

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-3
September 13, 2016
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
Finance Director, Diana Gomez

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item E-3 [10:17:00 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City of Coral Gables, Florida relating to the collection and disposal of said waste and recyclable materials in the City of Coral Gables, Florida; establishing the rate of assessment for residential property located with the City for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2016; approving the solid waste assessment roll; confirming the amended and restated initial assessment resolution; and providing an effective date. (For those who have already paid the solid waste assessment by the early payment deadline, this Resolution does not affect them).

Mayor Cason: E-3.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor, Item E-3 is a Resolution of the City of Coral Gables, Florida relating to the collection and disposal of said waste and recyclable materials in the City of Coral Gables, Florida; establishing the rate of assessment for residential property located with the City for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2016; approving the solid waste assessment roll;

confirming the amended and restated initial assessment resolution; and providing an effective date. (For those who have already paid the solid waste assessment by the early payment deadline, this Resolution does not affect them). I would also note that this is a public hearing item, because this is the time when someone, a resident can come, or property owner can come and contest their assessment. I don't know if anyone has alerted the City of any intent to contest, Madam Manager?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: No sir. The only confusion we received was the showing up on the Trim Notices when people had already paid, and that's why you emphasized that, anyone that has already paid is unaffected by this.

Mayor Cason: Any speaker cards?

City Clerk Foeman: No Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Cason: Close the public hearing. So this is the same rate as before?

Finance Director Gomez: The single family household rate is \$869 for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

Mayor Cason: And for those who paid before August 16th its \$743.

Finance Director Gomez: Its \$743, correct.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Commissioner Lago: Mayor is that an increase from last year in any capacity?

Finance Director Gomez: That is an increase, I don't remember when we...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: In June.

Finance Director Gomez: In June we had a Commission meeting where we talked about the increase due to increased cost, increased items that we want to -- pass throughs and increased items that we wanted to take care of with the budget going forward, and so there was an increase.

Mayor Cason: The formula is the cost for the single family home pickup, all the cost divided by the number of homes, is that how...?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Actually you subsidize.

Mayor Cason: Yes we subsidize like \$2 million, don't we?

Finance Director Gomez: About 20 percent.

Commissioner Lago: A significant amount.

Mayor Cason: So it's heavily subsidized still even at that rate. OK.

Commissioner Lago: And the reason why we subsidize it, again every resident that I've spoken to, one of the main things they mention about living in Coral Gables is just the type of service and quality, so that's an item where they are more than willing to accept the subsidy.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: I think during the time where we were changing over to put this on the TRIM Notices, those people that had been paying them quarterly were very concerned because it changed their method or their timely, the times that they scheduled their payments, but we also know that we advised a number of people that you can also pay your taxes quarterly, and you still receive a discount on the payment, and if you pay your taxes quarterly you also would pay this fee quarterly. So, I think it's important that we, I hope we use this opportunity to let our residents know that if you apply to the Tax Collector you can pay your taxes quarterly, which would also mean you would continue to pay your waste fee quarterly and you still receive some discount on all of these fees.

Mayor Cason: And if you have a mortgage, the mortgage company pays it for you and you pay it monthly.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Finance Director Gomez: And with this fee it is eligible for the four percent discount, if paid in November, so the \$869 would be discounted by the four percent, so on and so forth.

Commissioner Keon: So this transition year was a little confusing and a little bit difficult, but I think we have resolved it and so going forward it should work much more smoothly. Thank you.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And as a reminder, this was because when we went to the Property Appraiser's Office wanting to collect on those that either reneged on a payment plan or

failed to pay over a period of ten years, we could not just put those properties on the tax roll, we had to put all of them on.

Mayor Cason: How much time does it save you now, you think, not having to mail thousands of letters and dummy notices?

Finance Director Gomez: So this year, nothing yet, right, because we are still sending out, but the coming year we do expect to have the significant savings in staff time in dealing with all that.

Mayor Cason: And you can go after other people who haven't paid other bills.

Finance Director Gomez: Correct.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Commissioner Lago: Let me tell you, I've spoken to several residents, and I have brought them to the attention of the City Manager in reference to the issue of paying quarterly versus a lump sum. Again, everybody understands that the critical point here was close to \$3 million of fees. How much was the amount?

Finance Director Gomez: It was just under, like \$2.9 something (million).

Commissioner Lago: That was outstanding of some people who were about 10-15 years outstanding, so again, that's a disservice to the community as-a-whole by a fraction of individuals in this community. So, I think, again like Commissioner Keon mentioned, it was a little bit confusing this year, but once we get past this year people will be acclimated, and by the way, a lot of cities, most of the cities do it this way already, so we were outside the norm.

Mayor Cason: Do we have a motion on E-3?

Commissioner Lago: So moved.

Commissioner Slesnick: Second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago makes the motion, Commissioner Slesnick seconds – City Clerk.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes
Commissioner Keon: Yes
Commissioner Lago: Yes
Mayor Cason: Yes
(Vote: 4-0)
(Vice Mayor Quesada: Absent)

[End: 10:22:20 a.m.]