

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-8
January 24, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Ed Santamaria
Landscape Services Division Director, Brook Dannemiller

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item C-8 [9:30:04 a.m.]

A Resolution authorizing the execution of a Joint Participation Agreement (JPA) between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the City of Coral Gables for disbursement of FDOT funds in the amount of \$60,342.00 for 9 months to the City for the maintenance of Turf and Landscape areas within FDOT's right of way on State Road (S.R.) 5 South Dixie Highway, S.R. 976/Bird Road and S.R. 959/Red Road (east side only).

Mayor Cason: Let's do C-8.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So, I'm going to ask the Public Works Director, Mr. Santamaria, and if the Assistant City Manager for Operations, Peter Iglesias is available, and Brook Dannemiller from Landscape Services. Commissioner Lago we are prepared to explain the item or to answer your questions, what's your preference?

Commissioner Lago: A brief explanation because I think some of my colleagues may not be aware of some of the improvements that the City has done in reference to Bird Road, which have been requested by the residents that live on that corridor of Bird Road and 57th Avenue, which has been neglected a little bit in regards to beautification projects and they are really happy; and I think that what we need to do is highlight what we are doing for those residents in that area, which has never been done before. They are ecstatic, they are ecstatic, because they've seen not only measurables in regards to beautification, but they've also seen measurables in reference to respect by the motorists in that area who no longer are going on the swales to deviate from the congestion on 57th Avenue.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Good morning Commissioners, Mr. Mayor, Madam Manager, Ed Santamaria, Director of Public Works. We are very happy to undertake these particular projects for the benefit of the community. In particular, we do partner up with FDOT on occasion to deliver enhancements to the corridor. With regards to that project, I can tell you that Brook Dannemiller, our Assistant Director has done a yeoman's job and it's reflected in the outcome, and I would defer to him as to particular details.

Director Dannemiller: So, this item is for a maintenance agreement where FDOT gives us a set amount each year for maintaining the landscape, it doesn't cover the full cost, but it's to cover the landscape maintenance in all of our FDOT corridors – U.S.-1, Red Road, Bird Road. On Red Road there was traffic that was going on the swale, running over a bus stop, it was quite unsafe and unsightly, so we planted some solitary palms, fichus. We will be planting over 200 solitary palms along Red Road, those are just the first half dozen, we'll get that done first, and the rest will be planted as part of the tree succession project that's ongoing now.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, that's a major project that I want to commend staff for getting this done, because the residents have been talking about it for some time, and it's been – I live very close to that, I live off next to the University of Miami, but sometimes I drive in that area and it's unsightly, it wasn't really representative of what the City of Coral Gables is all about, because as everybody keeps mentioning, if you've seen the last two or three years the City has really stepped up its beautification process in reference to landscaping, and this was an issue that needed just a little bit more attention and the residents, they've all given me a call in that area, especially those first five or six streets, and they told me they are super happy. Now I'm getting calls from residents, when can we get this in our neighborhood? - so I just wanted to make sure they knew it was forthcoming.

Director Dannemiller: Thank you – appreciate it.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you. You know maybe you could take a look at the area in front of Ingraham Park, the new park, along Le Jeune, that swale is badly torn up.

Director Dannemiller: Yes, we have plans – that’s actually we kind of have an ongoing list that’s next on our list where we are going to be heading in the next few weeks. We are going to do the remaining loose crush stone that’s in the park, we’ll move it and put that pink granite stone dust so it’s more ADA accessible surface, and that’s going to kind of tear the swales up and then we are going to repair the swales and plant under the Banyans where it’s all muddy, we are going to do some Red Congo which is what we planted in front of the library, and then we got a permit from FDOT to put some Satakentia palms along Le Jeune and will expand some planting there, so that whole area should get improved over the next month or so.

Commissioner Keon: I think its people making left hand turns on to Ingraham or Edgewater that they are using the swale, because of the backup in traffic along there. The other thing is, along Old Cutler where they are redoing Old Cutler, the Trail, who comes back and takes care of those swales because those swales are all torn up as a result of that project, so who, is there a plan to restore those swales, or who restores those swales?

Director Dannemiller: That’s a County project, so the County should be restoring.

Commissioner Keon: Can we check and make sure, and you know maybe – there is a heavy canopy all along there, so maybe we can work with the County to provide a better swale treatment than just grass, because we know it doesn’t grow. So if we can work with them on the things that we have put into place, we can improve the swales along Old Cutler too, because it really is such a beautiful, such a beautiful distance you drive down Old Cutler, we can work with them, but nobody seems to know and people have asked us, you walk along there, they’ll ask who is going to take care of it? So, if you could let us know we could maybe put it in the newsletter, so people know or people at least are aware that we are aware of it and we are working with them to see that the swales are restores once the project is complete. The project looks great and the Trail looks great.

Director Dannemiller: We’ll follow up with the County on that.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The City Attorney is working with the County on the issue of the tree maintenance, as well as stunning as Old Cutler is and as Coral Way is, the level of

maintenance that the County does, because they are countywide is not the same as the City, so the City Attorney is in some good discussions about the City taking over those responsibilities.

Commissioner Keon: It's a good opportunity to address those swales properly now. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Do we have a vote on C-8, a motion? Vice Mayor makes the motion, Commissioner Lago seconds – City Clerk.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 9:35:55 a.m.]