

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-1
November 14, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Safety Director, Frank Fernandez

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-1 [1:36:20 p.m.]

An update from staff on the joint Enforcement Zone Agreement
(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is an item an update from staff on the joint Enforcement Zone Agreement.

Commissioner Lago: Director Fernandez please inform us and inform the Commission of all the great work that both the City of Coral Gables, Police Department and the City of Miami are doing together.

Director Fernandez: Yes Commissioner, as you and I spoke, last month we did our first joint law enforcement operation on Eighth Street with the City of Miami officers. As part of the agreement we have to work in coordination with them. The operation resulted in 14 arrests.

Commissioner Lago: Wow.

Director Fernandez: So, that's a fantastic opportunity to continue to strengthen our borders. You'll hear more today as we talk about the annexation process, how that's going to continue to help us, the joint law enforcement initiative you pushed forward, helping us in strengthening our strategies. Crime right now, last month we had a record, record low month; this month we are having some challenges because of Christmas coming up, but I will tell you that October is one of the highest months historically and last month the staff did a phenomenal, phenomenal job, I'm looking at the stats. The Mayor puts out these charts that track them and he can tell you about what a significant decline we've seen. And again, this leads to the area of Eighth Street and 44th Avenue, 43rd Avenue that has historically been a nucleus or a center of crime, and by working with the City of Miami we have a first multiplier and that will result in some great, great net gains for the City of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you just a quick question. Super excited about the fact that the Joint Enforcement Task Force is actually paying dividends and I know that the City of Miami now with Commissioner Suarez, which will be the Mayor as of tomorrow when he gets inaugurated. What I'd like to see, if possible, and I just want your advice and the City Manager's advice if this is even a good idea or if it can even be implemented. I'm thinking about potentially putting out there via social media, via print ads, maybe a sign of Eighth Street that says Joint Enforcement Task Force is in effect, we are in the process of commissioning monthly sting operations, your license plates are being read, because I think that we need to send a very clear message to all individuals in this community that again, Coral Gables is taking the necessary steps to protect this community. I'm up for any ideas.

Director Fernandez: The message board, yes, via the message board. We actually put the message boards out with a unique sign that helped us out; the sign says Coral Gables police advisory, police activity in the area. So, that's helped us a lot about getting that message out. I think we should add to that the Joint Law Enforcement operations, they know that it's a joint operation with the City of Miami.

Commissioner Lago: Maybe we can include it in the Neighbors section.

Director Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: I want to be careful the message we put out there for the residents, but I want to also put it out there in the sense that so people understand, you come to Coral Gables there is a high likelihood that if you are here to rob or commit a crime, we are going to catch you. We are being as proactive as possible and that fact that we went out there and we arrested

14 people, yes maybe not on the side of the City of Coral Gables, but those individuals are a stone's throw away from the City of Coral Gables and those individuals a lot of times are responsible for those petty crimes that again, happen in the City of Coral Gables.

Director Fernandez: I think it's an excellent initiative, having done 25 years in Miami, worked many, many years there along Eighth Street, both as an officer and at the command level that area has been known for quite some problem for so many years; and the fact that we are now working in conjunction with the City to address a common problem is going to yield some great, great results for both cities. So, I think it's a great leadership opportunity and we seized it. What I will do is I'm going to make sure that we look at those verbal message boards to put that message out. Additionally, we'll look at the Neighbors section in the newspaper; we'll work with Maria Higgins Fallon to get that message out what we've done, so we try to get the message out to everyone.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you for all your efforts by the way.

Director Fernandez: You're welcome.

Commissioner Lago: And, we are going to continue to do this, obviously right? I'm not asking for dates or times, but I want to make sure we do this quarterly or a monthly basis, whatever you deem necessary.

Director Fernandez: Sure, but the idea is to continue, absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: Good.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Sosa when she was Mayor of West Miami we signed an interlocal agreement with West Miami, Miami and Coral Gables to do these types of things, so it's good.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you sir, appreciate it.

[End: 1:41:04 p.m.]