

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
November 9, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Marlin Ebbert

Agenda Item G-1 [11:05 a.m.]

Discussion regarding solar panels for The Granada Clubhouse. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)
(Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: G-1, discussion regarding solar panels for The Granada Clubhouse. This was brought to my attention. Obviously, I have solar in my house, Commissioner Anderson has solar in her house, and we were talking about the opportunity of, again, doing everything in our power as a city to continue to push the agenda of renewables. We have removed through legislation, the cost of permitting solar, we have expedited it through the hard work of our staff, Suramy's team, all of Development Services, and I think we've been very flexible in regard to the location of certain solar, on residents when its difficult. So, we as a city, I think has been leading that effort. I think it's a good opportunity to send a message here, and I want to hear from Commissioner Anderson, I think it's a strong opportunity as people become, as we all know, as they activate the area of the Country Club and we are now going to renovate Burger Bob's, which in December will be showing the community some conceptual interiors, so that the community can give us their feedback and guidance on that. But I think its an opportunity for people to see solar, who doesn't have it at home or doesn't have a friend or a family member, you can get a firsthand look how solar works, and how its not dangerous, and again, it's a good opportunity to save money and do right by the planet. I know we just recently redid our roof.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yes, about four years ago, give or take.

Mayor Lago: I know that we are going after a grant that was brought to our attention, in regard to, I think it's a \$20,000 grant for solar panels, but I know that there is a delta in regard to the cost. Am I missing anything else?

Public Works Director Diaz: No.

City Manager Iglesias: No Mayor, that's pretty much it. We have a delta, this will be between 50 and 75, the grant is about 20, we can certainly include solar.

Mayor Lago: So what I would like for you to do and I'd like for Commissioner Anderson to please give us her guidance on this is, to have my colleagues request, through the Manager, to move forward with the grant and also move forward with trying to find or trying to bring all the pieces together to get estimates from multiple different companies to see what would be the final cost for the solar, and then bring it back so we can make sure we can include it in the budget. I think it's a nominal amount. It sends a very strong message, because we can't do it in many buildings, but we can do it in this building, this building in a city building.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we have no issue in moving forward with that.

Mayor Lago: I know you don't. Again, this is the effort of, showcasing a little bit about, we just don't talk about it, we do it. This is what this community, this city is all about. Commissioner.

Commissioner Menendez: Just a real quick question. So, the solar panels for the Pro Shop, Burger Bob's building, just to educate everyone, including myself, how much can it contribute in terms of providing energy or power to the facilities?

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, we really have to look at that now. We have to work with the City Architect, because there are areas that we can't put solar panels there, that we can't be consistent with what we do with everybody else, and so, we will try to maximize the number of panels.

Mayor Lago: We don't know yet, Commissioner, and this is like something what happens in the house. My house, depending on the time of the year, I can get my electricity bill down to \$9.00, but certain times during the summer, its working a little bit more. It also depends on new technology. For example, when I installed my solar panels, the technology has only advanced. You can also do certain things. For example, when we are remodeling this building, we are using different R-values for installation, which will reduce the use of the air condition. The air conditioning is the most, the item that contributes to most electrical use in a house or in a business.

Commissioner Menendez: The reason I asked is because, I'm supportive of this, but since Burger Bob's, the name that everybody has come to know is so part of the neighborhood that I could foresee, we were talking earlier about hurricanes and power, if things go out have Burger Bob's

continue to be able to stay open as part of the neighborhood, that's what I foresee. The place that the community comes to.

City Manager Iglesias: There are a lot of technical issues there, because it's a restaurant, there are high demand times for that, so its hard to do, but we can look at solar and Barry technology which is what the Mayor has in mind.

Mayor Lago: And I have the batteries in my house installed. I have N-phase batteries in my house, so I don't need a generator.

Commissioner Menendez: I think it's a good idea.

Mayor Lago: And they work incredibly well.

Commissioner Anderson: I think it's a long time coming, and we need to set this example. As far as answering your questions on how much power its going to create, depends on how many panels we can fit on at the optimum angles on the roof itself, but it also shades the roof. It was the best thing I ever did. You should consider doing it on your place. I've sat down with the City Architect and worked on designs that both comply with our code and aesthetic requirements, to help residents out during this process.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner, that's exactly what we'll be doing.

Commissioner Anderson: Right. So, your highest use items, they can also put an outdoor grill out there, they won't take any...during a hurricane.

Commissioner Menendez: This is my solar panel right now.

Commissioner Anderson: You're going to start glowing.

Mayor Lago: So, Commissioner Anderson, with your guidance, with that being said, can we request in December that you come back and just give us a more targeted number in regard to cost, let's see where we stand and push forward on the grant.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we will come back in December with all the specifics with this particular project.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, can we put it on the agenda, please?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. We are going to take a five-minute break.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, before you move on, I do have a member of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Marlin Ebbert.

Ms. Ebbert: Good morning, everybody. For the record, my name is Marlin Ebbert, excuse me, I live at 65 San Vicente. I brought to the city a possibility of a grant from The Villagers. We have a very wonderful resident in our city by the name of Sally Jude, who is 96 years old, and she approached me in the summer of 2021, and said, I'd like to have a Villager grant, we're both members of The Villagers, and she said, I wanted to be a sustainability grant. And what The Villagers do is historic preservation. So, I looked around for a building or something that could combine them both and that's why we are not really calling it Burger Bob's, because The Villagers are not going to put solar panels on a restaurant, but the name of that building is officially The Granada Clubhouse, and it was built in 1962 or 1967, right around there. So, it makes it over 50 years old. It sits in the neighborhood of the North Greenways, which is historic, and its on the oldest nine-hole golf course in the State of Florida. So right there it qualifies. Now, we have already done our grant cycle for this year. I'm sorry you just missed it, but I happen to run into both the Mayor and Commissioner Anderson at the Chili Cookoff, and I said, you know, that we could get this started again and maybe we would give a grant in the spring. We have done that in the past. So, I'm very excited that this is a possibility. I also have solar panels on my house. I was having dinner in South Miami last night when my watch signaled that my Tesla power walls were on. And so, I went home, and I was the only light in the neighborhood, 43 houses had gone out, and FPL, these two big men came and knocked on my door about 10 after 9, and they said, how do you have lights on? – and they said, we can't hear your generator, because Tesla power walls is perfectly silent. So, I was the only one that had lights. Commissioner Menendez, a lot of people are under the misconception that if you have solar, when FPL goes out, that you have power. I'm tied to the grid, so its only having the backup, power walls that gives me power. And last winter, I had a bill, Mayor, of 55 cents, one of my months, and the fact that the Granada Snack Shop is being outfitted with new windows and a new roof, I mean, you're going to see tiny bills, I hope. City Manager, Mr. Iglesias, what's the square footage of that building?

City Manager Iglesias: Which one, I'm sorry.

Ms. Ebbert: The whole Granada Clubhouse building.

Public Works Director Diaz: Around 5,000.

City Manager Iglesias: How much?

Ms. Ebbert: About what?

Public Works Director Diaz: Around 5,000, give or take.

Ms. Ebbert: Okay.

Public Works Director Diaz: Around there – 5-6,000 square feet, more or less.

Ms. Ebbert: You know, as head of your Sustainability Board, I also work very hard on having a green restaurant. So, I have lots of notes about low-flush toilets, automatic lights that go on and off, timers. So, I'd love to talk to you some time. I've said that about redoing that Snack Shop.

Commissioner Menendez: I just want to comment what Marlin, Ms. Ebbert said. Just so that there is no confusion in the community. From a practical standpoint, from a grant standpoint, the Granada Clubhouse is the name that must be used for technical reasons.

Ms. Ebbert: Correct.

Commissioner Menendez: But I want the community to understand that we can, and we should, and the community is free to continue calling it Burger Bob's. If they see Granada Clubhouse, its not that we are doing away with the history, we are actually trying to improve the path forward for technical reasons.

Ms. Ebbert: Correct.

Commissioner Menendez: I just don't want...

Mayor Lago: Thank you Commissioner.

Ms. Ebbert: You know, I see the whole outside with pollinator gardens, herb gardens, rain barrels, composting.

City Manager Iglesias: We've actually separated both buildings from a folio point of view, when we look at the solar panels, that's why I mentioned that which one we will look at, where its most efficient to put solar energy to.

Commissioner Menendez: Great.

Mayor Lago: What we'll do is, we'll bring it back in December with more concrete information, so that we can make a decision on how much does it actually cost to implement solar panels. Let's take a five-minute break. Thank you.