

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item K
April 14, 2026
Public Safety Building, CMR
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

K - Discussion Items

Mayor Lago: So, Madam Vice Mayor, so anything good for the order.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes, I was going to follow up on a coyote issue and a couple other things. They can become used to humans okay, just like any other animal they're down at Matheson Hammock, they're down at the Girl Scout Camp, they have snatched small dogs while people were walking in other places. My daughter lives in an area where you know wildlife exists. I think there's a lot that needs to be looked at, I mean I'd like to see more education, more information from the Florida Fish and Wildlife group, because they never existed in the North Gables before. They're expanding just like wild cat population. We need to look at this more and City Manager, I'd ask for you to look into this further to see what we can do to control the population, because on these golf courses and stuff when people go walking at night, they're not looking for coyote, we're not used to this here, we're not walking with bear spray like my daughter has to walk with bear spray in certain areas, you know when you're when you're going hiking and the animals are smart enough that they understand and you know the clicking sound of the top of the bear spray going off and

City Commission Meeting
April 14, 2026

they scat, because they learn that sound and are running away from it. So, I think you're better equipped than anybody here, Mr. Manager, to bring some information back for us on that issue.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes sir.

City Manager Iglesias: Vice Mayor, the Florida Game Commission does not have a season on them, they can, with a hunting license they can be hunted year-round. They are considered vermin from that perspective and that's certainly the way that they're kept in check and throughout a lot of the counties. If you look at the population throughout the counties, the counties that are more rural don't seem to have as much of a problem because they have more of a pronounced hunting season, but it's very difficult to do that in an urban setting and trapping them is very difficult. So, we will look into it and see we're currently looking at a couple of trappers who may be able to assist us.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes sir.

Commissioner Lara: Real briefly because it's time sensitive. If you go to the My Florida Wildlife Commission web page, right now there's a link that you can click for a live presentation regarding coyote control that's being put on right now so you can watch it live and participate it's interactive, of course I'm sure afterwards it'll be available for review, but if anybody listening right now via Zoom you can click right there and watch that in a live format right now.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor anything else.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, we have our annual recycling event coming up and Mr. Anderson would you like to give us a list of everything that people can bring now because the list is growing on a number of items that we can address.

Assistant Director of Mobility and Sustainability: Yes, we will be in the City Hall parking lot April 25th, 9 to 12. Disclaimer -- there will be the Chambers 5k going on kind of at the same time at the beginning of our event, so there will be a little bit of additional traffic in the area, but you can bring your electronics, anything with a plugger that takes batteries, any clothing that can be donated to Camilla's House. We have paper shredding, sensitive documents, household hazardous waste you can bring to the event. We'll also be accepting plastic film like we do in our three city facilities.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Old shoes, old sneakers.

Assistant Director of Mobility and Sustainability: You can bring, well you can bring those to donate to Camilla's House that are still in good condition, yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, because you have clothing that can be reused.

Assistant Director of Mobility and Sustainability: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I've seen also being reused down at the carrying place. So yes, we do a lot of wonderful things, our oversized cardboard.

Assistant Director of Mobility and Sustainability: Yes. Yes, we will be taking oversized cardboard, our recycling team will be there with the recycling truck to accept those items as well.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'll see you out there. And then we have arbor day coming up as well.

Assistant Director of Mobility and Sustainability: Yes. I will let Deena talk on that one.

Vice Mayor Anderson: What time do people need to be out there to cheer on the planting of our native slash pines.

Greenspace Management Director: Yes, fifth time up today. Okay. Arbor Day is Friday the 24th at 9:30 at Fewell Park and Coral Gables Garden Club and the Landscape Beautification Advisory Board we're going to be out there set up with a tent, we're going to be outdoors, we're going to have a small program and we're going to have Dalton Goolsby from the county extension office speak about native plants and the character of Fewell Park is natives so that's our theme there and we're going to plant Pines, like five small pines in containers.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Castro: Yeah. So, the prior dog walk that I had was extremely successful and I just want to go ahead and share that we got five dogs adopted just from that event so that I'm super, super happy about that. And then, I just wanted to go ahead and mention one more time that Matheson Hammocks, it happens from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday. I was there last weekend. I won't be able to be there next weekend, but I'll be there the following weekend. It's really nice if you want to spend some family time there with your family and get a little blanket or get some food and support. I think it's a great cause and that's it.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Lara: Right. So, I just want to remind everybody I'll let them know that we have our dear friend and our esteemed former Mayor Dorothy Thomson will be the keynote speaker on Saturday, April 25th at Pioneer Day at Pinewood Cemetery in Coral Gables. It's at 10 o'clock in the morning is when the festivities start, she'll be speaking at 11 o'clock. So, I'll be there. I hope to see

*City Commission Meeting
April 14, 2026*

you all there as well. She's a treasure and she'll be speaking from the heart regarding a historic location that is just teeming with history you know and teeming with history of the oldest cemetery that we have in the county, and by way of just congratulations to you know the recent National College Men's Basketball Champions. If anybody doesn't know, it was Michigan that water tastes sweeter than ever and that's all I have to say by way of update.

Mayor Lago: Congratulations.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Well done. So go do your recycling and then come listen to Mayor Thomson.

Commissioner Lara: There you go, right back at you.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Fernandez: I have nothing today.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Fernandez: I was going to mention Dorothy Thomson, but you took it from me so.

Mayor Lago: I have a slideshow I'd like to show you. We had some distinguished individuals here in the city last week. We had the Vice Mayor for Sevilla, and we had a good turnout. I want to thank our Sister Cities and Belkys and all the museum employees. We had a conversation about Sevilla. They gave us some great gifts, really representative of our Sister City relationship which all those you know statues of the Virgin Mary and of Christ with the Cross and some beautiful prints are going to be in the Sister City's room at the Museum, but that that is the Mayor to the left from Sevilla and then you have our Consul General of Spain to the left of her. My daughter is going to be in Seville and Salamanca next month as a trip with her school, so it was exciting to really understand a lot more about Sevilla the history of Seville. It's a beautiful, beautiful city in Spain, as all of you are aware. I've been there before. I highly recommend that if you get a chance to really go there and they'll roll the red carpet out for you and they'll show you some of the most beautiful historic buildings and culture that you've ever seen. We have this presentation so I'm going to ask Lora and Nicole to send it to all the Commissioners so you can see it. It's an amazingly well-done presentation on Sevilla and it highlights you know all the great things to do in Seville and in Spain and they're very proud to be our Sister City. So, I'm going to send it to you and we're going to send it out to the residents just give me a little bit of a background on Sevilla. Number two, I'm actually really impressed so far in regard to the ballot count. As of yesterday, we should be around 8,000 as of today. Those are big numbers when you think that there's 30,000 ballots that went out, a little over 30,000 ballots, you know we get to 10,000, which I think is more than doable.

*City Commission Meeting
April 14, 2026*

The deadline is April 21st. If you submit your ballots within the next three or four days, you're for sure, for sure even potentially five days, but I wouldn't wait till five, I'll submit in the next three or four, you're pretty much uh sure that your ballot is going to count. I've been receiving so many phone calls and emails from residents just asking for information, you know contacting us with pride. I mean I don't know if you've gotten some Commissioners, but I've gotten a lot of people who are very excited about the fact when the proof is in the pudding. You have over 8,000 ballots that have been submitted. To give you an idea, to give you an idea, if you look at not the last race, because I was on the ballot and over 10,000 people voted, but if you look at the previous race in 2024 when I was not on the ballot, when i was not on the ballot and Commissioner Fernandez and Commissioner Castro were on the ballot, 6,000 plus people voted, this is already more than that, and we don't even have a weeklong of early voting. We don't even have an election day. This is just with absentee ballots. This goes to show you that there's trust in our democracy, there's trust in our democracy that that things have worked out well, that that Alina Garcia, our Election Supervisor, has done a very good job, very transparent, always available. She's been in constant communication with the Manager's staff, ensuring that everything's done. I've sent her many people have questions; I didn't receive my ballot; I signed my ballot wrong, you know what do I do; I want to track my ballot. She's been amazing, she's been complimentary, she's worked very, very hard. So, I think, God willing you know between 9 to 10,000 people voting would be significant. So, I ask anybody if you have any questions in regards to the ballots, in regards to the ballot and the referendums, please feel free to reach out to me at 786-397-3957, again that's 786-397-3957, or you can write me an email at vlago@coralgables.com and I will provide you with as much information, if you haven't received it already. We've sent out text messages, we've sent out mail, we've been engaged in the magazine, we've really focused to try to get out as many people to make sure they return their ballots and I think the fact that almost a little almost 8,000, probably over 8,000 ballots have been returned is a testament to the fact that people got the message and we've been effective in targeting individuals to come out in.

Commissioner Lara: In Town Halls, right.

Mayor Lago: Oh, we've had Town Halls. Martha Pantin has done a great job, you know really getting the message out there. So everywhere I go people are talking to me, look I voted, I voted, getting pictures constantly of people who are going out there and really you know excited about democracy, at the end of the day. So, get out there, fill out your ballots. The deadline is April 21st. I will not wait till April 21st because it's going to probably take about two days in the mail, so please try to submit your ballots by the 18th or 19th at the latest to make sure that it gets there and it counts.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor real quick. It has to be received by April 21st so you cannot wait until April 21.

Mayor Lago: If it gets there late it will not count, and as you know there's eight items on the referendums, eight referendums. So, if you have any questions, you know please feel free and reach out to my office, reach out to the Manager's office and we'll give you all the information so you can make the best decision on behalf of your family and the City of Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'm going to add to the urgency because I mailed a box to Colorado to my brother-in-law priority mail, took over a week, should have been two to three days, over a week.

Mayor Lago: So, we're tracking and we're seeing a lot of ballots coming in here at the last minute, you know we're always procrastinating and waiting till the last minute. Thank all of you. Today's been a very long day, 7: 30 p.m., we're finishing the Commission meeting. I'd like to thank staff, everyone that was here. We tackled a lot of issues. Today you saw a great example of two parks that my office has been working on for over five, six years have come to fruition and I'm very excited about that and hopefully it will be transformational for our downtown. Thank you and God bless.