

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-3
September 14, 2021
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

IT Director, Raimundo Rodulfo

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-3 [Start: 2:05 p.m.]

Discussion of feasibility of automated location-based electronic notice of certain matters
(Sponsored by Commissioner Fors)

Mayor Lago: Item G-3 – discussion of feasibility of automated location-based electronic notice of certain matters, Commissioner Fors item.

Commissioner Fors: This is something we discussed dovetails right from what we are discussing right now, just like right now through the City Clerk’s site, you can tool-application, you can select to receive agenda items from specific boards automatically to your e-mail. I approached Raimundo about the possibility of creating a system whereby you can elect to only receive location-based notices of agenda, that is, you enter your e-mail and your address, and you’ll receive copies of notice regardless of the board, if an agenda item pertains to a parcel or issue near your home within X amount of feet or whatever. And there are different ways to approach it. He is trying, I believe,

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three to four different approaches. He is probably not hasn't fully explored all of them yet, but I think maybe he could come up here today and explain to you the fourth approach he is taking.

IT Director Rodulfo: The best solution is the one that I discussed with the City Clerk, and he is using the current system that already allows for registration, its already managing the boards and committees' agendas, and it will allow the liaisons on the boards, City Clerk correct me if I don't explain this correctly, to send notifications automatically to the citizens that are registered. Now that's not location aware, so we have reached out to the company to see if they can add that location component. That would be the most integrated and organic way to approach it.

City Clerk Urquia: So, Commissioner, we already have over a thousand subscribers to the City Commission agendas, so whenever the agenda gets published, sent out a thousand e-mails letting them know that a city agenda has been published. Now we can select that for the different city boards, any boards that we select. In order to make it location specific, we would have to create different sets, for example, different areas within the city and then people would register for that area. The only problem with that is what happens if the area, for example is LeJeune and Biltmore Way, and you're just right across the street. So, we would have to allow you to register for multiple areas and then for you to get notified for all those four areas when that happens. The way it is now, you get notified when that agenda gets published, its on you to read it, and okay, there's an item there that pertains to me, otherwise I just go on my way.

Commissioner Fors: Yes. Yes. And I don't see a problem for somebody signing up for more than one area.

Vice Mayor Mena: How do we do the actual notices, like we do within 1,000 feet, right?

Commissioner Fors: I think it's a third-party contractor that does it based on the Property Appraiser.

IT Director Rodulfo: In this case we use our GIS system, which is capable of getting mailing labels, additional mailing labels in the radius or any public.

Vice Mayor Mena: To his point, if somebody registers their e-mail address and it's connected to that address, that physical home address, because the goal here, the ideal would be if when those notices go out for any project, right, 1,000 feet, or whatever, that people will get them electronically as well, right.

Commissioner Fors: I want it to be elective, I don't want it to become any part of the formal notice requirement. So yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: If they sign up with their e-mail.

Commissioner Fors: They sign up for it, then you get it. And the way somebody described it, I can't remember who it was, if it was Raimundo or the Assistant City Manager is, the mechanism

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is there, but they are kind of on two or three islands and the question is just bridging the islands. The two things I want to emphasize is, (a) big goal of mine is to do this for free, not to have to pay anybody to do it for us, if we can connect those islands whatever is existing; (b) to have it be largely automated. I don't want somebody sitting at a desk, because in this day and age there is no justification for it, there maybe one or two steps that have to be taken, populate an e-mail list, but I don't want to be manually inputting, looking through the people who have signed up for location services.

City Clerk Urquia: In a perfect case scenario, you would have someone type the address and then you would do 1,000-foot radius and then the system will give you all the e-mails that have been registered. The problem is that the GIS software doesn't talk to whatever registration we are going to start putting out there to capture those e-mail addresses. If we can find a way to merge the two when people would register and they would put their e-mail address and the address and afterwards when you go to the GIS software, you say 1,000-foot radius from this address, give me all the e-mail addresses that have been registered, automatically send the agenda there.

City Manager Iglesias: And that would be for noticing but not formal noticing.

Commissioner Fors: Not formal notice, right, the elective location-based notice. And if we do get to the point where we are forced to write our own script or our own mini program, perhaps it was mentioned that we could actually sell it to other cities, have a form of revenue maybe for the City Clerk.

Commissioner Anderson: After you copyright it. It would be helpful too for certain boards, people get a little more interested in, like parking issues, transportation issues, if its going to be near their area. It would be great if it could just capture the areas that are going to be affected by that discussion that week.

City Clerk Urquia: So, Commissioner, all quasi-judicial boards the citizens can subscribe to receive the agendas, we will be adding the Parking Advisory Board at the request of Commissioner Fors, but like I said, its citywide, it hasn't been specific to a specific location.

Commissioner Anderson: What about Transportation Advisory Board, can you do that as well?

Commissioner Fors: What was I going to say? Oh, I remember now. You sign up for those boards and the problem is that we want people to find out about these things; you sign up for those board, you receive every single agenda, you are going to stop reading all of them. It gives people the option of getting a location-based, so when they get an agenda in the mail it's because it's something that's happening in their immediate neighborhood.

Commissioner Anderson: Right.

Commissioner Fors: Which makes the notice even more pinpoint.

IT Director Rodulfo: The GIS application can be developed with those characteristics, and it will have to be merged with InterGov, because InterGov we have the land management on the properties. InterGov, the new land management system, it has the ability to allow citizens to register and provide their e-mail address and provide their address. So that could be also another possibility customizing the functionality in InterGov to also do mailing of the agenda items.

City Manager Iglesias: I believe next year as we go more and more electronic and we get more registrations, then we should be able to tie an address to a website, to an e-mail address to a formal address, so we can do something like that. But right now, we only have an e-mail address, so its hard to tie back to a site. So, it will be a registration process that may happen as we go paperless, as we go electronic plan review, I think its going to get better and better.

Commissioner Fors: But there should be no problem even before that tying the e-mail address to the address, because here people electively go on there, if you want this register your e-mail and your address. But anyway, I know it's a work in progress. I commend Raimundo. I brought him the idea and very shortly after he had four potential plans, including integration with the fourth coming system. So, I'll allow you to continue working on it, just wanted to share with my colleagues.

Mayor Lago: It's awesome.

IT Director Rodulfo: We'll continue looking into all the options. Thank you, Commissioner. And Commissioner, one last idea that I discussed, also is to use the current system that we use to send ENEWS, which is constant contact. We can create four lists, four different zones in the city, so residents can register to receive notifications zone by zone. Now that has the possibility of error, if you live right in the neighborhood between two zones. So those are things to consider too. When we do workarounds like this, you can have situations where a particular resident didn't receive the zone notification that was expected.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Raimundo. I appreciate it.

IT Director Rodulfo: Thank you.