

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-2
February 23, 2010
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Donald D. Slesnick, II (Absent)
Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.
Commissioner Maria Anderson
Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.
Commissioner Wayne “Chip” Withers

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno
City Attorney, Elizabeth Hernandez
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant City Manager, Maria Menendez

Public Speaker(s)

E – 2 [Start: 9:53:12 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables amending the Lease Agreement between Coral Grand, LLC and the City of Coral Gables, Florida.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: E-2 – Ms. City Attorney.

City Attorney Hernandez: This is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables amending the lease agreement between Coral Grand, LLC and the City of Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Mr. City Manager.

City Manager Salerno: Thank you Mayor. This is the first reading of an ordinance amending the lease, and Maria is just going to give you a brief overview of the agenda item, I think, addresses the matter in more particular.

Assistant City Manager Menendez: Thank you Mr. Manager, good morning. As you may recall, this item before you today stems from a discussion during the October 13, 2009, City Commission meeting regarding extending lease obligations related to the opening of the facility, and deferring final discussion on outdoor dining to allow for neighborhood meeting, and further deliberation on the same subject matter. The proposed amendments to the lease agreement primarily provides an extension of time from the original dates for the opening of the restaurant and banquet facilities in order to complete the build-out of the work required under the lease, and

facilitate the opening of the premises to the public. The operator, however, is working toward and anticipates opening the restaurant this fall, and the banquet facility in the spring. The lease amendment also provides for modification and clarification to the related provisions. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Commissioner Cabrera.

Commissioner Cabrera: Well, you know, I think we are all going to approve this, this morning. My only issue, and I don't know how the rest of you all feel, and that's why I'm discussing it now is, I would feel more comfortable with some definitive timeframes for the opening. I realize that there had been some delays caused by the City, some delays caused by some processes that we went through, but I would just have a greater sense of comfort if we could define or set a deadline for opening, and I understand that's difficult to do given the fact that these delays have already been caused, but I see no reason why a schedule can't be met. I just happen to believe that when you set a timeline you create a sense of urgency, and you create an ability to measure a benchmark or a timeframe, and so that would be my only concern with these changes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Mr. City Manager your thoughts?

City Manager Salerno: The only thing I could add to that, and certainly Commissioner, we appreciate and value those comments. I know the operator is very interested in opening the facility as quickly as possible, the quicker he can open the facility the quicker he can start receiving revenue from the operations. This amendment mimics the original agreement that was approved by the Commission in that it had a no later than basically, provision. So this does not change the concept in the original agreement which had a definitive date, this has a definitive date, but it also – which is an ending date. He must open by that date and provides for his ability to open it sooner and it's in his interest to do so. This is a significant renovation project, and as we all know renovation projects of facilities sometimes encounter unforeseen conditions, and in this particular case, a historic structure the likelihood of them running into unforeseen conditions is perhaps greater. So again, there was – this amendment was really mimicking the same concept that was in the original agreement.

Commissioner Cabrera: Mr. Mayor, I am going to pass – I'm not going to move the motion, but I'm going to vote in favor of it, but with tremendous reservations with a lack of definitive timeframes in which to complete these projects, and while I concur with the Manager in terms of the unknowns that come along with renovations, let's all keep in mind that this building was renovated seven years ago; major structural changes occurred seven years ago. So I believe whatever changes will be implemented now, will be more of a facelift than anything else, but nonetheless, I am going to support the item, I just have tremendous reservations with the timeframe.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Thank you very much Commissioner. Just a comment. I had the opportunity to go over there with Maria Jimenez to take a look at what the vendor has already done to the property, and I was quite impressed with the amount of money, and time, and effort that he has already put into the property, and certainly is going to enhance and improve that facility tremendously, and we are very fortunate to have somebody in this economic time that is

going to take this building and transform it, upgrade it, make it a better building for our residents of the City of Coral Gables. Is there any other discussion on that?

Commissioner Withers: No, let's vote.

Commissioner Cabrera: No.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll gladly move it.

Commissioner Withers: Second it.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: There is a motion by Commissioner Anderson and a second by Commissioner Withers. Mr. City Clerk would you please call the roll.

Commissioner Withers: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Cabrera: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

(Vote: 4-0)

(Mayor Slesnick: Absent)

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Is Nick here?

City Manager Salerno: Nick was planning to be here, however, there was a snow storm that came in last night about 6:00 o'clock to Toronto, and he had an 8:00 o'clock flight; his flight was cancelled about 9:30. He wished to express his wishes to be here to say hello, but he is going to be back in town working sometime next week he said.

Commissioner Withers: I'm sorry Maria.

Commissioner Anderson: No, it's OK. Make sure he gets a copy of this and I want to thank him for his professionalism and for his attention to detail. I know we are going to have a fine facility, he's got a great reputation and I look forward to when it opens and we can all go dine.

Commissioner Withers: Yes, I wanted to echo Commissioner Anderson's remarks. As we know this thing was kind of on a shaky track not too long ago, and Mr. City Manager, I want to compliment you and your staff for keeping one of our potential joint-venture partners satisfied and pulling this out of the fire, because at some point in time I thought this was going to go south on us. Thank you Nick, I hope you get to sunny South Florida soon and thank you Mr. City Manager.

City Manager Salerno: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I think I should also echo those sentiments, because I was one of the ones that made it on shaky grounds here. I am very pleased that Nick is going to proceed forward; he has my wholehearted support for moving this building forward. We've had issues with the

Country Club over the past several years, I actually think we have the right person at the right time there, and so Mr. City Manager would you please pass on those sentiments of the Commission.

City Manager Salerno: Be glad to.

Commissioner Withers: And I'm excited about the new nightclub and bowling alley he's putting in (laughter).

Commissioner Anderson: Is that going to include a metal roof or something?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Thank you very much.

[End: 10:01:12 a.m.]