

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-2
October 10, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Deputy City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-2 [10:40:40 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida identifying the duties and powers of each member of the City Commission (including the Mayor and Vice Mayor in their roles as Commissioners) and creating Section 2-29 of the Code of the City of Coral Gables entitled “Commissioners; Duties and Powers,” establishing the functions, duties, and responsibilities of the Office of Commissioner; providing for a repealer provision; severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: F-2.

City Attorney Leen: Item F-2 is an Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida identifying the duties and powers of each member of the City Commission (including the Mayor and Vice Mayor in their roles as Commissioners) and creating Section 2-29 of the Code of the City of Coral Gables entitled “Commissioners; Duties and Powers,” establishing the functions,

duties, and responsibilities of the Office of Commissioner; providing for a repealer provision; severability clause, codification and providing for an effective date. This item is sponsored by Commissioner Lago. It's a public hearing item on Second Reading.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

City Attorney Leen: It's a public hearing sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Anybody want to appear?

Commissioner Lago: I just want to bring up one issue that I went over with the Manager and make sure my colleagues are OK with what I expressed to her. There is a process and maybe Miriam could come up and give us a little guidance. There is a process for the approval of the budgetary items. From what we discussed there is going to be \$5,000 budgeted for outreach for each Commissioner here in the City, and the process is going to move as follows. Right now any item that a Commissioner or the Mayor decides they want to spend, they want to allocate funds to be approved by Miriam, correct?

City Attorney Leen: Not approved on its merit, it's approved for ethics and legality.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Right – So, the City Manager had asked that all matters, all expenditures by your office that I look at them to make sure that they are appropriate expenditures, I'm sure they will be, within your official capacity as a Commissioner.

Commissioner Lago: I think that's a great idea and I think that provides us with the necessary guidance and coverage...no question about it. The second step would be moving it to the City Manager and providing them notification. I'm in favor of notifying the City Manager that this expenditure is taking place, but what I'm not in favor of is seeking approval from the City Manager in reference to once we've already had approval from Miriam in reference to ethics. I just want to bring this up. I want to have discussion amongst my colleagues, because again, as the sponsor of this, this is the first time we are going to have a budget, which I think is extremely critical to service the residents that support us and that place us in this public office. Does anybody agree with me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, I agree with you.

Commissioner Lago: OK. So, can we strike that from the ordinance?

City Attorney Leen: It's not in the ordinance.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: It's not in the ordinance.

Commissioner Lago: I'm just saying, I just want to make sure. I stand corrected. Strike that and make that simplify the process as much as possible.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

Commissioner Quesada: So moved.

Commissioner Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the role please?

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Vice Mayor Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, now we go to our most important item the peafowl.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor we do need to go forward with the vote on the actual ordinance now. Was that the vote on the ordinance?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

City Attorney Leen: Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Lago: Including the amendment.

City Attorney Leen: That includes the amendment.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: There is no amendment.

City Attorney Leen: It's not really an amendment...it's a direction.

Commissioner Lago: I want to clarify. It's not philosophical it's the process. Mayor would you like, can we go over one more time exactly the way that I would like it drafted and I want guidance from my colleagues to see if you agree with me.

Commissioner Mena: I think you were clear; my question maybe that wasn't clear is there something in there that says that now or not?

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: All it says is that a budget will be allocated to each Commissioner as decided by the City Manager, that's all it says. This is an internal process that we are establishing.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very good.

Vice Mayor Keon: And, you determine the ethics...

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: That the expenditure is legal and ethical.

Commissioner Lago: And, the next step would be notifying the Manager of the expense.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: So, that the Manager's office can keep track of the amount.

Commissioner Lago: Yes – 100 percent, but it's not an approval, it's not an approval.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Just as clarification. The queue today, the financial queue shows that it's in our office and I think all they are asking for is to remove our office from the queue, so they don't even need to notify us.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: So, Finance is the one...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Yes, Finance is absolutely a part of the queue, Procurement, has to follow procurement procedures, has to confirm with you through ethics, and then it can go right to Finance.

Commissioner Lago: But again, I want to make sure I want to be clear. I want to notify City Manager's office of what we are spending on. It's not an issue of approval, it's an issue of we are notifying.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: And, I think that both Commission Aides can do that in the process. I think it would be helpful to have two different motions, have a motion approving the Second Reading, just for clarity.

Commissioner Lago: So moved.

City Attorney Leen: Yes, do a motion on the ordinance.

Commissioner Quesada: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please?

Vice Mayor Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Lago: Can I make one final comment, if I may, because I know that Commissioner Mena, I want to get this on the record, Commissioner Mena was interested in potentially, and I welcome everyone whoever wants to do it, we can pool money that way we can be a little more efficient and have more of these meetings that we do on a quarterly basis. Maybe we should consider having a Sunshine meeting on a quarterly basis or every six months as a Town Hall meeting that way we are able to spread the money as much as possible and really get that outreach out there and we get a better bang for our buck for the residents.

Commissioner Mena: Yes, it's a great idea.

Commissioner Lago: You OK with that?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can I say something with regard to Town Hall meetings though. When you look at – if part of this is to cover the cost of a Town Hall meeting, is that what your intention is?

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: What would be covered? The staff that comes is not overtime anyway, then you don't start using like the rental of space and that kind of stuff.

Commissioner Lago: No. Let me be clear and I think that you know me very well after four years.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, we know that before people have used private space and not public space, so that's all I just want to talk about.

Commissioner Lago: Let me be clear. This is me, and that goes back to our esteemed Deputy City Attorney.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Does this have anything to do with peafowl?

Commissioner Lago: No.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You are not going to dedicate funds to peafowl.

Commissioner Lago: We are going to give away to people for Thanksgiving....I have no interest; we should have these Town Hall meetings if you want to join, we should have it in a public setting, because it's free. For example, the Senior Center, it was very efficient, very effective, and everybody liked it because parking was an easy opportunity for people to come and join us. What I would use these funds for is just outreach. For example, sometimes I'll send a mail piece telling people, because I want to get as many people to come to the Town Hall meetings. I spend over \$1,500 a year just on constant contact. I know Mike is doing the same thing. For example, I buy probably about \$100 worth of cookies and food, so that people when they come to the Town Hall meeting or the Manager has also helped us out in reference to that. At the end of the day, the whole purpose of it is for us to really do outreach, because I've heard people – I just can't afford to spend \$2,500-\$3,000 every time we send a simple mail piece out to a few thousand people, it get expensive, especially if you do it two or three times a year. It's not about me; we can just call it a Town Hall meeting with your elected officials. The whole purpose is to get people out there and really give us their concerns, so that we can be a better City.

Vice Mayor Keon: Absolutely. I just know that in the past Town Hall meetings and some events were held in public facilities, in private facilities where there should be some sort of payment, if it's for a public purpose, so that's all I'm asking is that...you are looking at a public facility.

City Attorney Leen: That's one reason we'd like you to go through Miriam because, for example, a facility can donate their time to the City, but we would be concerned if it was just two

individual Commissioners, so it's better that the City be involved and that would be Miriam's role.

Commissioner Lago: And, I want to be very clear and just two comments just to put it on the record now. This is not about campaigning, OK, we've been doing this for four years, Town Hall meetings, and we've doing a lot of different things that have been extremely beneficial for outreach. What the Vice Mayor is saying I'm, 150 percent behind, we should not be spending small amount of money that we have here, which is significant money in the sense of that its public funds, we should be using that money for outreach to get people to come in and become part of the process.

City Attorney Leen: One other thing we discussed was the coordination of funds among Commissioners. You would need to do a Sunshine meeting, so just let Miriam know if that's your desire, you can set up a Sunshine meeting with that other Commissioner, 48 hours' notice at least, and then we could have a discussion about them if possible.

Commissioner Lago: I just think it's a lot more efficient process and the residents get more bang for their buck.

[End: 10:49:41 a.m.]