

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items C-1, C-2 and C-4 – Mayor’s Comments
October 22, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena (Attended by phone)

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Items C-1, C-2 and C-4 [9:08:10 a.m.]
Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mayor’s Comments. I think that Curtillet Khatcherian, the owner of a beauty salon on Miracle Mile is not here. I thought she was away on a trip, but this is...our Sister City in Aix-en-Provence, which our Sister City visited our City many times and is encouraging your business want to come to America to be with us.

Resolution designating the City of San Jose, Costa Rica as a “Sister City” of the City of Coral Gables. Is Lourdes Cuzan here, the Chair of the International Affairs Coordinating Council. The City of San Jose, Costa Rica is the capital of Costa Rica and they have interest in establishing bonds, alliance with us, because of our Smart City advancements and also our possibility of tourism, a possibility of doing business with us. Let me talk about our Smart City Program. When I was a Commissioner in the 80’s and then Mayor in the 90’s, we had a very, very passive Sister City Program. We had Cartagena, Columbia; we had...which was on and off; we had Granada, Spain, which was a disaster, a disaster because their leadership kept changing from the socialist to the popular party, United Party. They never new if whether they wanted to establish relations with us. To the point that, this is anecdotal, but when we visited the last time, the Commissioners visited

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last time and they were sitting in the reception area, the police came in and the Mayor was being taken away. It was not very successful. We had Cartagena, we had Antigua, Guatemala, and Quito, it didn't work very well. And now with Mayor Cason that program was reactivated, very much reactivated, and today we have several Sister Cities with a very active program – Santa Tecla in El Salvador, which is a wonderful program. We just established a relationship with San Isidro in Argentina, which is to Buenos Aires what we are to Miami, its right next door. It has a wonderful Smart City technology program and also a lot of programs for kids and youth and whatever. We have Antigua, we have Aix-en-Provence, which we made our Sister City, I was there the last time; Seville, Spain, which is fine to have Seville, Spain as a Sister City and we can learn a lot from them in terms of tourism, in terms of development, etc.; and the last is San Jose, Costa Rica. We are not looking for Sister Cities, because they are there, but we are looking for relationships that will benefit us and us to benefit them. With Santa Tecla in El Salvador we have absolutely no cost to me personally or to the City. Introduced them to a program that transplant livers for kids. It's a Columbia University program which is very active in Venezuela and Guatemala and Dominican Republic, and we have exposed El Salvador to the program and Columbia University to El Salvador and that's going to be a success that's going to save many lives. Those are great programs and I think it behooves us to adopt San Jose, Costa Rica as a Sister City of Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Commissioner Fors: Second.

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

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And I'm going there now that this has been approved, next week to sign the agreement, our City Attorney of course vets these agreements and approves them, always approves them, at no cost to the City, at my cost, and I would like to tell the City Manager to, Mr. Manager can I be accompanied by somebody from Economic Development or PR?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes Mayor, I will discuss it with them.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And we probably have funds for this, although we have to recuperate these funds, and there is a foundation that funds this type of trip.

City Manager Iglesias: I'll discuss it this afternoon with Economic Development and make it happen.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

[End: 9:12:56 a.m.]

[Note for the record: Agenda Item C-4 started at 11:05:24 a.m.]

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Discussion regarding suit challenging SB168 and that's C-4, time certain C-4.

City Attorney Ramos: I'm not sure if Mayor Stoddard is present to speak. You asked me to look at this several months ago, I consulted with our constitutional expert, Abby Corbitt, who is present here, Special Counsel to the City, and we discussed it again after the recent order of the court in that particular case. So, I am happy to answer any questions that you all may have. Also, the Chief is present, he is happy to answer questions as well.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Any questions?

City Attorney Ramos: You know if Mayor Stoddard is coming?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I don't think he is.

Commissioner Mena: I have a question.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

Commissioner Mena: Madam City Attorney and I guess this is also for Chief Hudak. My question is, why isn't this something that if and when our police department receives some sort of directive to do something that's not in line with our protocols that we would deal with then, as opposed to sort of participating in a lawsuit that's already ongoing at this time?

City Attorney Ramos: That's certainly an option, and in fact, what we had discussed with the Chief earlier this year prior to this particular order. We could stay that course Chief.

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Chief Hudak: I agree. We are kind of handling what it is now. From a public safety standpoint, the last thing we want to do is not get a phone call from people that may have fallen into this. If we get an official request from a federal agency, another agency then we respond in a backup facility, but we don't want to ever become an agent for that unless there is given direction and each direction then has to come through my office to get approved. We do not want the blanket of people worrying about calling 911 or reporting a crime because they are worried about their status. That's irrelevant to us as far as that crime is concerned.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you Chief. Mayor Stoddard, I don't think is coming. Put it on the next meeting.

City Attorney Ramos: You want it deferred to the next agenda?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

[End: 11:08 a.m.]

City Attorney Ramos: Mr. Mayor back to Senate Bill 168 really quickly. Just so you know, the deadline is November 26th, so we will have time, if we chose to do the lawsuit at the November meeting, but it will be a bit tight for the...law center to include us, just so that you all know.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK. Thank you.