

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C
October 22, 2024
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.
City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Tom Wells
Maria Cruz
Jackson Holmes
Maite Halley
Jennifer Frund
Jorge Diaz
Tova Teitelbaum
Carl Leon Prime
Laura Milay
Robert Ruano

Agenda Item C [10:06 a.m.]

Public Comment

Mayor Lago: Now we move forward with Public Comment. Very quickly, on item, after I'm done with Public Comment, I'm going to take the 10am time certain and then immediately after that,

City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024

I'm going to take item F-3. So, the individuals that are thinking about speaking in Public Comment in regard to item F-3, if you wait maybe ten minutes you can have that conversation. Is that fine, or you want to leave your comments now because you've got to get going. Okay. Perfect.

City Clerk Urquia: So, first speaker on Public Comment, this morning Mr. Mayor is Tom Wells.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Wells, good morning.

Mr. Wells: Good morning. By the way, congratulations on, I want to formerly congratulate you. It was a pleasure to see you this weekend at the pickleball tournament. I heard that you have incredible news to bestow on the city. So, first off, why don't we start off with a positive and show everybody that that the amazing hardware that you'll be wearing. I heard you actually wore it yesterday to work at your law office. Is that true or no.

Mr. Wells: Mr. City Clerk, my three minutes have not yet started.

City Clerk Urquia: It hasn't yet started.

Mayor Lago: We are going to give you more than enough time, don't worry. We let everybody talk, so go ahead, tell me.

Mr. Wells: Okay. So, my name is Tom Wells, I live at 1310 Coral Way. I came to complain about Senor Martinez not being open for eight months and I think its because they didn't pull a permit for 13 months after the lease was signed and they weren't issued a permit sixteen and-a-half months after the lease was signed, but enough with the bad vibes. Yes, I want to thank the Commission and all the volunteers for raising \$30,000 for the Ronald McDonald House this weekend, at the Biltmore with the pickleball. And I also want to thank the 30 to 40 Coral Gables residents who show up every Tuesday and Thursday to the Youth Center to play pickleball, which help me win the over 50, 3.5 pickleball doubles championship in men's.

[Applause]

Mr. Wells: I believe what's going on at the Youth Center is the most active Coral Gables, weekly process going on right now, and I want to continue that. And also, thank you to the Commission to having it at the Biltmore is fabulous – Friday sucked with the rain, but Saturday was brilliant, and I also want to thank the Mayor and the Vice Mayor for showing up at the event and saying some kind words. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Quick question. You didn't answer if you wore it on Monday at the law office, that's what I heard, but I also want to understand, you said you were 3.5, is that sandbagging or because I heard that you were 394, that's what I heard. You were playing below just to make sure that you could win that first place, that's what I heard.

Mr. Wells: You know, there are too many false facts in politics right now, let me just express that.

*City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024*

[Laughter]

Mayor Lago: So, you're not at 3-5, you are admitting you're a 4.

Mr. Wells: On duperating, I am 3.486. Also, I want to thank the City Clerk for not playing in my division, because had he played in my division, I would not have won.

Mayor Lago: Can I ask you another question.

Mr. Wells: Yes sir.

Mayor Lago: Besides being a great athlete, wasn't the Clerk the best dressed pickleball player there, and I spent a few hours there with the Vice Mayor, so I saw every single person. He was the guy that you thought he was going to win the biggest trophy despite his appearance.

Mr. Wells: He wasn't on the court. I didn't see him on the court.

Mayor Lago: Oh, you didn't see him on the court. I saw him on the court.

Mr. Wells: Well, that must have been a different tournament. So, thank you for not playing in my tournament. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So next year, we're going to do a special competition, and we are going to have you against the Clerk, okay.

Mr. Wells: I don't play singles.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll play next year in the over 60 group.

Mr. Wells: If Billy plays Rhonda and I play with Vince, we are going to crush you guys.

[Laughter]

Mr. Wells: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll get back to practicing.

Mayor Lago: Who do we have next.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Good morning, Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I have my little – it's a great day in the City of Coral Gables, so far so good, so far so good. Let's see if we can last the whole
City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024

meeting this way. This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. And guys, you have a lot of people here, listen carefully to them, because they're the ones that need to be heard.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Jackson Holmes.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir.

Mr. Holmes: Greetings City Commission, city leaders, citizens. I'm afraid to give this public comment, so I want to apologize upfront for my trespasses because I should be wearing a jacket, its at home. I should be better organized in the presentation. They only allow me one video, so it's a little bit shocking, but let me get right into it. I'm afraid there is a danger now of nuclear war starting with Israel-Iran conflict and I'll go quickly to the video, which is a very shocking video, but then I urge the people of Coral Gables, we are powerful people to write the Congress people and say cease fire now, and I urge you all considering the downside if we don't do anything to consider a cease fire resolution. A hundred other cities have done this. Can we do the video.

City Clerk Urquia: Cable TV can put up the video please.

Commissioner Castro: Its muted.

City Clerk Urquia: No audio.

Mr. Holmes: Scott ___ was the fellow who exposed there were no weapons of mass destruction in the Iraq war. We never should have gone into that war because he's the guy who blew the whistle, there were no weapons of mass destruction.

City Clerk Urquia: Seems we are having issues with the video, Mr. Holmes.

Commissioner Menendez: The audio.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes.

Mayor Lago: So, we'll try to figure it out and come back. Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Maite Halley.

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Ms. Halley: Good morning, everybody. Thank you for having me here. I have to say, first of all, everybody who's here in support of pickleball because I know you are all not going to speak, could you just stand up, if you don't mind, please. We've got all these people here, I know Tom's here too, but I also wanted to ask, everybody here who has played pickleball to stand up, because I think

it's a lot of you.
City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024

Vice Mayor Anderson: Which side of the dais.

Ms. Halley: There you go. Melissa you've played.

Commissioner Castro: You can call me Melissa.

Commissioner Menendez: Is there an expiration date, I played back in the 70's and 80's.

Ms. Halley: No expiration date, absolutely. So, I have to tell you, this man is the "Come back king." I watched him play on Saturday and he was down, but he wasn't out. He fought, fought, fought and came back and won a game against these like 19-year-olds, who were, I don't know, they were like Jack and the Beanstalk tall, and they were amazing, and so, congratulations. I'm sorry you didn't win any medals but that was awesome. Tom congratulations, I didn't know, that's wonderful, that's wonderful to hear. We also had at this wonderful tournament on Saturday, we had our Mayor, our Vice Mayor there, said some kind words, helped raise the \$30,000 for the Ronald McDonald House, that I know of this is the third tournament, charity tournament that they've done at the Biltmore, and they run really smoothly. I'd like to say, yes, obviously, its part of the management company that's running it, but I'd like to say too, its this beautiful venue we have here in Coral Gables and I urge you, and I don't have it in my presentation only because I found out this morning, Mr. Mayor, I think you were interviewed by Mugs Rodriguez for Base to Pickle, so the video is going to be out very soon. So, if you follow Base to Pickle, because it runs from baseball to pickleball, I guess is the thing, Base to Pickle, they are going to have a whole video on it on YouTube and its announced-on Instagram, so if you go to that. But I wanted to talk to you today about the state of pickleball courts in Coral Gables and I have a presentation which I emailed to all of you. What do I do. I don't know, I'm sorry. This is not the class I took with Mr. Finora, okay.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, while she is loading, can you also make sure that this presentation is made available as a public record.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes.

Mayor Lago: So, anybody who wants to enjoy can review it.

Ms. Halley: So briefly, I'm not going to go through this, but back in the fall of 2022 to the sitting Commission at that time, the Commission asked the Parks and Rec's department to report on pickleball and pickleball courts. Fred Couceyro came back with a presentation. We found out that was coming to the city, to the Commission, and we came in with a presentation about the demand. Later that year, the Youth Center court started to come online that we share with the outdoor basketball courts during the off hours. Last summer, June 2023, there was a request in the Capital Improvement Budget which was denied. In June/July of that year, I went to each of you and came to the full Commission talking about temporary and permanent structures, and again, we didn't have any action taken at that time. Fall of 23, we had a lot of discussions about parking garages, a lot of discussions about parking garages, and the feasibility study came in early this year. We had

*City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024*

some ADA and bathroom issues, so we couldn't do it in that one parking garage. Spring of 2024, there was the idea floated about taking part of the Youth Center field. Pickleball players do not want to take from children's sports, that really important for everybody out there to hear, and I know you guys have heard it, but its really important for us not to take from other sports. May of 2024, I wheeled myself in my wheelchair into some of your offices and presented an update, a plan again for temporary courts while we build some permanent courts. Nothing's happened. And now we have approved by you, \$500,000 for a plan for pickleball courts. The issue is, we need eight dedicated, centralized, lit pickleball courts now, to meet the demand. We've looked at a lot of options, right, and we've talked and talked about these things. Parking garages, land across University Drive from the Youth Center, the land owned by UM at Granada and Ponce, Kerdyk Family Park, the Kerdyk Tennis Center, the Biltmore, the northern end of Country Club Prado at Southwest 8th Street, all of these involve some pain. None's perfect. Everything we do here is not going to be perfect for every single one of our residents, some more than others. I say that because I personally, I was distressed listening to the last Commission meeting. It felt like that was a day to take some jabs at pickleball from some residents and I was distressed by that. So, I wanted to make sure we did something positive here. We can't keep kicking this down the road. You have a substantial block of residents and I'm going to give you the numbers in a minute, asking for courts. Without a centralized pickleball court, we will miss opportunities for holding pickleball tournaments like we had last week, and we may also lose the opportunity to maybe host some professional things that maybe coming down the road, some professional events. I would invite you all, by the way, if you don't know, Major League Pickleball, the world players are in town this weekend, they are playing out at Tamiami Park. So, if you want to come see me and I'll help you get some tickets, and we'll see what we can do with that. Like I said that I know of, we've run three charity events at the Biltmore that have turned out really well. I'd like us to have some publicly funded courts. Pickleball taxpayer dollars, pickleball player taxpayer dollars are good, so I don't think a private/public partnership is necessarily what we're looking for; and our Recreation Department, our Community Recreation Department needs guidance from you all. You need to tell them. You all need to tell them which way to go with this. So let me just give you some updates on some facts. When I came here in October of 22, we talked about that Coral Gables would reach 1640 players by 2024 and 2200-plus players by 2025. We were wrong. We were totally wrong because we reached that 2200 players in the city last year. These are the numbers from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, these are numbers on all sports and participation in all sports. 7.7 percent of the U.S. public plays tennis, 7.7 percent; 4.4 percent plays pickleball, and by the way, I'm using tennis as a comparison, because we both take up real estate in the city. As people age out of tennis, they come into pickleball. Young people are flocking to pickleball, and you'll see the numbers on much more than to tennis right now, but I want this also clear, I don't want to take, we don't want to take formal playing time from tennis either, okay. By applying these numbers that this report gives us, we have 3800-plus tennis players in the city; 2200 pickleball players, and we have 32 tennis courts in the city, 2 dedicated pickleball courts. If the proportions work out right, we should have 18 pickleball courts in the city which we don't. We do have two dedicated and five shared courts at the Youth Center, which has worked out really well for us, and as Tom said, we have tons of people coming out there. Let me give you, basically some numbers. They did a survey over two and-a-half weeks in early June of this year, and with 268 players, who showed up, 173 of them were residents. I know a lot of people say, there are a lot of non-residents there, there are, but that random two and-a-half weeks, 59 non-residents, 173 residents, and 36

*City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024*

people who had no I.D.s. We do have, I know, plans for new courts at Phillips, \$500,000 – we have the funds for the dedicated courts at Phillips Park, and then we also have the additional funds for plans in this budget, but tennis is growing at one percent, pickleball is growing at 51 percent a year; 223 percent growth in the last three years alone, which is just unprecedented. The other thing that’s happening with pickleball is high school, and I don’t have the data point here, but we are getting clubs at all the high schools. Coral Gables High School has a club, Coral Reef has a club. I know at their interest meeting; they had 150 kids show up for their club. Now this isn’t even a team, Columbus has 150 kids in their club, Belen has just around 100 kids in their club also. College scholarships are coming down the road. We need to provide a similar infrastructure for pickleball young players to get them to the level where, hopefully they can do the same thing with tennis that they can go to D-1, D-2, D-3 schools with these skills that they have. In closing, with this growth trend, the number of pickleball players are going to equal the number of tennis players in less than three years. We need to meet current and projected demand. We need to provide programming, leagues, clinics, camps for our children, and our adults. And so, we respectfully ask for all of you to meet our recreational needs in the pickleball community. Thank you. Any questions. Follow us on Instagram, by the way, @coralgablespickleball.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Couple questions, couple comments. Looks like you added some pages since you sent us this presentation.

Ms. Halley: No.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No. Okay.

Ms. Halley: I changed some of the things that you pointed out. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The typo. I just happen to spot it. I’ll have to make sure I turn the rest of the pages. It was great speaking to you on Saturday. We walked the area that I think is a viable location. There’s actually room for at least eight, if not more courts.

Ms. Halley: I agree.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We spoke about doing a private fundraiser. Its not really a city event, but the city would accommodate. I’ve spoken to our Director of Parks, asking for February or March, he’ll get back with us and we can work together on this and get it done, because I think there is the energy to do it, and the willingness to do it, and if we work together, we can get it done sooner rather than later. Its quite a group. I heard from the Clerk that that was the best attended event, the Ronald McDonald event that ever occurred and it would be nice if we could, before the next Ronald McDonald event, have something out there, with permitting and building and construction costs and getting drawings and stuff. I’m not sure we are going to meet that bill, but certainly by the year afterwards, I would hope that we could do something.

Ms. Halley: We are happy to work with all of you to do what we need to get done.

*City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024*

Vice Mayor Anderson: I went back out to the Pumpkin Patch with Ronald McDonald flyers, and I had my “I donated” sticker on, and when I saw someone that I knew, number one, and it was a type of person that is willing to give, I was approaching them and saying, hey, here’s a good cause, I was out there earlier, please think about doing it because the Ronald McDonald House does such wonderful things for children and families that are going through the most difficult times of their lives. I think the network of folks that we have that are interested in pickleball can do the similar spreading the word, reach out to those they know, see if they can make a donation, a sponsorship, whether its Titos.

Ms. Halley: Vodka.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Vodka – you know, you have people that watch, because they know that they shouldn’t be out there on the court, and you have others that love to participate, and we’ll get our Clerk out there again. Maybe I can egg the Mayor to join me. I’ll be in better shape next year.

Ms. Halley: He needs to play.

Mayor Lago: I was impressed by our hitting. We had a good time out there. Maite, I’m going to be brief. Again, I wanted to say thank you to you. I go to really enjoy spending time with you for the few hours that we were out there. I was really impressed with the amount of people that were out there. It was amazing. The setting, like you said, was incredibly fitting. It was exceptional. I’ve been working with Ronald McDonald House for a few years now and it’s a great cause for the synergy between Ronald McDonald and the individuals that we met that put together the actual pickleball tournament were first class. They did it the right way. They did it really well and they understood the importance of the giving back portion. And everybody loves to play pickleball and its great, but people were there in mass to support pickleball, but to also support this great charity, and it was really nice to see that, everybody understood that. It was great to spend time and kind of look at it a little bit about what’s the future going to look like for pickleball in the city and what’s the opportunity of it, and also to speak to a lot of advocates in the community who are interested from all walks of life. We had a lot of people that were not from Coral Gables there, who came to our community, and they said, listen, we always love to come to the City of Coral Gables because you have the best facilities, because you are the best, opportunity for recreation and for family fun. Thank you for your advocacy on that front.

Ms. Halley: Okay. Well, I hope that this information will be helpful to you.

Commissioner Fernandez: And I want to thank you for all the work you put into this. I know this wasn’t easy to get all these statistics and all this information, but I think it just continues to drive our interest and ensuring that we have these pickleball facilities here in our city. Like you said, we finally have money in the budget for this fiscal year to begin addressing this, and its not only about the adults, its also about the children. You and I have had many conversations. My son Stephen had a project in school, he had to say what his hobby was, and it was pickleball, Pokeman and pickleball, and the children are looking for. When we did the event here at the Farmers Market this year, we had tons of people and tons of children who came out wanting to experience pickleball and that’s the future generation of our pickleball community and we need to make sure we have

*City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024*

the facilities for them as well. So, I think you have the commitment from everybody up here to get this done this year.

Ms. Halley: Alright.

Commissioner Menendez: I just want to mention, your recovery is amazing.

Ms. Halley: Yes, I'm doing pretty well.

Commissioner Menendez: I saw you – remember how you hobbled and wheeled around and it's a testament to what pickleball can do.

Ms. Halley: I was in fair shape before, and I think that's helped and I'm working hard at it. I hope to be back out there on the courts in January, that's the goal. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Maite, good to see you again. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Jennifer Frund.

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Ms. Frund: Hey, good morning, all, Jennifer Frund, 621 Minorca. Just wanted to let you all know that my husband and I play a lot of golf and tennis over at Granada, but we just started playing pickleball in November here at the Youth Center and we attend religiously on Tuesdays and Thursdays for open play, and when we first started, I'll admit, it was like you know, a bunch of people like me, sweaty, older, and now like really within the last few months, I'm seeing kids, I'm seeing teenagers, there are a lot of 20 year olds, oh my gosh, they play so well. But the great thing is that it brings the community together and we all play together. So, a lot of things here, especially golf, you know you see like a certain age bracket, with pickleball we've got kids, we've got teenagers, we have older people, and then we just all have such a great time, and I feel like a real sense of community. So, I pray that the Commission will find some space for us for dedicated pickleball sport. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: Jorge Diaz.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir.

Mr. Diaz: Good morning. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Jorge Diaz, resident of...

Mayor Lago: The microphone. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Diaz: My name is Jorge Diaz, resident of Coral Gables for 35 years. I want to thank you for remodeling the pickleball courts, they are great, and I want to comment that we need more. Like
City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024

the previous speaker said, its an opportunity to bring, it brings people together, and we need more, more, and I want to emphasize, it has to be open. None of that having to, what time you have to go. No, no, I go whenever I can. I'll be there whether its 8, 8:30, 9, whether I leave at one time, we overlap and that's how it works. That's how you have young people playing with old people, different genders, different ethnicities, and I think that's a good thing. I think George Merrick would be happy and proud of that. His role and his inspiration in building a community, building a city, and that's what a city is about. Thank you and humbly we need more. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Tova Teitelbaum.

Mayor Lago: How are you. Good morning.

Ms. Teitelbaum: How are you. As you can tell from my attire, I'm a pickleball player. I've been playing now for a little less than a year and its an incredible place. I go to the Youth Center, and I've made so many friends showing up, people of all ages go there. It's a place that brings community together, which we desperately need in today's time. There is a loneliness epidemic and if you show up to the Youth Center, I guarantee you'll make a friend; and I've passed by in the evenings of Tuesday and Thursday with my bike and there are definitely not enough courts. There is a massive line of people waiting to play. So, I implore you to please find space for us, so we have enough courts to accommodate our community. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Carl Leon Prime.

Mayor Lago: Is he on the phone.

Commissioner Fernandez: He's here.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Prime how are you, sir. Good morning.

Mr. Prime: Good morning, everyone. Let's see, let's dispense with this part. Carl Leon Prime, 141 Florida Avenue. Good morning to all the distinguished members of the dais. I don't have to take forever to do this. Came here this morning just to give credit where its due and for primarily the inclusion of our neighborhoods, the Golden Gate and historic MacFarlane, and all of the events and activities coming up to the centennial celebration. Now we truly appreciate the level of input that allowed us with the artwork that's coming up that will be put there, and also the inclusion in the overall history. We have to remember what our history is. Sometimes we have to be reminded that, oops, we overlooked a little bit of this with the end, make sure that its always reflected and is known. And I'd like to leave one parting thought for you today, as you continue with your business. Remember, keep peace as a constant companion. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Good to see you.
City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Going to go to Zoom next, Mr. Mayor. First speaker is Laura Milay.

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Ms. Milay: Good morning, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, neighbors. Thank you, Commissioner Castro, for adding F-10, discussion regarding the crosswalk at intersection of Ponce de Leon Boulevard and Stanford Drive to the agenda. My name is Laura Milay, and I live at 1205 Mariposa Avenue with my husband and seven-year-old daughter. We moved to Coral Gables in September of last year, and intentionally chose our home, because of its proximity to our daughter's school, West Lab, located next to the University of Miami. Our family values healthy living and we walk and ride our bikes or travel via Metro to get to school, work, shopping, etc. We intentionally avoid driving so as not to contribute to the excessive traffic in our community. In fact, its often faster not to drive to get wherever we need to go. So, we bike our daughter to and from school every day and this commute involves crossing over Dixie Highway via the pedestrian bridge, which we are so grateful for, near the University Metro Station. We then head up the pedestrian and...known as the M-path across Stanford Drive in front of the University of Miami. Every single day, we have been unable to safely cross this intersection either on the way to school or during pick up in the late afternoon. Cars are always blocking this crosswalk. We have asked motorists to move their vehicles into other available lanes on Stanford towards the Dixie light and have been argued with and mocked. We are often stuck in the center of the crosswalk when the light changes and cars are speeding toward us from both directions. It is unsafe and we fear for our lives every day. We've noticed a police presence for the first time in the past few days, and hope that will continue until a permanent solution is found. This is not just an issue for our family, but for everyone that uses the path. Other children that may ride or walk to school, University students, and others using the path for commuting or exercise. Once the Underline redesign is complete, many more will be utilizing this path too, including all of you pickleball users. We will be taking advantage of the Pilan Court Complex near Corello and the University and West Lap. Please, what can be done to make this intersection safe for pedestrians and cyclists. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

City Clerk Urquia: Robert Ruano.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir.

Mr. Ruano: Good morning. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, good morning. Robert Ruano, 1544 Mercy Avenue. I'd like to say first of all that I am a private resident 24-year Coral Gables resident. I do not belong to any special interest group, as some people have said. I was a co-founder of Bike Walk Coral Gables, which still exist and had a wonderful tour this past week, and I was at one point on the Transportation Advisory Board, but I've since left those because, unfortunately, when you get involved in things like this, people start thinking that you are part of some group and some agenda. In my case, my agenda is safety and so, I'd like to share with you a piece that's in
City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024

the Community Newspaper right now and will soon be on there in print, and I'll read it to you. In case you haven't heard, the latest tagline for road safety is Vision Zero, an initiative where US cities and states commit to ending roadway fatalities and serious injuries by a certain date. Recently adopted in Coral Gables, Vision Zero intends to end all deaths or serious injuries in all roads within the city by 2050. The Gables resolution states that the City Manager is responsible for developing and implementing a plan to achieve these results. This means that 26 years from now, no one should die from a head-on collision, lose their leg in a bike crash, be run over by a car while walking on a sidewalk, or be killed while riding on a scooter in a crosswalk. All which has happened in Coral Gables in the last five years. It was the last incident, the death of Daniel Bishop, a popular senior at the University of Miami, set to graduate this past June that may have pushed this Commission to adopt this Vision Zero policy a month after his death. While six months have passed, since Coral Gables committed to Vision Zero, its unclear what the city has done in this regard. For Daniel, who's commuting to school on a scooter, the city has not moved forward with plans to provide protected routes for students to get to the University or for pedestrians like my friend Jeff, who was a victim of a hit and run while walking on a sidewalk. Is the city ready to make all new sidewalks as safe as possible. The realty is that many cities across the country are committing to Vision Zero, because without doing so they will be ineligible for millions in federal transportation dollars. For those funds, they need to commit to end deaths and serious injuries by a certain date, but also commit to a Vision Zero mentality. This is where cities, including Coral Gables struggles. In the words of a local activist, the city has a better than nothing attitude when it comes to pedestrians, cycling infrastructure. It is this mindset, along with the not in my backyard mentality, that cities will continue to face after the Vision Zero declarations, because voting yes on that document is just the beginning of the process, for any city, especially Coral Gables. To truly achieve their goal, they need to see Vision Zero as a new way forward, not a tagline. If we are serious about ending road deaths, particularly for people walking, cycling, or scootering, we have to build the infrastructure that will result in safer outcomes. If this new mentality takes shape, everyone benefits, not just with less car traffic, but with safer streets where we can let our kids ride bikes or walk safely, with protected paths, especially to the University we can put an end to the tragedies like the one that happened to Daniel Bishop and the others over the years on our streets. If anybody wants to learn more, they should go to visionzeronetwork.org. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, I'm going to try to share Mr. Holmes video one more time.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: And I'll try doing it through Zoom to see if it makes a difference. Cable TV could put up my computer.

[Video Presentation]

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Holmes asked me to share 2 minutes and 40 seconds.

*City Commission Meeting
October 22, 2024*

Mr. Holmes: Yes. Yes. Perfect. So, if anyone wants more information on this, you can get it on my YouTube channel, Jackson Rip Holmes. Let's face it, we all brag about how Coral Gables is one of the top cities in the United States, we make a difference, and I think that the citizens probably feel the same way I do. I urge you to write to your Congress people and I urge you all, it's a very tough thing that I'm asking of you, but consider a city cease fire resolution. The public opinion poll show that the citizens support a cease fire. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Alright. Perfect.