time and then it disappears, that would make sense. But there are many of us on 16th Street who want to pay to connect to the sewer line that is County owned but administered by the City, but we're not ready to commit to the next 40, 50 years' worth of a 25 percent surcharge. So, those things I think should be taken into consideration. We want to be part of Coral Gables. Our homes do look very much like Coral Gables. We have on our own adopted the aesthetic that's there and we just want the opportunity for this to come to a vote so we can once and for all understand the will of the neighborhood. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Christina Villamil.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

Christina Villamil: Hi, good afternoon, Commissioners. My name is Christina Villamil. I live in Little Gables. We've lived there for the past seven years. We've been following this process since we've moved in. We also bought under the presumption that annexation was imminent, which is why we bought. We've bought our second home there because we were able to buy a larger lot than what was available for sale in Coral Gables. We built our house to Coral Gables specifications. I have the approved exterior colors, tiles, all of that. Many neighbors in our area are redoing their homes, they're building brand-new homes. It is the Coral Gables aesthetic. I've spoken with our County Commissioner Cabrera, who very much understands that our pocket has been neglected for political reasons. No one wants to redo our streets because they say, well, annexation's imminent, why is the County going to pay for it when Coral Gables is going to pick up the tab. And so, I had a great fruitful conversation that I think you all should have simultaneously with these conversations in that the County can pay for these road improvements, they can pay for tree canopies, they can pay to improve San Jacinto Park, which I believe there

was an appropriations for already there. So, these are less charges that you guys need to absorb as a city, which I agree with. Why should you inherit a problem of our neighborhood that was brought on by previous administrations? But one thing that is incredibly frustrating is the changing of goalposts. We keep being told that you need to follow the process. We came as the Little Gables Neighborhood Association. We followed all the steps. We hit the 20 percent mark, which many of you understand how important and significant it was to hit a 20 percent voter turnout in a non-election year. This wasn't go to a polling place. This was you had to submit your ballot for this issue. You had to be moved enough to want to have your voice represented. And we had that time and time again. Many of you were elected with under 20 percent of Coral Gables residents' turnout. It's not a bad thing. It's just reality. So, we hit that step. Then we're told, okay, we're going to hear this at the City Commission Hall and it's then going to be put as a formal application. Now, we're saying, no, no, no, we're going to wait two more months. We're going to create a whole new petition process that's never been done before. And big questions like, who are you going to survey or poll? Is this now residents of Gables Estates? Does South Coral Gables now have a say on this neighborhood that they have no idea about, that they have no -- they don't pass by there every day, they're not neighbors with us, they don't see the areas day in, day out. Are you going to restrict it to just that 600 feet like it is in the current process? You're supposed to have public hearings, now we're going to delay that, we're going to keep delay, delay, delay. We're going to wait for more elections. We're going to allow the Firefighters Union to come in with more funding. It's just becoming messier and it is really dividing both Coral Gables and Little Gables on such a trivial issue. We are sensible neighbors. We want to be part of your neighborhood as well. We enjoy what you guys have been doing to the area, and we are only going to add to that. And I think you guys need to have the financial conversations with the County, and that can all be worked out now, because it's still going to be a process to get to the vote. And let the residents finally vote. We've been told for over 20 years now you can vote. And it keeps being ripped away from us, from special interest groups like the Firefighters Union. And I know it's going to happen this next time. You guys are going to get the results. The neighbors of Little -- of Coral Gables -- of North Coral Gables are going to say we want this to proceed. And then we're going to say, oh, well, let's talk now about septic to sewer because now we're getting residents who are disgruntled with that process. Now, we're going to create a separate petition for that before we proceed with annexation. We keep just adding more to it. When we've laid out the process, you guys have laid out the process, you've spelled it out, you've voted on it numerous times, you've had numerous County Co -- or City Commission meetings, and not one resident of that area has come in that neighborhood and said we're anti you spending that money. And I think that's telling. And so I just please ask you, please, please follow the democratic process. People are watching this. They see it. They're talking about it in all the group chats and news sites as you see. And people don't like their democratic process being ripped away from them. And that's what we're doing by changing the goalposts here today. I thank you for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Jessica Keller.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

City Clerk Urquia: Give me one second, Mr. Mayor.

Jessica Keller: Good afternoon. My name is Jessica Keller. I'm a resident of the City of Coral Gables. I reviewed the PowerPoint presentation in advance of the presentation, and I heard the presenter note that \$5.2 million would be needed for, I think, Public Works initiatives. I think that's what it was for, and I just wanted to make sure that all of these items were included. I heard that resurfacing was included, sidewalks was included, drainage was included, lighting, traffic calming. I didn't hear swale maintenance. I know swale maintenance is given as a one-time courtesy throughout the city. Dog waste stations, trash pit cameras that we've talked about in the past. I was wondering if those things were included. That's the first question. The second question is, will these items be implemented ahead of those people who are currently waiting for these items in their own neighborhoods, traffic calming being a primary example. I know that there is a five-year wait list for traffic calming for existing City residents.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Duyos, would you like to come up, please? The first question.

Mr. Duyos: Yeah, to the first question, the \$5.2 million that she's referring to was the year one total estimated expense. That's not Public Works. It's all inclusive of all expenses.

Mayor Lago: And Mr. Manager, if you may, as per Ms. Villamil's comments about there being some potential monies available for the County, will you, between this meeting and the next meeting when we are supposed to be -- inquire with the County Commissioner in regards to that funding?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, we will.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Do you want to address the second question from Ms. Keller? Which was whether, you know, the individuals in Little Gables would have to wait behind the current traffic calming schedule that we have, or how would that be addressed?

City Manager Iglesias: We would have to work that in.

Mayor Lago: I'm using traffic calming as an example.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, we have a five-year plan.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: We would have to work that into that five-year plan. And so, depending on the budgets and what we can physically do, right now it's been a problem just building it, as

you know, just getting materials. So, we would work that into that five-year plan, but we do have a current five-year plan.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, that's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: That's it? Okay. So, what is the will of the Commission? Commissioner Menendez.

City Clerk Urquia: Oh, I'm sorry.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Keller was not done.

Mayor Lago: She has an additional question?

Ms. Keller: Hi, yes. I don't think that it was -- the question was thoroughly answered. So, I think what I heard was that Little Gables would be incorporated into the existing plan, they would not go to the end. So, they would displace people that are currently in the queue.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: We have a five -- we have a current five-year plan, and we -- I'm sure after that we'll have additional areas that will be included after and our current plan stays.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Ms. Keller: Okay, so my one last point is that if residents are displaced waiting for traffic calming, for example, across the entire city, the whole city should have a say when it comes to allocating resources citywide and should weigh in on annexation of Little Gables. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Keller, if I -- I don't want to speak for the Manager, but I don't think that's exactly what he said. But we have an existing five-year plan that we're going to finish off, and we're going to add new scope as we've been moving forward, and this would be added to that, correct?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, that is correct, Mayor. We would look at those areas that are the most critical and then work beyond that based on the areas that are in most need as we've done so far.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

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

Mayor Lago: Alright, so Commissioner Menendez, what is your will?

City Attorney Suárez: So, Mayor, I think that you already gave direction to staff, so there's no...

Mayor Lago: I just want to make sure that we...

City Attorney Suárez: Sure.

Mayor Lago: Again, I think that there was some...

Commissioner Menendez: No, I think...

Mayor Lago: Comment from the residents. You never know if there's a change of heart...

City Attorney Suárez: Of course.

Mayor Lago: Moving forward.

City Attorney Suárez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Well, there is a change of heart, for example, a change of heart today from the past, so I just want to get the final point. If there's nothing else to discuss, we move forward. What is the will? Is the will of the Commission the same?

Commissioner Menendez: Just, yeah. I think Naomi and her team has instructions. And you know, it's interesting that doing some research in Little -- about Little Gables and Coral Gables, in the 1920s, George Merrick tried to buy the Little Gables area from John Stadler -- probably Stadler Realty -- and because of personal ax to grind, they didn't sell to him. They had a prearranged agreement to sell, and when it was time, they refused. If he would have purchased it back then, we wouldn't be here today having this conversation. So, let's just, you know, move forward as we discussed in December and go from there. And I just want, you know, the folks that spoke earlier, we're not here to undo anything that the residents of Little Gables have done. We're not here to undo the rules and procedures that you all have followed that are dictated by the County. So, we're not here to undo any of that. At this point, we just want to have the Coral Gables residents, current residents, the opportunity to share their thoughts or position on this. That's all we're doing right now. We're not derailing this in terms of procedures.

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright, procedural question for the City Attorney. Do we need to withdraw the motion that's -- or do we need to take a vote on it?

City Attorney Suárez: I think if you all are just discussing, you can discuss. If there's going to be a change in the direction or the action, then we can evaluate but...

Commissioner Fernandez: What I'm saying, we don't need to have -- we don't need to take a vote, is what I'm asking you.

City Attorney Suárez: No.

Commissioner Fernandez: Staff has direction.

Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

City Attorney Suárez: We all had -- we had consensus.

Commissioner Fernandez: Thank you.

City Attorney Suárez: I'd say, you know, unanimous.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, then I'll withdraw my motion.

Mayor Lago: So, perfect. So, moving on, there's pretty much nothing else to discuss.

Commissioner Fernandez: There was a motion for a vote, so I can't -- there's no vote.

City Attorney Suárez: But it was like a...

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll withdraw the motion so I can move it.

City Attorney Suárez: It was -- by unanimous consent, it was approved.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay, alright.