

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-5**  
**April 12, 2022**  
**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**

**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz**

**Landscape Director, Deena Bell-Llewellyn**

**Public Speaker(s)**

---

Agenda Item G-5 [Start: 12:20 p.m.]

Discussion regarding viable swale options.  
(Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: G-5 – Discussion regarding viable swale options. This came to me as a result of what I mentioned before of certain things that we are seeing with our swales, where we are starting to see now rocks being installed, and for areas that have high traffic areas. We know with FedEx, UPS, delivery drivers are doing, they are parking on the swales. We don't allow reflectors; we don't allow bollards of any sort. So, there are certain situations that we need to find a viable option, for example, for the corner of Blue Road and Granada. It's a giant pit in front of this gentleman's house, as a result of the fact that there is no formal right hand turn, so all the cars, instead of waiting in the traffic, they just go on his swale and every three or four months they just take up truck full of P-rock and, maybe he does it himself or somebody else does, but it doesn't look acceptable, literally it looks like an industrial park. I recommend you go and check that house so you can see it and I talked to the ACM. I mentioned to the ACM the other day about this, the fact that that corner of Granada and Blue Road is just unacceptable. It does not look like Coral Gables. I'm ready to pave it; pave it and put a curb, if I have to do it. I would not want to live on that property.

*City Commission Meeting*  
*April 12, 2022*

It's not presentable. So, as you see the proliferation of these little rocks being installed as a trim, as a trim for the corners in the properties, what are we – what is a viable option? – what are we doing or are we just citing people for this?

Landscape Director Bell: Good afternoon, Deena Bell, Assistant Director of Public Works Green Space Management. The swale permit options that we currently have, we allow property owners to submit a Public Works application to put three types of crushed gravel or crushed stone, we call it, to create parking areas in the swale, to plant the swale solid, or to even consider creating a border along the edge of roads with this material where areas where cars or trucks have routed it out. So, all this is available in the current permit process, which is a Public Works permit.

Mayor Lago: I'm very familiar with that, because I wrote that piece of legislation, but right now people are not getting – they feel like they need to install like a 6-inch, 8-inch, 10-inch trim on their swale with crushed stone because they can't maintain the grass with the asphalt as a result of just heavy traffic or the heat from the asphalt. So, you are seeing this proliferation all over town. Give you an example. I'm one of them. I'm currently not in compliance. The options are simple, and I showed a picture the other day of my driveway. On the corner of Rubino and San Amaro heavy, heavy, heavy traffic. What they are doing is, they are just basically dragging the swale all over my driveway, so every day I go out there with a broom, I broom up the driveway. I make sure that it gets cleaned up. I push all the dirt and mud back onto the swale and then I plant a piece of grass every month. I go and I buy a piece of grass and put it there. That gets dragged down the block and now what I just did, I just installed rocks. Yes, I'm breaking the rules. I understand that. We need an answer. I need staff to give me an answer because I don't know what else to do outside of just removing that grass and paving it. I don't want to do that. So, this is an area that I recommend that you can go see it, it's my house, it's an example, and a very high-trafficked area. So, I would like for staff to provide me a little guidance so that when someone wants to install a little trim, you say you can't do more than six inches, you can't do more than eight inches. This is the material that you can install. Not saying to put rock all on the swale, that's not what I'm saying. In areas that are high traffic where vehicles are stepping over it, let's find residents a viable option so that their home ends up as beautiful as possible.

Landscape Director Bell: Absolutely. And we are working with residents on a case-by-case basis to allow these, as long as its aesthetically pleasing and functional. We are already permitting a few of these with meetings with the residents during this permit application.

City Manager Iglesias: I'm not sure if this is going to work at Blue and Granada. The traffic there is so extensive that you may have to look at a different alternative.

Mayor Lago: This is the only option – I've been discussing this for year now. Mr. Clerk on the next agenda, I want viable options provided for Blue and Granada. I want photos the way it currently exists. I want a presentation of what is viable. I want, either we curb the property, so the person can have a semblance of a decent swale. I think they deserve that. I know it's the county, I know you are going to say its county, I know.

Public Works Director Diaz: I was going to ask if you could give us until May.  
*City Commission Meeting*  
*April 12, 2022*

Mayor Lago: I know, but I've been asking for this for years, for years, and no one – I've got to take action here.

Public Works Director Diaz: I believed we reached out to the county, but we need to circle back and see where we are.

Mayor Lago: I understand. Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: As you know Mayor, Blue is a county road.

Mayor Lago: I understand. I know. I know. I see this every day. I drive by it every day. I need to see some action here. If you want, I can get it done myself. I'll go and get my site contract just to go out there and we'll do it. We are paving the job down the street. Mr. Clerk for me, as a courtesy to staff, please I need action. I need to understand if there is going to be a right hand turn there, by the way, I've never met the homeowner, I just see them out there with their hands on their heads sometimes looking at the front yard. I mean, we're talking about an actual ditch where all the asphalt has broken and its just white P-rock, the ditch gets so big they just keep dumping white P-rock, keep dumping white P-rock. Please go to the corner of Granada and Blue Road, you can witness it for yourself, take pictures. I'd like to see pictures at the next Commission meeting. I want action, either we make a right hand turn there, dedicated right hand turn. I know it's going to back up traffic, but the people using that street, some of them live in the city, some don't. We have to learn to co-exist and I'm not going to put somebody's quality of life on the chopping block just to make people who are cutting through out city happy that they don't have to wait in traffic. We all have to wait in traffic. I get frustrated sometimes having to wait in traffic, but you don't see me going off-roading on somebody's front yard just to get from point A to point B. We have to be more respectful, more civil to each other. So, I ask you please in the first week, in the first Commission meeting in May, to make sure that we have a viable answer for this. I'm ready to implement this. Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Deena, you're the best, by the way, I appreciate you.

Landscape Director Bell: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, I'll be talking about later about the downtown replanting. I see we are making efforts. I want a schedule for that, okay, please.

Landscape Director Bell: Okay. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.