

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-3
August 26, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-3 [Start: 6:29:40 p.m.]

Discussion regarding additional Commission Aide.

Commissioner Frank Quesada

Commissioner Quesada: I have one more item I want to discuss. I just have one item.

Mayor Cason: Alright.

Commissioner Quesada: And that is the other item I have on the agenda in relation to another Commission Aide. When I deal with our Aide, with Danette, I feel like she is being pulled in a thousand different directions. I ask her to be at a lot of meetings, I give her a lot of different work, a lot of different things to work on, and sometimes she tells me she is either doing something for another Commissioner or she is too busy to attend to whatever needs I have at that time. I think we are – I know Commissioner Lago uses her and Commissioner Keon, I hear that she works for the Vice Mayor as well. So are you guys having the same experience that she is being pulled in different directions? Do we need additional help?

Commissioner Lago: I'll tell you from my experience. Just this Saturday and Sunday she was – we were e-mailing back and forth with a constituent. The work that I give her in reference to constituent services, policymaking, is significant enough just for her to work for me fulltime. So I don't understand to this moment how she is capable to work for four individuals who are here mostly every day, when they are not here they are contacting her so that they can deal with City matters. So I think it's a matter of time that we bring forth another Commission Aide, along with the support of my colleagues, because I myself am in dire need of it, and if I'm going to do my best work to represent the residents of this community who elected me, I think we need to bring somebody in who can service them.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you a question.

Commissioner Lago: Yes sir.

Mayor Cason: Is your concept with this extra person to assign that person to two specific Commissioners so that they know who they work for and therefore....it seems to make more sense.

Commissioner Quesada: Seems to make more sense and back-up to each other.

Mayor Cason: And back up. Seems to make more sense because also in terms of inadvertent Sunshine issues to the extent that you have a person working for two, you know who to call and then that way you can differentiate in terms of your evaluations of two different individuals.

Commissioner Lago: One hundred percent.

Mayor Cason: I support that.

Commissioner Lago: I spoke to the Interim City Manager in regards to this issue and again, I won't speak for her, but she made it clear that the funds are available from my understanding and I told her that this is something that I need done not in 2015, I need to provide some relief for Danette as soon as possible. So I know that you are bringing up this item, but I kind of feel that I'm also attached to this item.

Mayor Cason: I don't have a problem.

Commissioner Keon: Where does she sit or he sit? Where does this individual sit?

Commissioner Lago: In the closet (laughter). We'll figure that out. Let's get the aide and then we'll figure it out.

Mayor Cason: One of the things we've been discussing or I've been discussing with the City Manager past and present is something that's very needed and that's to find an office for every Commissioner and I think to the extent we can find that and I think there are some solutions in the works they'll be space I think.

Commissioner Lago: Right now you have Danette, the Vice Mayor and Commissioner Quesada sitting in an office, an office that's the size of a closet. It doesn't make any sense.

Mayor Cason: Is this by consensus?

City Attorney Leen: Yes. You can approve it by consensus, its unanimous consent.

Commissioner Quesada: Did you have an issue with it Vice Mayor?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: No, I don't have an issue whatsoever. I was just trying to find out a couple of things. One is, who is that person going to serve?- who is going to interview this person?- who is – where is this person going to sit?- how is this whole process going on. Fundamentally, I don't have an issue with it whatsoever.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Who does it report to?- which I am assuming is the Clerk's office, just to clarify?

Commissioner Quesada: I think it is the cleanest way, is keeping it the way we have it now through the Clerk's office. They do the interview process, if we want to be involved maybe they have two or three finalists they want to meet with us with. I think between the four of us we'd have to decide who stays with Danette, who goes with the new person.

Commissioner Keon: We already bought her flowers.

(Laughter)

Commissioner Lago: Its already been decided, you weren't notified? (Laughter)

Commissioner Quesada: As far as the location....

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: We'll figure it out.

Mayor Cason: We'll find a space – work it out.

Commissioner Quesada: We can figure out, but I think the directive should be to the City Manager and the City Clerk to move forward and finding someone and thinking about the space options and what we can do. If need be and I'm just going to throw this on the Vice Mayor, I can share a desk with the Vice Mayor and she can take my current desk, so she can sit next to Danette so that they are – because they might need to communicate.

Mayor Cason: I think there are some possibilities of a discrete office for each person that's being worked on.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mayor Cason:...In conjunction with the City Attorney and Public Works.

Commissioner Quesada: Well if anything comes up, just let us know.

Commissioner Lago: And if I could just add one last thing to Commissioner Quesada's statement. I want to expedite this process, since we have consensus amongst the Commission, I want to make sure that we expedite this as soon as possible, at least for Danette's sanity, because I know how much stuff I'm asking her to do.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Just one more question for clarification. So this means we were at 800 employee count, are we given the authorization to increase the head count to 801?

Mayor Cason: Or you can find somebody within that's an unfilled position....

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Because we need approval for that, so do we need a motion to increase the number?- apparently we need a motion to increase the number of employees.

Mayor Cason: Can you find anybody within the vacancies that could fill it?

Commissioner Quesada: I'll make a motion to either fill a vacancy that's out there for this position or if not, if there is no vacancy to fill the position to add an additional employee.

City Attorney Leen: So you are going to make so you are basically then going to be adding a Commission Aide, it's under the Clerk's office and the Clerk and the Manager are directed to act in an expedited fashion.

Mayor Cason: Yes. That's correct.

Commissioner Quesada: Correct.

Mayor Cason: Do we have a second?

Commissioner Lago: I'll second the motion.

Mayor Cason: City Clerk

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 6:36:00 p.m.]