

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items H-4 and H-5
August 28, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-4 and H-5 [4:40:04 p.m.]

H-4:A discussion regarding the upcoming retirement of the City Clerk
(Sponsored by Commissioner Keon)

H-5: Status of Neighborhood Planning Study for residential neighborhood north of SW 8th Street
(Sponsored by Commissioner Keon)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: H-4 – discussion regarding the upcoming retirement of the City Clerk.

Commissioner Keon: The only reason that I brought this up was related to Walter’s letter advising us that he would retiring effective December 31st and in his letter he talks about his looking forward and preparing his current staff to fill the spaces as to people leaving and he’s done a very good job of it, and he has recommended to us that Billy Urquia would be a perfect candidate to take his place when he left. The reason I brought it up is because if -- we can either at some point accept that and decide, yes we would name him as the interim or whatever the

position would be that he would take over when Walter leaves, or if you want to do a search you would have to start it pretty soon, so that's why.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I would feel very, very comfortable with Billy replacing a wonderful City Clerk who is a fink because he's retiring, I feel very, very comfortable with Billy and I would like you to make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: I am too. Are all of you comfortable with that?

Vice Mayor Quesada: So am I.

Commissioner Keon: What do you call that position?- the successor?

City Attorney Ramos: If you would like to appoint...a permanent

Commissioner Keon: We would appoint him as the permanent City Clerk as of January 1st.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So I think we are all in agreement. However, it's one of the officers; we can just wait until Commissioner Lago gets back on that.

Commissioner Keon: He can make that motion when he comes back. The other one was – my item was on we had been talking for a long period of time of looking at doing the Planning Study for the Coral Gables neighborhood north of 8th Street. We had worked with – the status of the Neighborhood Planning Study for the residential area north of 8th Street, we did a lot of work with them on the 6740 Building and had come to an agreement between the property owner and the neighbors as to how they are going to deal with the parking lot and the egress and ingress to those spaces. But for so long and so often, the people that live in that area remark that they don't look like the rest of the City of Coral Gables; and a lot of people that you talk to when you say that is the City of Coral Gables, they say, Oh, it doesn't look like the City of Coral Gables. So, you get the sense that it's not the City of Coral Gables. Some of its trees but Ponce is a very, very wide median, a very wide street there and Boabadilla is also quite a wide street. So, what I had asked the Manager is if we would look at a consultant to do the planning study and the workshops and neighborhood meetings with the community and come back with a plan that we would look at if it's affordable to us. If it is, how do we fund it, and then how do we implement it, so that it doesn't get lost in just conversation, but it really becomes an action item. So I would like to see us do that. I know there is in this package, is it under H-5? - there is a proposal that the Manager had provided with Dover Cole that is at the \$50,000 mark and I guess...the discussion earlier today that's one of the things why I asked you to give her the authority to go

through and do these things so that they can move forward without, usually within is the scope and everything of the neighborhood planning study for that area.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you want to make a motion?

Commissioner Keon: Well, I'd like to make the motion that we would move ahead with a contract with Dover Cole to begin the neighborhood planning study.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think since I've been Mayor it's always been very neglected. It's a very different part of the City. You should have seen it before, the median – we planted those trees in the median and it looked a little better, but the place is barren. I walked in the last election and I'm sure all of us did and the lack of trees is amazing, just amazing.

Commissioner Keon: Right. So it's a decision whether do you have swales?- do you have medians?- how do you do it?- and I would leave it to the urban designers, along with the neighborhood to begin to tell us, because we are not urban designers. So, I'd like to move forward with this agreement and I'm not sure how we do that.

City Attorney Ramos: You can make a motion to move forward with the agreement.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: Agreement that the Manager has...

City Attorney Ramos: She already has the authority to do it.

Commissioner Keon: Has the authority to do it.

Commissioner Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Would you call the roll please?

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And Commissioner Lago we were waiting for you. Commissioner Keon made the motion to appoint Billy Urquia as the permanent City Clerk and this being a Commission appointment. We were waiting for you...

Commissioner Keon: As of January 1st.

Commissioner Lago: Did anybody second that?

Commissioner Keon: No.

Commissioner Lago: Spectacular. I would have been able to make that motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please?

Commissioner Keon: Did you have a question about it Commissioner Quesada or you are just...till you came back – OK.

Commissioner Lago: Not that we are kicking you out, but it's been a long time coming, Billy is well deserved.

Commissioner Keon: You know and with having an election this April it's good to have all of those things in place as we move forward and not have Billy be off on another job some place.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please?

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor you might as Mayor ask Billy if he would like to say yes.

(Applause)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I would like to have in the near future an appropriate recognition for Walter and his many years of service and have a celebration and ceremony, because I think he deserves it.

Commissioner Lago: Maybe we can have some hors d'oeuvres in the downstairs area, a nice sendoff which would never be enough for the work that you have done in this community.

Commissioner Keon: We are going to move it out to the sidewalk, so we can have wine.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: He can come in a scooter and then he will join us.

Commissioner Mena: By the way Billy, do you want the job? - just making sure.

Deputy City Clerk Urquia: Definitely.

[End: 5:12:20 p.m.]