

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-2
July 9, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

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

Public Speaker(s)

Samuel Joseph
Darrell Payne
Richard Ebsary

Agenda Item G-2 [0:00:00 p.m.]

A discussion regarding how the City can assist with obtaining a proposed plan and estimate from the Miami-Dade School Board for renovations to Coral Gables High School, including remarks from Samuel Joseph, Chair of the City's School and Community Relations Committee.
(Sponsored by Commissioner Fors)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. We have a time certain item, G-2. Commissioner Fors...

Commissioner Fors: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Discussion regarding how the City can assist in obtaining a proposed plan and estimate from Miami-Dade School Board for renovation of Coral Gables High School. This is Commissioner Mena's (sic), G-2.

Commissioner Fors: This is my item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Fors: When I came into office not too long ago, Coral Gables High School was at the forefront of my mind simply because during my campaigning, I was surprised to learn how many residents were concerned about it. I understand that we don't have much jurisdiction with what goes on with Coral Gables High School and the funding, et cetera. I also understand that we recently -- or that Coral Gables High and our residents who care about it recently obtained a big victory in terms of additional funding from the School Board, which everybody is very appreciative of. I also know that many of my colleagues, especially, Commissioner Keon, have been a champion for the school. Because of the fact that I heard about it so much, I wanted to sort of just make sure that we continue the conversation about the high school. For that reason, when I met with Samuel Joseph, the Chair of the City's School and Community Relations Committee, I -- that was one of the topics I wanted to discuss with him as I made my rounds with the various different resident committees. He explained to me that there's various people trying to help out the cause with Coral Gables, both private and within our city government. He had some interesting things to say to me about sort of what his view is and the view of other groups, like the Friends of Coral Gables High School, are in terms of going forward now that we've achieved this initial goal of what we can try to do in the future. As we know, it took a long time to achieve that first vote. We can probably expect obtaining another vote will take an equal amount of time. And for that reason, I think it's important that we start early and never let this conversation die, and really, just keep an open dialogue about the school since it does sit within our city limits. And the fact is that

a lot of residents I learned do believe that we're -- we are, as a city, in charge of Coral Gables High School, even though we're not. But I wanted to give Mr. Joseph just a public forum to sort of share some of the things he shared with me in terms of what he sees going forward in terms of the next step, whenever that may be towards the improvement of Coral Gables High.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Morning.

Samuel Joseph: Good morning.

Vice Mayor Lago: Morning.

Mr. Joseph: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, also, the visiting public. Thank you, Commissioner Fors, for having this item on the agenda today. And I wanted to preface the conversation by saying a couple of the things that you mentioned. First of all, we have been doing a lot of work on our schools, specifically, Coral Gables Senior High School, as you'll see from my presentation, starting since before 2015. And I think what we've done in the last four years in building relationships, contacts, has really moved our schools forward. I'm always proud to come and talk to you about our schools because they're some of the best in the county, in the state and in the nation. And the only way we get that done is through working collaboratively with our school partners. And yes, like you, I get stopped in the community a lot and say -- and folks ask me, well, what is the City doing about our elementary or what is the City doing about our high school? And I always have to remind them that we could only do so much because it's not our property. But we all benefit and gain from those institutions succeeding and we do work very closely together to make that happen. And that -- those relationships have only grown and gotten better. I'm going to give you a brief history of where we've been and where we are now. And as you mentioned, Commissioner, there are some ideas about how we can move forward and move forward a little quickly, and I'll mention those also. But please, at any time, stop me if you have any questions. First of all, we have started working on specifically the high school since 2015. Actually, when our School and Community Relations Committee was restructured, the

Commission saw it fit to approve school improvement projects. And one of our first projects was the City Beautiful Schools Initiative, and it came out of community meetings and meetings with political officials and school officials about we have wonderful things going on inside of our schools, top caliber programming, but from outside, it was very difficult to see that because our campuses were a bit rundown and didn't fit into the City Beautiful moniker that we believe in and live by. And so, we talked with our school district partners about how we could help with improving the outside look of those campuses so that they mirrored the excellence that was going on inside. We have, since that project was instituted, visited seven of our eleven campuses. We've developed punch lists of projects. We've actually taken care of projects and issues both inside and outside of the campuses to address those issues and to make those schools, as we possibly can, the most beautiful schools inside and out that they can possibly be. In April of 2017 -- actually, we were due to visit the high school in November of 2016. Unfortunately, with the way the scheduling worked out, we really didn't get to the high school visit itself until about a year later. But even prior to visiting the high school, Superintendent Carvalho was a keynote speaker for one of our chamber luncheons and specifically brought up Coral Gables Senior High School and our GOB project and that the initial \$11.2 million that was set aside for that project would not be enough. After having toured the school and seeing the issues that were there, he said -- in front of City officials, by the way -- that it was not enough, and he would go and seek additional funding to see about making that project whole. And in that time, we got a chance to, as a committee, go out to the high school and actually physically see the conditions that he saw. And like him, said exactly the same thing, that \$11.2 million was definitely not going to be enough to address those issues. I'm happy to say that through the relationships that we've built, we did. We got successes. And that the school district did come back with a new plan in February of 2018, after having met with parents and community stakeholders. And really -- and I give them full credit for this, being fully transparent about the issues that were there, and also, looking at ways to address them the best they could with the resources that they had. And they came back to us with a phased -- a new phased plan, which included 13 additional million dollars for a brand-new building that we're looking forward to seeing in the 20 -- I believe it's the 2021 school year. That new building, which will be on the west side of the campus, will -- along with the new building, they will be taking care of

-- and these are back issue things -- putting in a new chiller system, new electrical vaults, and really, upgrading the school system's roofing and other things to the current standards. And then as part of -- and actually, as part of the phased plan -- phase one was to address safety and life issues, which they did immediately. Again, I want to point out and single out School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas. I know -- I don't think our School Board partners are here today. It was very short notice, and with the recess, a lot of them are not in town. But I do want to single out School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas who, when she took over, really was a dynamo in making sure that all of the issues that we had about our schools were addressed immediately. And she did -- immediately upon hearing this, she was at the school. She had facilities, folks from the school district out the next Monday taking care of safety to life issues, and they've been working on the school ever since. We've actually now moved into phase two, where they'll be starting the demolition of Building 6 and 7 and starting the construction of the new building. And so, we -- she really has kept the project on time and made sure that it's been a focus despite the district's many projects that have been a focus of district staff, and we really appreciate that. In the meantime, we also -- there were two things we wanted to do with the high school. Not only do we want it to look beautiful, but we also had a plan for -- and our Mayor set this goal and target for us. Our Mayor remembers that our high school was once ranked number one in the county, ranked number one nationally. And he gave us a -- what I think is a lofty goal, but a -- one that's attainable to get the school back there. And we actually, in January of 2000, introduced a plan to get the school to those heights. And part of that involved getting a new school building and renovated school building, but the strongest part of the plan was to find a group, a permanent group that could really be the benefactors, the stakeholders, the watch dog for the school, an alumni association. And so, we began work on that in January of 2018, and by May of 2018, we'd already gotten a small group of folks together, key stakeholders to hold a charrette at Allen and June Morris' home, and I thank them for opening their home up to us. And we expected about 20 to 30 people there, and we had standing room only. It was the first time that we realized that there was true community passion for the high school, and that there were a lot of folks out there who wanted to see not just the high school do better, but the rest of the world to know how great their high school is. That group has since grown and become officially the Friends of Gables High, who I know their rank

are in the audience here today. This proves to you their commitment. They show up for everything that relates to the high school. I've had the honor of being at their meetings. And they are organized. They have a plan, and they're ready to make a difference for their high school, not just today, but tomorrow and into the future. That group, in that one year's time that they've been in existence, has raised over \$50,000 and donated over \$10,000 back to the school in just their first year to show their commitment. It's a volunteer board, and they're doing their best to get the word out to the alumni about the needs of the school so that we can -- by hopefully, 2021 -- get our school to be one of the top-rated schools in the country again. Not both -- not just in its programming, but in its look and in the fact that it is a 21st -- 22nd century school. I think this conversation today is really important in that we talk about -- because we did get a success in that we have a new building coming, but I like to remind folks that it's not the entire campus. Our campus is much bigger than just one building. There are eight buildings on the Coral Gables Senior High campus as it stands right now, and it is truly a campus. I consider it almost a community college campus in the kind of programming that they're running out there. And we're a world-class city that deserves to have a world-class educational institution. The reason we've been talking about this school since 2015 was my committee, upon our founding, was called in by the Economic Development Board and our economic developer at the time to say we need your help. As we drive our potential businesses, potential folks around town, we want to have a place that we're proud of when they ask us where our high school is when we drive by it. That's always been our goal since day one, for it to look the way that we know that it is, an excellent, excellent school and have that happen from the outside. This conversation helps us push everyone around how do we get the full world-class campus that we deserve, what does that look like, what is that going to cost, and then how do the partners come together to make that happen. And I believe that conversation really starts here today and continues and will continue in backrooms, but it starts publicly here today. And I thank you for having that conversation. I'm going to yield the floor because I do want you to hear from the folks from the Friends of Gables. But you need to know that this -- what you're doing now is not unusual. Most municipalities are now very involved with their schools, and so involved that they're investing in making sure that those schools are the best. Because they know that, at the end of the day, it comes to the bottom line of if you are the best,

you have to have the best in terms of all resources available to constituents and potential folks coming in. If you need examples of what some of those commitments are, I'll be happy to come up later and talk to you about what those municipalities have done and what those -- their schools look like. But thank you again for having this conversation and keeping this on the forefront. I, like you, look forward to the day that we cut that ribbon to our world-class campus and let our community know that we did the job that you asked us to do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Sam. Thank you. Very, very good presentation.

Commissioner Fors: Thanks, Sam.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have two people that wish to speak, and I'll call Darrell (INAUDIBLE) first. Hello.

Darrell (INAUDIBLE): Thank you, Mr. Mayor. And thank you...

Vice Mayor Lago: How are you doing?

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Commission, for hearing me.

Commissioner Fors: Before you go, Darrell, I have one quick question, and maybe you can answer it actually, or Sam. It's a yes or no answer. To the best of your knowledge, you know, the two big questions: What it's going to look like, that full restoration and what's it going to cost? Has anybody from the County -- or maybe somebody from our staff knows -- has anybody from the County ever expressed that they -- that the County be willing to answer those questions?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes. They were here...

Commissioner Keon: They were here.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And they did an hour-long presentation with pictures and everything.

Commissioner Fors: And with a...

Vice Mayor Lago: I think...

Commissioner Fors: Budget?

Vice Mayor Lago: I think...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Let me -- if I could just interject one second. What we're presenting today has been discussed for three years. And Commissioner Keon and Mena and the Mayor -- I wish Quesada was here. We -- you know, this project -- and I have a timeline...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Timeline that goes back...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Read it.

Vice Mayor Lago: To 2015.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Read it.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no. I have it here. I won't bore you. Where Sam Joseph, who happens to be my appointment to the City -- to the Schools and Community Relations Board and he's done

an exceptional job representing me on that board and this Commission. But we've ironed this out a long time ago. We were at \$11 million, and now the City -- excuse me, the School Board, has kicked in \$13 million, which is way outside of what we have any control of. And now we're talking about close to \$25 million. And correct me if I'm wrong.

Unidentified Speaker: Twenty-six.

Vice Mayor Lago: Twenty-six million, excuse me, \$26 million, which is just -- I don't want to be one million shy. We're going to use every last dollar of it. You know, this has been talked about. We've had multiple meetings with the school. We've met -- we've been having -- you know, we've been talking about issues about the alumni association. You know, we've set that up. I think the bigger question is -- and I don't know if this is the proper forum to have this discussion. I think what we need to have a discussion is about what's the final step that the School Board's not going to cover. And my meetings with Sam -- and I know that Commissioner Keon has been in many of these meetings too -- has been about what's the next step and how are we going to fund that. So, two years ago -- and correct me if I'm wrong -- what ended up happening was Sam had a vision, along with the Mayor, to move forward and really solidify the individuals who had attended Coral Gables Senior High and build up that alumni association and give it the strength needed to not only help the current students, but help the future students by building a world-class campus, in conjunction with what the dedication and the commitment was from the School Board. But the main issue here is that he outlier is the monies that is the delta to get there. And Sam, correct me if I'm wrong, because we've discussed this a litany of times and that is that this delta has not been defined because the scope has not been defined. So, we don't know if it's \$10 million, \$15 million, \$20 million, and you can't get to that scope until the School Board, which we have reached out to the School Board on multiple occasions -- and that's why -- I don't know if this is the right place to have this conversation because what you want to do is I would be in favor of having a workshop bringing Mari Tere Rojas, which has been an exceptional partner to the City and has pushed this program forward, has actually -- you know, we got to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Lago: Give credit where credit is due. She's doubled -- she's doubled. It went from \$11 million to \$26 million. She needs to be in the room. We need to have the stakeholders, the alumni association here, who has stepped up, these gentlemen here, everybody in the back, and say, okay, the scope is going to be \$10 million, \$15 million. How are we going to raise that money? How are we going to be a partner in this process? Because I don't know of anybody here who's willing to pony up \$15 million right now without a defined scope. And I don't think we should move forward without having a defined scope because we're talking about something which, again, it's not really on the table. Do you disagree with me or...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): I don't. And everything you said is absolutely true and we appreciate that you're seeing the results of your efforts to get the alumni group...

Vice Mayor Lago: So, you take...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Amount...

Vice Mayor Lago: You take all the credit.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Well, I'm not the chair.

Vice Mayor Lago: And Sam -- and so does Sam.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: We -- what you guys have done -- and you know, it was -- you guys didn't exist two years ago. This Commission just said, hey, this maybe is a good idea. Sam ran with it, and what you have done is you deserve all the credit. We don't deserve any of the credit.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): And June Morris, who was our original...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Chair.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: June Morris.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): She got the energy...

Vice Mayor Lago: Mary Snow.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Mary Snow, with the Coral Gables Foundation. I think we have -- I know that we have the PTSA president, Jackie Kellogg here. We've got alumni. We've got parents. We've got students. We've got the community -- business community involved as well. We have a fundraising goal both for annual contributions from Friends of Gables High and an endowment to support it for the long-term. But I think you're exactly right. We need some more information on exactly, you know, cost of that next step. My estimate, I think you need another 10 to 15 million...

Vice Mayor Lago: Might be another 20.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): To finish the job. But having some numbers on it. The other thing that I want to express...

Commissioner Fors: But Darrell, before...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Some appreciation...

Commissioner Fors: But before you express the appreciation...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Sure.

Commissioner Fors: That was my question, the delta.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Right.

Commissioner Fors: That's what I'm asking. Has the County expressed willingness to provide that estimate and that scope?

Vice Mayor Lago: It's not the County; it's the School Board.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's the School Board.

Commissioner Fors: Oh, School Board.

Vice Mayor Lago: School Board.

Commissioner Fors: Right, the School Board...

Vice Mayor Lago: So, I mean...

Commissioner Fors: Sorry.

Vice Mayor Lago: But, the...

Commissioner Keon: I think the...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): I think the School Board would tell you until they know that there's a possible funding source, they're not going to invest a lot of resources.

Commissioner Fors: Commissioner...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): But I do think that this Commission's interest in partnering the way that Key Biscayne has, the way that Miami Beach has and having us, as well, partner from the community will show that we're interested in making that happen. We're not making any financial commitments...

Vice Mayor Lago: But you can...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): But let's get the numbers.

Vice Mayor Lago: But you can...

Commissioner Fors: But wait, Mr. -- Keon and Lago just said that the County has already provided us with those numbers. So, have they not provided us with those numbers and scope?

Vice Mayor Lago: No, they have not.

Commissioner Fors: They have not.

Commissioner Keon: They...

Vice Mayor Lago: They have -- no, no. Let me make this correct because this is what I do for a living. I'm a Miami-Dade County School Board contractor. I've been doing it for 15 years. The first thing you have to do is you have to have a funding allocation that has to be put into place. And then you hire an architect, or a contractor and you move forward in the direction of what is the scope that is needed for that particular project, whatever it may be. The best way, in my opinion, is holding hands, the architect, School Board, and the contractor to deliver on your budgeted number. But right now, there's been no money allocation. Right now -- and Commissioner Keon was there, sat next to me, and I know Mena's been there too. This number's gone from \$11 million now to \$26 million, which was a massive jump that was presented by President Carvalho -- excuse me, not President Carvalho. I...

Commissioner Fors: Superintendent.

Commissioner Keon: Superintendent.

Vice Mayor Lago: Superintendent. Thank you very much. President -- Superintendent Carvalho, which, to the joy of everyone in the room, they were excited about. But it still falls very short. Just to get an idea, Miami High was -- I think it was \$80 million.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Eighty million.

Vice Mayor Lago: And at one point, it was even considered to be over \$100 million. And this is a world-class institution in the same vein as Miami High. So, what we need to do right now -- this is why I think it's a little premature. And what we need to have is a workshop. We should have workshops about this. I've been meeting with you and Joseph, Mary Snow, June Morris. I think the issue that we need to have is all this Commission needs to sit down and say, okay, what's the scope? What is the magnitude of the scope? And the School Board -- but the School Board hasn't given us what they're willing to accept. There's design criteria. What is going to be your design criteria? We don't -- we won't design something that is not in line with what the School Board

will accept because there's many, many criteria -- ADA. There's Jessica Lunsford. There's a litany of important regulations that need to be followed that the School Board requires, and that costs a lot of money than your standard norm construction. So, I think it's a great discussion to have. This has been going on since 2015. The funding has been moving forward. The School Board has allocated money for a certain project, \$26 million. But the delta, you've got to define a scope first and the School Board has to come to the table.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think -- I did a walk-through last -- a week ago yesterday with Mari Tere through the high school with -- and with someone from -- that deals with the physical plan to ask her to show me and to talk about exactly what was being done and what is going to be replaced, and you know, what is really needed. And I think at this moment, they are addressing all of the issues with this \$26 million that are essential at this time -- I think, at this time. I know we talked about windows and whatever. I said it's -- you know, a lot of the windows are painted over for some reason. And so, they're really...

Commissioner Fors: Blocked in.

Commissioner Keon: Well, the ones that are blocked in, they're not going to change. You know, they put in -- those windows that are blocked off, they have put a -- they've made a cut to make an emergency escape because they're required by law to have that. But the rest of those, they are not planning on their plans to open them wide up again.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): The latest from Victor Torres -- Victor Alonso, I'm sorry, was that in the main building area, those courtyards, they are planning on opening up about half of those windows, bringing in natural light.

Commissioner Keon: Opening them up from where they're blocked up now?

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: I think we better go back and have him come to the campus and do that walk-through with you and have him explain that. Because when we walked through, there was - - and they're already painting those areas, so there was none, and they did cut away and put in the emergency (INAUDIBLE). But the ones -- a number of those windows that are painted over -- and I'm assuming that it was because at one time they were -- from the sun and the heat or whatever, they were done. But they have -- you know, we have new options for dealing with heat and windows or whatever. So, I think we are in the process of talking about, you know, the replacement of all of the windows. I really have to thank some of the people within our community, you know, Jack (INAUDIBLE), and there's other people in the community that serve on different boards for the Superintendent that have been very, very, very helpful to us in moving these projects forward. I think that there is beginning to -- or they're looking at this issue of natural light and how we need to bring natural light in there. So, you know, hopefully, all of the windows in the existing buildings that aren't new -- I think in that science wing, they were new windows. But in the -- the rest of the old part of the school, they will replace all of the windows. Hopefully, all of the ones across the front of the school so they'll have similar windows throughout the school. And I know in the new building that they're going to build, they will have a lot of light into those. Now, I know that there was some question about, you know, the gym and...

Vice Mayor Lago: Bandshell -- the bandshell and lockers.

Commissioner Keon: Well, they were talking about the bandshell. We walked through the bandshell. You know, the bandshell can be renovated. It doesn't necessarily -- at this moment, if they don't have the funds, it doesn't need to be replaced unless you're going to come up with another funding mechanism to do it. They do intend to renovate it. What they do badly need are new instruments.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: May I...

Commissioner Keon: So...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Make a suggestion? You know, we're talking about the bandshell, windows, light, instruments...

Commissioner Keon: They're taking -- yeah.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is -- wait a minute. Wait, wait.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This, I think, is a proper subject for 5 o'clock...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Meeting. You know, not to say a Commission meeting, but a study group or a...

Vice Mayor Lago: Workshop.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Workshop for us to discuss all of these details, as opposed to, you know...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They're very, very important details, but they are...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Subject to -- or proper for a workshop.

Commissioner Keon: But I think that, you know, the issue is now I think they have increased the amount of money to address the big issues that were real problems at the school. They are looking at the windows. I think as the other projects become -- are finished and dollars become available, they will set a list of priorities of what will go back and be done. For the school system, I was, you know -- I've been reasonably pleased with -- you know, yeah, I'd like them to give us \$50 million, but they're not going to do that, and we have no way of making them do that. You know, we keep asking and we keep working, and we do keep getting better and we do keep getting more. But I'll tell you, the biggest -- the largest group that is going to most effect what happens at that school are the parents and the teachers. That PTA -- you need a massive organization and a voice out of that PTA because that's who the school system views as their client, and they are -- they will move it more than any one of us will ever be able to do.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): And we're lucky enough to have...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Jackie Kellogg, who is the PTSA president now.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): She served last year as well. They've got a dynamic group. They're approving the size. I agree with whether it's a workshop or some other step going forward...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): My suggestion, my request to the Commission would be let's not let this slip. Let's do this...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Absolutely.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Within the next few months, by the fall. It's a unique opportunity.

Vice Mayor Lago: Why don't we...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): The campus is getting renovated.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's have a workshop, yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Why don't we do this?

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): We need to finish the job.

Vice Mayor Lago: Why don't we do this? Why don't we schedule -- if my colleagues approve -
- that we have it at the next Commission meeting in September. We have a workshop, at 5:01.

Commissioner Keon: I would wait until after all of our budgets are passed.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, you want to do October?

Commissioner Keon: October.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: October.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay, fine, October. Commissioner Keon...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They'll be back and...

Vice Mayor Lago: Makes a good point. We'll do it in October. But I'm -- but what I want to do is -- we've been on this since 2015. We've made some strides, but I don't want to spin the wheels of all the people who are here committed, okay. Let's keep pressing the School Board for a scope of what is pending because there's going to be a lot of items that are pending. And this number's maybe 15. I think it's going to be more like 20, especially with the cost of construction today. and I want to make sure that we understand what is the true scope because I don't want to just talk about it and spin our wheels. Because today -- I mean, it's a good thing. We put it on the, you know, front burner again. But you know, to really get this done, it's going to -- we're going to have to find a funding stream for \$20 million and it's going to be a major issue.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): The other thing I just want to do is compliment this Commission on some of the creative ideas you all came up with that we talked about individually on how this City might be able to help around the margins, whether it's beautifying and landscaping along LeJeune Road...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): Whether it's the lighting initiative at the track...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): That you already talked about a few years ago. We're pushing that because Key Biscayne just entered into a deal at the June 19 meeting to put lighting at the K-8 there as part of the...

Vice Mayor Lago: Why don't you...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): City compact.

Vice Mayor Lago: Do us a favor if you can. Can you get us that documentation of that agreement and...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): I've got it with me, actually.

Vice Mayor Lago: Send it to the Commission so that when we...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Meet -- and I want to make sure the Manager schedules for October that workshop, 5:01, after our Commission meeting, so that then we can have a real discussion, invite Mari Tere Rojas, the School Board member, invite any member...

Mr. (INAUDIBLE): We'll give everyone some notice.

Vice Mayor Lago: From the School Board, invite the PTA, invite the members of -- the newest members of the alumni association. I want it to be a robust discussion where everybody has input. And you know, we want to be aspirational, but we also want to accomplish goals.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Commissioner Fors: Is there...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And...

Commissioner Fors: Is there anything we can do...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Richard Ebsary. Richard, you wanted to speak?

Commissioner Fors: Is there anything we can do as a city -- maybe have tried similar things before -- to, as Commissioner Lago says, press the School Board? I don't like the word press but nudge the School Board for a scope in the meantime leading up to October.

Commissioner Keon: We can ask for it.

Vice Mayor Lago: We can ask.

Commissioner Keon: We can ask for it.

Commissioner Fors: Ask for it.

Commissioner Keon: We can ask the School Board members.

Commissioner Fors: I don't think we'll...

Commissioner Keon: I'm sure they'll...

Commissioner Fors: Probably be able to do anything...

Commissioner Keon: No, but I think that they'll be glad to provide it to us.

Vice Mayor Lago: Sam, do you want to give us an update of where we are on the scope request? We've talked about it, but I want to -- since we're talking about it right now, you might as well.

Mr. Joseph: No, it's perfect timing. Because I did want you to know beyond just what the Commission's doing, there's always work behind the scenes. Our staff meets with Mari Tere and

with district staff almost on a weekly basis and have one on one communications. And then, in August, so you know, our first SCRC meeting, we're going to be -- get -- we want to get an update of what's happened this summer, starting with phase two project and confirm the phase one -- all phase one projects are done. And then, we are going to press about phase three, which is the unfunded part of the plan and ask for not just a status report, but a funding plan and a project plan, again, from staff and from the School Board members. So, we'll be backing you up as you make the request, the SCRC will also be backing you up and making those requests. We've also asked -- and this came from the Mayor's Office personally. We were trying to get a walk-through of the campus this summer -- actually, this month -- to see about the phase one and phase two issues. But because of timing and school being out, that's going to be scheduled in September, after the Labor Day holiday. That walk-through is going to be for you. We're going to invite the entire Commission, the SCRC, also, the folks from the alumni association and PTSA and community members to really walk through. And we have pictures from before and after to look at what's been done, what's left to be done in terms of phase two projects, and then we also want to stress what's happening with phase three. We'll just keep asking, as much as we can and keep pressing as much as we can. The last thing I want to say is we do have the skills and expertise to dream here. We're very fortunate to have a Vice Mayor whose job is just this, building state-of-the-art schools. I know his company was very helpful with the West Lab project. If you've not been to West Lab and seen those renovations out there, they're stunning. So, we have the ability to dream and we have the ability to know the figures, guesstimates, but we want real numbers and real dreams from the folks whose property it belongs to so that we can marry those numbers so that they're real.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Sam.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, before we make that private ask, there's another good point that was made. As GOB projects sunset...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: As they sunset, we'll have an understanding if we have a scope, a defined scope and we -- that's why I think October is so important. This is very premature. October is important because when we have the School Board members there -- School Board member and the other School Board member staff, we can say, okay, listen, we want this. Let's press in the next month or two to get that scope. Once we have that scope, we can go there and say, okay, we're going to find a roadmap to deliver the delta. Either it's through private donations, either it's the City getting involved in some capacity, if it's even feasible right now. But we need to know what the number is. We need to know how to get there. And then we can press the School Board and say, listen, you have certain GOB funds that are left over that have not been allotted to projects or there was excess money -- I don't think there's much, but there's excess money. Let's see if we can redirect those funds, you know, over the next three or four years and do a detailed capital plan over the next three or four years to, you know, target the delta at Coral Gables Senior High.

Mr. Joseph: And we're not in this alone. Remember that the way the school is zoned, actually, the Vice Mayor of Key Biscayne was at the Friends of Gables High kickoff fundraiser. And when I asked her, I said, well, Vice Mayor, you're here. Are you an alumni?

Commissioner Keon: Their district is there.

Mr. Joseph: She said no, but remember...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, a feeder.

Mr. Joseph: Your -- Coral Gables High is our home school. Not every kid goes to MAST. They can't get all their kids in MAST. Remember, it's a magnet school. Their home school...

Commissioner Keon: No.

Mr. Joseph: Is our school, and they're already in the habit of making investments to make sure their schools are the best.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Perfect.

Mr. Joseph: So, we're not alone in this effort.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, please...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Sam.

Vice Mayor Lago: Please follow up and make sure that we're on the agenda...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Richard Ebsary.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, we can put the workshop together.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Richard. Hi.

Richard Ebsary: Good morning.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good morning.

Vice Mayor Lago: Morning.

Mr. Ebsary: Thank you for having me. My name is Richard Ebsary. I live at 950 Andora. And I've been a resident of Coral Gables all my adult life -- actually, my whole life. And I graduated from Coral Gables 1960. And ever since then, I've -- at that point, Gables was well-known across the county. It was well-known in the country. And I have seen, really, I think a lot for lack of PR

for the most part because I think we actually have a great school, but there's not enough people that know about it. So, when this opportunity came up to join Friends of Gables High, I decided, yes, I think I want to join this, at least see what they're all about. I found out what a dynamic group it is. We've got fundraisers and we have the PTA people. We have people who are actually working at Gables High now. We have people who have gone to Gables High. And so, I'm quite pleased with the fact that I'm sure hearing -- I'm enthusiastic about what I hear about the Commission today. I'm quite sure that you're going to find us to be really cooperative and productive about helping you. Last spring, there was a group of us that went and met with the enemy over at Miami High, at their alumni association. They invited us over because we were kind of in disarray as to how we were going to get started and what they were doing as far as -- because their alumni association is quite dynamic. And we picked up some pointers. We got a chance to see what they've actually done with the school, and it's absolutely beautiful.

Commissioner Keon: It's beautiful.

Mr. Ebsary: We don't have the same kind of school that they do, and we don't have any idea that we're going to change it to look like that or anything like that. That's not the point. The point is that we feel like we would be a part of private fundraising to -- and working with the Commission and working with the School Board in partnership. That's it. And I feel very proud to be a part of it. I don't need to say any more except that I'm pleased to be a member of Friends of Gables High and will be there for quite a while. So, appreciate your...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Ebsary: Points.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, thank you.

Commissioner Mena: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. Thank you very much, and we'll go on to the next item.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: Oh, is this mine?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Update on improvement to Code Enforcement. Thank you, everybody.