

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-6
August 23, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Deputy Fire Chief de la Rosa

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-6 [2:56:50 p.m.]

Zika Virus Update by Assistant City Manager/Director of Public Safety Frank Fernandez

Mayor Cason: Let's talk about Zika.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Thank you Mayor. We'll have CGTV help us with the PowerPoint. Frank Fernandez, Assistant City Manager, as you all recall was Deputy Chief while Chief Timmony was in Miami, and so he is in New York for the services that buried Chief Timmony after a long and respected career. So, I'd already seen his PowerPoint and I said that it would be in my honor in his absence to present. As you know, he is Assistant City Manager and Director of Public Safety for Police/Fire/Emergency Management/IT/Human Resources and Labor Negotiations, and it's this type of experience where having an ACM from Public Safety that can pull in any department, all departments at any time which is really critical. We are watching a hurricane, a tropical storm that may be brewing out there. This City does a really good job at hurricanes, but emergency management is much more complicated today. There are

manmade issues and there are also natural issues like Zika and so I have to say before I do the presentation, three things to walk away with. You started us on this more than seven months ago, so this is not an “Oh my goodness what are we going to do?” We have been doing because of the direction of the Commission. We have taken the stance that one of our most appropriate roles is to be a force multiplier for the CDC and Miami-Dade County. We are messaging the way they want us to message, and that involves drain, cover, and repel – cover being long sleeves, repel being take care of your personal selves and also, if you have a birdbath that’s out there, this is the time to drain it, the birds will find some other water. We are very much opposed to stagnant water and you’ll see how we are opposing it. So we’ll go the Zika Virus timeline. Thank you. So as I mentioned, you started us seven months ago, January 25, 2016, the Office of the Governor identified travel related Zika in three cases in Florida, two of which were Miami-Dade County. This is travel related, it got brought in. January 26th Miami-Dade County, Emergency Operations Center issues a First Flash Report on the Zika virus monitoring the virus itself. February 2016, the beginning of February, so less than a week after the County’s announcement the City Commission adopted an emergency ordinance, 2016-07, amending our City Code, Chapter 34, for establishing a fine for failure to cure a mosquito infestation. Thank you City Attorney, thank you Commissioners, especially Commissioner Keon for your leadership in forcing us to have tough teeth to act when there is an area that is harboring mosquitoes. This is again, before Zika local was detected. City staff met with and created an operational plan, a plan that has evolved over the last seven months, we’ll talk about that, Code Enforcement has done an amazing job. They began prioritizing all the standard water complaints when you are hearing about water that is left in abandoned pools, when you are hearing about ponding that is happening on top of roofs, they have been evaluating all of the known cases and then going in and also helping us address the others. External and internal communications – we had a Zika virus advisory page. It is on all of our ENEWS; we had ENEWS tips on how to protect yourself against mosquito bites, because it’s not just what is the City doing, it is what is the resident doing as well, and they’ve been good partners with us; and then we distributed, this was in February, a flyer to our City employees because we want to make sure that our City employees, 820 fulltime employees, 125 part-time employees, they are partners in this because we are pursuing an “all hands on deck.” Late July early August, our goal again was to be that force multiplier for CDC and Miami-Dade County; Florida Department of Health confirmed non-travel related Zika virus in Miami-Dade County. City of Coral Gables Emergency Operations Plan was developed and our Zika virus response was further pushed out. Our goal is to protect the public, our goal is to communicate, our goal is to identify areas which are mosquito breeding, take action, and also to protect our employees. We have a lot of employees that are out there working and we want to make sure that we have all of our employees have been issued repellent, all of our employees have been educated in the process, but then our employees are not only protecting themselves, they are dedicated to protecting the public, and I want to talk about some of the things they are doing. We have, you may not have known, 2,419 catch basins. I think it was Jessica Keller that identified what is

called a mosquito dunk, and you take that tablet and you put it in that catch basin and it's good for 30 days. So that we are addressing our catch basins, but we began addressing our catch basins Super Bowl weekend, when we authorized our storm water staff to go out and check all of our catch basins and I promised them they would be done before Super Bowl Sunday. We have been flushing Bromeliads on City property weekly, that stagnant water can create mosquito, can harbor mosquitos, so we've been flushing them out. We've asked the public to also do that. Some of our ENEWS have been "How to handle your Bromeliads," ensuring resident garbage can lids are properly secured and recycled bins are turned over. We are making sure to close those lids after we are done collecting, we are turning over those recycle bins, so that you don't open up your trash can and see a pond of water. Monitoring, identifying, reporting, abating potential mosquito breeding areas – we are looking at the roofs, we are looking at the A/C's, we are looking all over the place to take proactive action to make sure that we are not harboring mosquitos, not only on City property, but on all property. There is a higher frequency of inspections on vacant property, residential and commercial construction sites. GovQA – you all do a really good job using GovQA, you can now report on GovQA standing water on both public and private property and we get it addressed; prioritizing again the standing water, inspecting City facilities for standing water, the idea of preventing mosquitos from breeding is one of the key strategies. Focusing also, as I mentioned on catch basins, grease traps, drains, flat roofs, air conditioning units and more on downtown properties, but all commercial properties. Communication – When you count up all the different departments that are working, more than twelve City departments are fully engaged in this issue. Communicating drain cover repel, I won't...it anymore, but you know what I'm talking about, the continuous update with Zika virus, the ENEWS around town, drain and cover, posters; posters that we followed what the Department of Health wanted, but we pushed them out. We partnered with the University of Miami Emergency Management, we partnered with Crime Watch, security guards, civic groups, homeowners associations, community affairs, churches, synagogues, to distribute flyers and information. Our team has delivered and is in the process of finishing 14,000 hangers on doors so that it says in English and in Spanish and there is a picture in our PowerPoint of what it looks like and what the City is doing, what they can be doing. Visual message signs, those things that flash that usually say like "street closed " or "slow down" they are also giving out the Zika message and then if I can, and this is a different order than I was doing, so I apologize. We also developed CGTV, which I'm confident we are going to get another Telley on this one, developed a two-minute Zika Alert Video, in both English and Spanish and if we can push that out quickly. It appeared on Facebook, YouTube, CGTV, and we are still pushing it out. So can you run that, so when they catch up with me....there we go?

[At this time Video Presentation]

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: They do amazing work, and so the message is what City is doing, what you can do, we are pushing out on press releases, a Zika virus update of what is happening, what the City is doing, and what they can do to help, and then how you can report to us where you are seeing standing water, where we know that we need to be intervening, as I mentioned before it's a "all hands on deck." The door hangers – can we come back to the door hangers?- so they are in English and Spanish, just like the CGTV message, our goal is to inform and educate, and so they are pushing a lot of information out there. It's on ENEWS, it is posters, and when they talk about posters, it's at Publix, it's at the Library, it is at where people convene; and all of the businesses and all of the operations that we've reached out to had been very helpful. We are using the messaging, it was very important to CDC, every day at 3 o'clock there is a joint information center meeting, and so that's very important that they want us to stay on message, and so that's why we are doing the repelling, the draining, the covering, as a part of the message that the CDC wants us to push out. Now it's also important not only are we committed to protecting our community, we are committed to protecting our employees; and so we have said, if any of our employees are concerned, if they are outside employees, if they are pregnant, if they are planning to get pregnant, if their wife is pregnant, we want to help, we want you to be calling Raquel Elejabarrieta, she is our Director of Labor Relations. We can figure it out so that our employees can continue to serve, but our employees also remain safe. We've issued Employee Zika Advisories and you know we can do it on e-mail, we can do it with pop-up screens, but when we do it on paychecks we know everybody really sees it, and so we are pushing it out in that way as well; and then our Fire Department is going to Public Works, is going to Parks, is really educating our employees, and the Fire Department has really stepped up on this whole emergency management response, but we are also going to Police roll calls and Fire roll calls. As I mentioned, mosquito repellent is being passed out. It's optional, we want you to use it, but we are not forcing you to use it, and also doing mosquito bite prevention; and then the e-mail that I mentioned about labor relations, Risk Management saying, if you have concerns come talk to Raquel we are going to figure it out. Economic Development – this isn't just about residents, it's not just about employees, it's also about businesses, and so Javier Betancourt's team is doing a great job of engaging the business community, hotels, Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement District, how they can partner with us, with South Florida, really on tackling the Zika virus. What's our next step? Today they have not identified Zika local in Coral Gables, but this is a moving target, and so our team is going through an exercise as what if we do?- and how do we evolve our response plan to take it to that next level?- and so all of the answers and they meet again tomorrow, on Wednesday and so they will have pooled that under that possible scenario what are we going to be doing? As I mentioned before, Public Safety, Emergency Management continue every day, 3 o'clock at the Joint Information Center teleconferences, we are collaborating with Miami-Dade Health, Miami-Dade Emergency Management, Miami-Dade Mosquito Control; Miami-Dade is responsible for mosquito control, the spraying, so that while you may have your residents say, why isn't Coral Gables spraying

more?- we are following the protocol of who is responsible for spraying. And then again, we are going to maintain that consistent communication. Another City asked us, what's Coral Gables doing?- and I think when we were done explaining what we were doing their eyes were like so big in amazement, and they said, how do you do it?- and I said, because we are doing it together. The employees, twelve different departments are engaged in this Zika response. The Commission had already told us they wanted to have strong teeth involved in enforcement, and that what is the City doing?- what are we doing with our Bromeliads?- what are we expecting others?- But then we are also reaching out to the residents and to the business community, because in order for us to really reduce the ability for mosquitos to spread, look at the standing water and to educate our total public, employees included on how to take the proper steps to cover up, to spray, and to identify where standing water exist. So that is your quick operational response to Zika. The City has done, I think our staff, whether it is, as I was listing them out, Public Works, Sanitation, Landscaping, Recycling, they are all on board, the Storm Water team, Development Services, Building, Inspections, Construction sites, Code Enforcement, Police, Fire Rescue, Economic Development, Labor Relations, Human Resources, Finance and Procurement, Parking Department, Parks, IT, Communication, if I didn't mention it already. When the Assistant City Manager, who is honoring his friend today in New York, has done a great job at convening a citywide response and we are really proud of the employees and the response and cooperation we are getting from our residents. That's your update.

Mayor Cason: Very, very thorough. I had a call from the New York Times and I explained this to them and so they were pleased they didn't run any story on Coral Gables. Just a suggestion, to make sure that the garbage cans when they take out the bags that they turn the cans over, because a lot of times the tops are not fixed, sometimes they don't have tops, or they are askew, some people go out once a week and take the garbage out, so it could have a whole week's worth, so to turn the cans over as well.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I will check with our teams, they are partners in this. When you can deliver 14,000 hang tags, you can only deliver it because Recycling is there, and Code Enforcement is there, and we told them make sure that the lid is on tight. I will find out what the protocol is if something is lidless, but they are looking, they understand. Like the recycling, when I see my recycling bin, I see now they take it and then they flip it, so they are really working hard on that, but we'll take your suggestion back if they are not already doing that, they'll figure out how to do it.

Commissioner Slesnick: Two questions. Is Metro Dade spraying in Coral Gables at all for mosquitos?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I know that there...sorry, Deputy Chief de la Rosa, do you have that information regarding what spray, not in Coral Gables, but perhaps over Coral Gables what's happening?

Deputy Fire Chief de la Rosa: The only areas that are being sprayed currently are within the identified areas that they've had contact at. If the County was to expand their spraying, they would communicate that through the City Manager's office and the Mayor's office prior to them doing that. They would allow us the opportunity to inform our residents within the prescribed area of spraying prior to them starting to spray, whether its ground spraying that you have to go into your house or if they go into aerial spraying, but the only place right now that they were doing aerial spraying is over the Wynnewood area, the Beach they are just doing the ground.

Commissioner Slesnick: OK. Second question. I just ran a lot of listings this weekend and they have construction dumpsters outside and I looked inside and there is like two or three inches of water, kind of murky water.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We log those addresses; we are asking the public to...

Commissioner Slesnick: Well, I'm suggested they put in a gallon of Clorox, would that help or no?- or do you have the tablets?- can we buy these tablets...?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: What we are using is basically, it's similar to a Clorox tablet, correct?-

Commissioner Slesnick: I use Clorox on everything.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Let us find out. Let us find out on that.

Commissioner Slesnick: I just would like to know, because I was just looking. There is only so much water, but it's kind of dirty water with lumber and stuff piled on top.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We are dumping and we want cooperation, we want compliance, we want education, but then we are also taking serious steps.

Commissioner Slesnick: On a 20 cubic foot dumpster.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I understand. So we have the addresses as a part of the confirmed sites, because we are out there looking at...

Commissioner Slesnick: If we can put something in there or – I don't want these people fined or anything, I suggested to them about putting Clorox in, but I really would like to know and tell them what they could do.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Well, I will get more of the environmental friendly solution that Jessica has identified.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's a great point, maybe what we should do, I know you have to pull out a permit when you get one of those, maybe every time you pull out a permit that sort of gets put on a list of – we have to check up on them or something like that, that's a great point, because those things really can puddle very quickly.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Deputy Chief you have an answer?

Deputy Chief de la Rosa: Well what we've done is our Code Enforcement is going out on a weekly basis more than one time a week to all the construction sites, specifically to not only the trash collection sites at construction sites, but also the ones behind businesses. We have sent out a communication to Waste Management asking them if they do have a protocol for mitigating or abating mosquito infestation whatever their tents are, their collection area, if they don't then we are going to try to work with them to partner with them to make sure they do.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The idea is great because the more input we get from our residents, from obviously our Commission the more we are uncovering – we need to also think about this, and this, and this.

Commissioner Slesnick: Since things are on computer, can the computers automatically pull up permits for dumpsters?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'm sure my next conversation is going to be with Development Services after we are done with the Commission meeting, so that we find how we are immediately and if they aren't already doing it, how we can do it.

City Attorney Leen: One issue to add. Do you want to speak to that?

City Attorney Leen: See I told you its all hands on deck.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We can get the dumpsters are on permits separately, so we can pull those permits off EDEN and we'll make sure that they use that same product, you can just toss a few of those in and they'll be good for a month, and generally those in construction sites

generally are dumped less than...they are picked up more than once a month, so we will follow up on that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: See I remember when I used one year ago in the Gables and you get the permit for one, you bring it out, and I think you have to notify the City when you get rid of it, is that the way it works, I forget? So that should be very easy to track it's all in the system.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We have permits for those, yes.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And I'm curious, Assistant Chief you've been dealing with, you were talking about you were dealing with Code Enforcement on this. Are we doing any kind of spraying whatsoever?

Deputy Chief de la Rosa: No. There is very specific protocol as to when spraying is recommended, we are following and coordinating with the County. If the County was to recommend through their findings with the CDC and the Department of Health that there is an area that should be sprayed, then they will coordinate and communicate that with us.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Our Bromeliads on City property though, the landscape services is taking care of that and they have for a long time. I went actually when they were working in the patio of City Hall and I asked them, what is the process here?- what are we doing?- and so they've been on top of that for a long time.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So two quick things; number one is, what about screening or testing for Coral Gables residents that are pregnant, have we thought about doing that?- does that exist?- is that something that makes sense for us to do?- because I know there are a lot of pediatricians in Coral Gables, it seems like since I have small children, I have a lot of friends with small children, so they are on the same pediatric circuit and it seems like there are some pediatricians in Merrick Park that I feel like 95 percent of all the children in Coral Gables go to that one pediatrician. Is there any kind of conversation we should be having with them?- is that overkill or not?

Deputy Chief de la Rosa: As the Manager mentioned, we are participating in a teleconference every afternoon and this is where we use it as a clearinghouse to come up with questions like what you just said. The only patients or folks that should be tested right now are pregnant women, that specific test is being done by the Department of Health and exclusively by the Department of Health because that question was asked to us if you can go to your personal doctor and have that test conducted. All the information regarding the location, the times, the number to that testing facility is on our website. We've gone ahead and put that on our website.

We've also put a guide from the CDC for pregnant women if they have any questions and answers, if they want to do some more research on them, that link is on our website as well.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And the last thing is, my parents have a piece of property where there are mangroves and we've always had a lot of standing water. They've had mosquito issues for years ever since they purchased that home and we bought something years ago that's worked tremendously, I don't know if it's maybe something we want to implement like maybe Gables Youth Center or at the Granada Golf Course, it's called a mosquito magnet, it's a machine, but it doesn't have to be that one, but that machine I found to be incredibly, incredibly effective. So it's a thought maybe in some of the bigger public parks we have potentially pregnant women walking around and stuff.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We are taking it all seriously and it's great to have the media also covering it, because sometimes a specific product, we may not be able to endorse, but somebody on a blog can say that they've had a lot of success using mosquito magnets when we can't say it ourselves.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor one last thing. I just want to make sure it said on the record that the City Manager is exercising all authority here as necessary to address the mosquito issue. I raised that with the Vice Mayor, remember I called you about that and issued an opinion about that CA-2016-053, and invest the Manager basically with all the authority of Florida Statute 252.38, that includes emergency procurement, anything of that sort. I was able to reach the Mayor on a glacier, I believe, in Alaska and he indicated that as well, but I just want to be clear, because the whole Commission is here, she is exercising all that authority with the Mayor's permission now with the Commission's permission and support.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We just didn't want to waste time in certain aspects, how we could quickly get the repellent to our employees, how we could quickly get out those hang tags that we could quickly react for the public.

City Attorney Leen: Yes. So I want to be perfectly clear, that's authorized by state law and the Mayor's order and also by City Attorney opinion.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And the City Attorney has been very helpful in all of this process and we are grateful.

Commissioner Slesnick: FYI – if any pregnant women are watching to get to the Department of Health 305-324-2400, 324-2400.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And is that the same information that's on our website? So either hopefully they are watching this program and if they are not we'll direct them to the website.

Commissioner Lago: Maybe we should include also in ENEWS.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Yes, they have been. You will be really proud of the amount of times that this message is being pushed out in different vehicles, because you've seen it before when somebody says, nobody told me, and instead we told them like 16 different times and we are doing it in every different way.

Mayor Cason: I have a suggestion that you take this briefing and send it to the other municipalities in Miami-Dade, because as you said, somebody reached out to us and were surprised, this would be helpful for them to look at the range of things that they might consider doing, it's a regional problem.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And we are following the protocol that, I mean we are proactive in it, but in terms of the messaging we are following what the CDC and Miami-Dade wants us to do.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much. That was great.

Commissioner Lago: Great work.

[End: 3:25:44 p.m.]