

**City of Coral Gables
Virtual Commission Meeting
June 9, 2020
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli

Vice Mayor Vince Lago

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item I-1

A Resolution to name the City owned property located at 1047 Venetia Avenue,
Coral Gables, FL 33134 with the name “James T. Barker Park.”

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I-1.

City Attorney Ramos: I-1 is a Resolution to name the City owned property located at 1047 Venetia with the name “James T. Barker Park.”

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Sir, I had the pleasure of the privilege of serving on the City Commission when I was Mayor and with Commissioner Barker. He was a wonderful person and very noble person and very passionate and he was a very, very good Commissioner. And this is a fitting tribute to his memory. Do I hear a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Commissioner Keon: I didn't serve with Commissioner Barker and yes, he was a very good man in the end and as a Commissioner and think he's with was with Bell South, you know as...[Inaudible]...those things, but I have, you know have had this discussion before about the
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park and naming of things. Our parks -- that Park is currently named Venetian Park and in all of these little neighborhoods that we have purchased and usually they all carry the name, or most of them now, carry the name of the street or a location that they're on, that sort of give them a place in that neighborhood that I think is important and I don't like renaming these parks after individual people think. I think they belong to the neighborhoods and I think holding this treatment is a sign and, you know, I the process and I was told that they went through the process to have this park named in this way, and you know, and looking at it. It wasn't through community support, I mean the three letters, one is from Mark Trowbridge, one was from former Commissioner Chip Withers, who I know was very good friends with him and certainly comes as a very nice recommendation from Commissioner Withers. The other one is Ileana Ros Lehtinen, which was our Congressman for a long time. But you know, that's isn't the neighborhood that's not the people in the neighborhood that come to us and ask for, you know, that we use this park and know this park, and it will become a part of their neighborhood. It isn't, you know, it's not where Commissioner Barker lived. It's really no involvement with him. He would...[Inaudible]...that property and then we have Fewell Park because Fewell donated the land that the park sits on so it's you know, it's not -- this is to just honor him in any way, but I think that we should find a way to honor people. I mean it is just you know, I know it was mainly generated through his family who you know, obviously, you know, love and miss him, and you know, they don't want in any way to, you know have my objection to this be an objection to Commissioner Barker. It is my objection that I don't think that that's how we should go about naming that park. And I do think that there are other ways that we need to find to honor people who have served our city and have passed away. I know that when we talked about...[Inaudible]...park quite some time ago, having it established it was going to be established Memorial Park, and that that would be a place to be able to place a plaque in memory of people in the city who, you know, by families as a form of remembering. I know there's lots of opportunities to...[Inaudible]...and do a plaque near Merrick Park right across from City Hall. I know they're going to replace the Poinciana, I think the Royal Poinciana tree at some point that were there and, you know, to have a plaque put there at the time its across from City Hall. You know, I think it has value and does honor the individual. I know that Commissioner Barker was, after he passed away, maybe name a scholarship program along with Bill Cooper and there was someone else there. They renamed that to include his name in it. So, I think he has been well honored, but I don't want to see those neighborhood parks that really have become focal points for neighborhoods and places for neighbors to gather, and they should have the ability to have input into the naming of the park and the community. So, I would, you know, I don't support it because I just don't like the process and it is not reflective of in any way of Jim Barker.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Any other comments or do I hear a motion?

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, we do have a member of the public who would like to speak on this item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

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City Clerk Urquia: Its Ms. Gaye Walker. She is...[Inaudible]...

Ms. Walker: Yes. Hi. Thank you very much for recognizing me. Gaye Walker, I am currently in Western Maryland surviving the pandemic. We live right outside Washington DC. I'd like to thank the mayor and the City Commission for considering this item and everything, helping to recognize everything that my dad did over his years of service and the Commission, that several members of my family who are also dialed in. Commissioner Keon, I recognize and appreciate your concern however, I would offer that perhaps those could be considered offline since we did follow the current process as it stands and if there were any concerns or considerations that needed to be taken into account regarding the current process that maybe those could be considered side. And since we did follow the process and we had no idea that there was any question or concern about the process, and we did follow it to the "T". So, I appreciate everyone taking the time to consider this and more than 10 years that my dad dedicated to the city as a matter of America Ward and his just ongoing dedication and love of the City Beautiful. And I appreciate everyone's time and considering this.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Any other comments?

Commissioner Mena: Yes Mayor. I think Commissioner Keon, you know, I think he makes some fair points, but I think Ms. Walker's points, I think are also very persuasive in the sense of, you know, if we want to visit and discuss the criteria for naming parks, I think we kind of shouldn't do that. Maybe we could place that on the next agenda, or you know, whenever is appropriate.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's place it on the agenda. You are correct.

Commissioner Mena: And then what about because I do understand the point, you're trying to make Commissioner Keon and I think they're fair. But to Ms. Walker's point, I don't think that we should prejudice the current applicant with standards that are not currently in place when they sort of followed all the criteria on the rules and certainly, you know, he is deserving of the recognition, and so, I would be supportive of the item but I would also be supporting Commissioner Keon a discussion on the broader criteria and how we approach this going forward, because you're right that it could – it's something worth visiting so that we understand clearly what the criteria are as we proceed with other such items.

Commissioner Keon: Right. I think the criteria is very subjective and very open to interpretation by the one individual that is making...[Inaudible]...objective criteria. So, I don't like the process. I wasn't aware that that I didn't think that it was that liberally interpreted. So yeah, I would like to discuss that, and we can do it at another time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's discuss it at the next meeting.

Commissioner Keon: Billy could you put that on the agenda for the next meeting please. Thank you.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Vice Mayor, I would like to turn the gavel over to you and I would like to have the privilege of making the motion naming this park as the “James T. Barker Park.” I made the motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: Is there a second motion?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there a second?

Commissioner Mena: Yes – second.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk we have roll call please.

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Thank you very much.