

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-5 and E-8 are related
April 14, 2026
Public Safety Building, CMR
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Joe Jimenez

Agenda Item E-5 and E-8 are related [Start: 1:29 p.m.]

E-5: An Ordinance of the City Commission amending Ordinance No. 2022-32, as amended, which approved a Planned Area Development for the property known as “Regency Parc” and legally described as Lots 1-12 and Lots 35-46, including the public alleyway lying in between, Block 10 and Lots 1-4, Block 15, Coral Gables Crafts Section (290, 272, 250, 244 Valencia Avenue, 247, 297 Almeria Avenue, and 2701 Salzedo Street), Coral Gables, Florida, to allow for the issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy prior to completion and conveyance of the public park to the City, subject to the terms and conditions of a performance bond. Lobbyist: Joe Jimenez

E-8: A Resolution of the City Commission amending Resolution No. 2022-170, as amended, which approved a mixed-use site plan for the property known as “Regency Parc” and legally described as Lots 1-12 and Lots 35-46, including the public alleyway lying in between, Block 10 and Lots 1-4, Block 15, Coral Gables Crafts Section (290, 272, 250, 244 Valencia Avenue, 247, 297 Almeria Avenue, and 2701 Salzedo Street), Coral Gables, Florida, to allow for the issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy prior to completion and conveyance of the public park to the City, subject to the terms and conditions of a performance bond. (This Resolution is not for consideration at this

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time and will be included with the above ordinances on Second Reading if approved on First Reading.) Lobbyist: Joe Jimenez

Mayor Lago: Next item here is item E-5, Regency Parc.

City Attorney Suarez: Thank you, Mayor. E-5 is An Ordinance of the City Commission amending Ordinance No. 2022-32, as amended, which approved a Planned Area Development for the property known as “Regency Parc” and legally described as Lots 1-12 and Lots 35-46, including the public alleyway lying in between, Block 10 and Lots 1-4, Block 15, Coral Gables Crafts Section (290, 272, 250, 244 Valencia Avenue, 247, 297 Almeria Avenue, and 2701 Salzedo Street), Coral Gables, Florida, to allow for the issuance of a temporary certificate of occupancy prior to completion and conveyance of the public park to the City, subject to the terms and conditions of a performance bond. E-8 is related, but it's a resolution that will not be voted on today, because it will be considered and voted on if this is approved today on first reading, when the ordinance comes back on second reading. I know the applicant is here, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Sir, good afternoon.

Mr. Joe Jimenez: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: You can present in two minutes.

Mr. Jimenez: Sorry?

Mayor Lago: You think you can present in two minutes.

Mr. Jimenez: I can present much faster than that if there's a motion. Well, first of all, Joe Jimenez, JMZ Group, offices of 2020 Salzedo Street, representing Regency Parc. I know you're all very familiar with this project, and it has been a labor of love for a lot of the people in this room and a lot of the people across the street. One of the requirements for TCO and CO is the construction and deeding of a public park located on the corner of Almeria and Salzedo. The park has been contemplated since the beginning, Mr. Mayor. I know how hard you especially, it was not in our original plan to give that park, and it was asked for. I didn't control that property at the time. It wasn't ours to give away, but it soon became very clear that the Mayor would not allow it any other way, so we did acquire it. And we've planned on building that park this whole time. There have been design issues as we've gone from different philosophies in the city on what would go there, what wouldn't go there, so we finally got around to a design. I think you'll be seeing it today. But we've also used it as a construction parking site, so we put 40, 50, 60 cars on there in the middle of downtown without affecting the neighborhood. And quite frankly, I'm glad we hadn't built it yet, because as we were talking earlier today, it's probably not a good idea to have an active park

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next to an 18-story construction site. So, we've used it as a construction trailer, but we have not built it. The design is up there. We would like your blessing on it, so I can release the architects. This design has comments and approval of, and I'll let the Manager speak for his staff, but this reflects comments that we've received from staff, from Public Works, from Greenspace, from Planning and Zoning, from the Manager, and hopefully it meets your satisfaction. But we're never going to get this done, obviously, before TCO, which we would need in the next probably two weeks. I mean, and county permitting alone for this park, I'm afraid, is probably going to take a few months. So, we would like to amend the authorizing legislation of this to take that requirement away as to TCO and even CO. We have agreed on a price that has been reviewed by the Public Works Department, approved by the Manager. It's \$622,000 to build this park, on top of the \$1.2 million that we paid for it. So, you are getting close to a \$2 million park. There's the sidewalks. There's obviously the landscaping trees remain. Trees will be added. The greenspace. And we would also put the deed in escrow. So, if you have to call the bond, you already have the deed. We do not anticipate that being a problem. We are builders. We want to build this. We just, it's hard to build a park in an 18-story tower at the same time. And like I said before, I'm personally glad to be asking for this because I think it would have been, it would have lessened the park to have the construction. My dad goes to that post office all the time. And as much as my dad loves me and supports me, I think he's still mad at me that we've made it harder to get to the post office. So, we would have made it a little harder to get to this too. But this will be a jewel. And Mr. Mayor, the jewel that I think you wanted for one of the urban parks. It is not an insignificant amount of money. It is, like I said, a \$2 million project at our costs. I can only imagine if you would try to do it with, I know what public procurement requires sometimes. So, I ask for your support on this legislation. I'm here to answer any questions, but it is not for lack of trying. It has been, we have been moving forward all the time, but we have used it as a benefit to the neighborhood by keeping, because I know how much that's a complaint of construction sites. When people park all over the place and they affect the neighborhood and they take parking away from other businesses there, we are jam-packed in that lot, 24-7, you can see it. So, I know it's an ask. I know it's an amendment to what we agreed to do, but it is in good faith. And we will deliver what you fought so hard for. I mean, I know, and I smile about it now, but you fought me tooth and nail on that one. You put it in there as a requirement. I had to do it, so did you. And we do look forward to the complete project being completed soon.

Mayor Lago: So, Joe, first and foremost, thank you for being here and thank you for bringing this in for fruition. You know, it's been a labor of love for the last three years. When I got elected Mayor, we had one park in the downtown, Ponce Circle Park. When you include Ponce Circle Park now with the additional ones, we're going to have six parks in downtown, all negotiated at zero cost with developers. Publix has a 20,000-square-foot park. John Marquez has a 15,000-square-foot park. Jose Boschetti in front of Nordstrom's has like a 6,000 or 7,000-square-foot park. And then we have obviously this site adjacent to your home, Madam Vice Mayor, which is a

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beautiful little site, a little site there with a nice park there. And we're working on two other ones that I'm not going to discuss right now, that are potential 7 and 8 where they are downtown. We talked about this for a long time. For me, this is a legacy item. This is real legislation. This is bringing, this is years of hard work that you see here before you. By the way, Joe, you and I both know and the Manager can attest to it and so can the DCM, that property is no longer \$1.2 million. A corner on Sevilla is more like \$4 million now. Okay. \$3.5 million or so. I'm just telling you, that's a city asset. And now to build it, another \$600,000, \$700,000, which is going to be enjoyed in perpetuity for everybody in this community. After we're all long gone and not serving here on this Commission anymore, this is what truly it takes to effectuate change in our community. To come to work every single day and negotiate and really deliver excellence for the city. So, to me, I want to thank you. You worked your tail off. Armando, Manny, it was a tough negotiation. As the Manager can attest, this was a sticking point in regard to the 17 additional feet on the building. And I think the trade-off was an amazing windfall for the City of Coral Gables. I have a few asks that I want to make sure from staff, not from you. Mr. DCM, I want to make sure that we have decent mature trees, that we have shade trees, that while I respect and I follow the lead by Ms. Bell, I want to make sure that we have oak trees, we have beautiful shade trees that, you know, 15 years from now, they're beautiful in nature and they're welcoming in our downtown, especially as we continue to grow. That's the mark of a world-class city, a town with plazas, a town with open spaces in the middle of your downtown. And that's what we're going to have in the next two years once we're done with these six or seven parks, God willing, along with the Underline, which is being completed, a piece of legislation that I wrote 10 years ago. And now you see it coming to fruition. So, I'd like to make sure there's shade trees, real shade trees. I also want to make sure that sidewalks is part of their contract anyways. The sidewalks are replaced on both sides. You have, especially around the fire hydrant, there's some, they tapped into the fire hydrant. There's been some issues there. They're going to replace it anyways, but I just want to make sure that gets taken care of. And I also want to consider for here, I know we're working on it right now. Here comes Ms. Bell to talk about trees. Is to talk about the issue of, I would like one day to put a work of art, a work of art in this, in this park. I know that the developer is bringing a world-class piece of art that they're putting in front of their building, which is amazing. It's already there. It's encased, it's protected and you'll see it, but I would like in the future to use our Art in Public Places fund to take advantage of this incredible park and put something there. And what I'd like to see there potentially to be considered is a work by Carmen Herrera, a Cuban-American artist who was discovered in New York when she was 90 years old. And she recently passed away. I think it was two years ago at an age of almost 104, 105 years old in New York. So, I would love to see that one day, maybe we get some funds from other projects that we can put it into this park. So, I like the design of the park. I like to see it the greener, the better. I know the less hardscape, the cheaper it will be. I'd like to see some shade trees, and I have no issues with granting the extension because I understand building this park with 300 workers on a job site, the disaster that would have been,

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this is what I do for a living. You need a place to park and I'm okay with that because this is a massive investment that the city is getting in regard to a park, just like the one for Publix, just like the 15,000 square feet on Sevilla, I think in Sevilla, correct? The corner, Sevilla. And also, the one where Jose Bochetti in front of the Nordstrum's. These are massive investments in the future. So, if we have to make some accommodations, as long as we have a bond, we're perfectly fine on the job. I have no issues. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes. Thank you, Mayor. It is a 10,000 square foot park. It was used very effectively for parking vehicles, which is always a problem. And through a construction of this size, the title is an escrow. We have a bonded job, and we have a park which has been reviewed and our Assistant Director of Greenscape, Deena Bell, has done a wonderful job in creating a beautiful park there. So-

Mayor Lago: Get us some shade trees, Deena. Make sure, Ms. Bell, make sure that they're shaded, shaded, because we have some oaks in the back, but I want to make sure we get some oaks on the property. And by the way, I forgot a project, Trammel Crow project, corner lot. That's another park that we negotiated that was deeded to the city. And by the way, just so my colleagues understand, these properties are all deeded to the city. When we started doing this, the Trammel Crow property was not deeded. Now they're all deeded to the city. These are assets that belong to the city, assets that belong to the city. So that's another one that I forgot. So that's the sixth one that we have right now. And we're looking at two other ones.

City Manager Iglesias: So, through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: So, Mayor, because of all these issues, I think we have no problem in having the title in Escrow, a bond for \$622,000 and the TCO and CO extended in providing a TCO as long as, of course, it's in Escrow and we have a bond for the full amount.

City Attorney Suarez: Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Suarez: Just to clarify, with discussions with Mr. Jimenez, it would be a letter of credit in lieu of a performance bond is what we had discussed. And we will work out between now and second reading, Mr. Jimenez and I will work out the mechanics of the timing and when the letter of credit could be called for whatever reason and all that to make sure that the city is protected.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

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Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, can you do me a favor if the Commission will give me this latitude? Will you work with your team, maybe Chelsea at your office and have her be the point person with the county so we can shepherd this through and push this through as quickly as possible and address the issues of getting the approvals through DERM, WASA, because I want to see them get the TCO and I want the project started. I want to deliver. This is the first one. This is the first one of six. No, Trammel Crowe is going to be first. Trammel Crowe will be delivered probably in the next few months, but this could be the second one. I want to see these parks in our downtown come to life.

Commissioner Castro: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah. So, I think this is just very -- we're going to go ahead and have a letter, and we could just wait for CO. We're not going to give you a CO if the park's not done. And if the park's not done, the city would probably do it for \$700,000, which will have the money. So, I'll go ahead and I'll move this item.

City Attorney Suarez: I do want to clarify though, Commissioner, and like I said, we're going to be working on the details of that. But if they are ready for CO, what we've discussed is that they would be able to get the CO because my understanding is that the CO will be months after their TCO is when they'll be ready. So, they would be able to get the CO, but we would be able to if the park is not completed within the timeframe that's agreed upon, which is they've asked for a year and the city would be able to call in the letter of credit and the deed would be released from escrow to the city.

Commissioner Castro: So, at the end of the day, we're going to get a park no matter what. That's why I am in agreeance with this legislation.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: I think it would be easier just to clarify everything. I think we are coming to second reading. I think we've been asked if we can modify it on second reading to bring a letter of credit and the title kept in escrow. The reason we are keeping it in escrow is so that all the permitting can be through the Codina property, through Codina instead of through us. And then at that time, we can issue the CO. As long as the title is in escrow, we have a revocable letter of credit, and we will work all those details out and then bring it back on second reading so that the TCO and CO can be issued based on that.

Mayor Lago: Okay, all right. Madam Vice Mayor.

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Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor, just a couple things. And I appreciate Mr. Codina's working with the community, the number of things that he's done to try to make sure that he didn't impact the area any more than necessary, including not just the parking, but using the cement trucks that made less noise to make sure that the neighborhood was not impacted. I met with some of the condo owners that were nearby and they were very appreciative of that. They're also very appreciative that this is going to be a park with green space no artificial turf. I've asked staff to look at maybe some more flowers in some areas because not everything's going to be able to grow underneath an oak tree and in the shaded areas, but some of those sunny areas, we might be able to showcase some of the flowers that's going to bring in some more nature, some more butterflies, some more birds, and things of that nature. And I appreciated the fact that when I asked you all if you'd have any heartburn making it 75 percent green space, you didn't push back.

Mr. Jimenez: I think it's more. I think it's a little more.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I think it's a little more because that's what this community needed. They were walking across LeJeune, you imagine, to come into the neighborhoods because there's no green in that area at all. So, we've really transformed the community, and I appreciate the efforts that the Codina group has done to make this come to in for a landing for this area. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: So, we have a motion and a second. Commissioner Fernandez seconded.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I think Fernandez seconded and if he didn't, I'll second.

Commissioner Fernandez: No, I had seconded it.

Okay. Do you have any public comment? Anything?

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: All right. Okay.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for your hard work, my friend.

Mr. Jimenez: Thank you very much.

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Mayor Lago: We'll see you in the second round.

Mr. Jimenez: I really do want to call out the Manager, his staff, and the attorney because we've been at this and I really do appreciate the attention that they've given to this matter.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. We're almost there. All right.