

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-2
May 8, 2018
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, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Mark Trowbridge, President of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce

Agenda Item C-2 [9:55:33 a.m.]

Mayor's Comments

A Resolution authorizing the drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pan American Development Foundation, an arm of the Organization of American States for the promotion and support of hemispheric-wide STEM program.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: C-2 – Resolution authorizing the drafting a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pan American Development Foundation, an arm of the Organization of American States (OAS) for the promotion and support of hemispheric-wide STEM program. This Pan American Development Foundation is an arm of the OAS that promotes STEM, that's science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs in Latin America and we are trying to attract them to get their headquarters in Coral Gables and this would just be authorizing the City Attorney to draft a memorandum for us to look at and try to bring them here. I think it would be a feather in our cap and one more item of Coral Gables taking a leadership role in the Americas.

Commissioner Lago: It's a great idea.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Motion?

Commissioner Keon: I'll make the motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Commissioner Mena: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: All those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I have two more things. One a question on FEMA reimbursement, where are we on that?- and when can we expect reimbursement. We followed the procedures 100 percent and I'd like to know when we are going to get that money?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Sir, I can have later on in the meeting an update with Diana, she's not in the room right now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We met with the external FEMA representative last week. They complimented us for the detailed applications that we've made and that they are confident that we'll get the high level of reimbursement, but she'll be able to speak specifically about it, if we can have it later on in the meeting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good. And the last is, I would like for us to start studying, just like we did the Styrofoam and the plastic bags, plastic straws. There are billions of plastic straws dumped in the ocean every year and I'd like for us to study if there is anything we can do about that, and again, take a leadership role in the City of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Lago: I'm 100 percent behind you. What I wanted to try to do, I'm grateful that you brought this up, was to make sure that today, and I know that we have Mark Trowbridge here, maybe we can remind...but I wanted to make sure we could actually roll this out with our private entities here in Coral Gables and Publix has done that today. So, maybe you can talk a little bit about that.

Mr. Trowbridge: Sure. Good morning everybody, Mark Trowbridge...

Commissioner Lago: Have a success on our side and then we move onto the next...

Mr. Trowbridge: Well tomorrow is actually the official, official, official day when we have one year since the ordinance was fully passed, and so I think in the last six months especially, we have continued the education process and continue to get feedback from our businesses. And as you know, had a wonderful report from our partners at Publix that they have moved toward complete elimination of plastic bags and encouraging people to obviously bring their reusable bags to the grocery store, and I hope in the very near future we are going to have the opportunity to recognize them and some of our other great folks that have worked in this, but we'll be glad to help carry the water on that and have that conversation. I've noticed already a number of restaurants, either asks you to request a straw, they don't necessarily provide it, or are already moving to a paper-type product. That's all that straws used to be made of is they were paper products.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They were.

Commissioner Lago: They were.

Mr. Trowbridge: Back to the future.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Commissioner Lago would you take the leadership role on this?

Commissioner Lago: I would love to and Mayor, if I may, through the Mayor, I would like to have you come back on the 22nd if my colleagues deem it appropriate, bring Publix and bring some of the other businesses, which have lead on this, because I know that we talk about Publix because Publix is a national company, but there are some smaller companies in Coral Gables, which has taken a leadership role and have been doing this way beyond the time that we even contemplated a plastic bag and polystyrene ban in Coral Gables and we've got to give those businesses the credit, because they were the ones who started this movement and have been pushing it forward.

Mr. Trowbridge. Yes, many of them were in that.

Commissioner Lago: But I want to thank Publix, because – and there are certain people in the room here today that when I mentioned it on Tweeter they actually tagged Publix and says listen, now it's your move. They want to see it in their city, they want to see it in their state, and you see large states already moving in that direction; New York already moved in that direction, I think it

was last month, so people are noticing that a small City like Coral Gables can do it, then why can't we do it.

Mr. Trowbridge: We will be glad to help with that and continue the conversation. We actually have our next restaurant meeting on the 29th of this month, so maybe you can even come and join us and share your thoughts with that and any members of the Commission.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That would be great. Let us know.

Commissioner Lago: One last point. Yesterday, I know the Mayor was there, we had a great opportunity, a nature conservatory had a great symposium in regards to sea level rise and resiliency and the Mayor gave some great comments and harped on all the accomplishments that the City has done, this whole organization has done. And, one of the items that he brought up was plastic bags and people had an immediate interest on how can we accomplish this goal. So when you bring them here, what the intention of the Commission hopefully would be is to, not only say thank you, but to basically push them to adopt this in other cities and other municipalities.

Mr. Trowbridge: We'll be glad to work with you and put that together for the 22nd and honor those that have done the heavy lifting, but I also want to thank all of you, I want to thank Miriam and her team, I want to thank Matt Anderson, and all of the folks in the City, because it's been a process of collaboration and I really appreciate that. I think our businesses have truly appreciated that timespan for implementation and that will move forward.

Commissioner Lago: And, the reason why I brought up the nature conservatory, conservancy excuse me...

Mr. Trowbridge: And they are located here in the City.

Commissioner Lago: Which they are located here, number one; and number two, they really stressed, they didn't mention it, but they stressed, you can tell by the people who were in the room, the people who were talking that this should be a bi-partisan effort. This is not about one party; everybody has to take ownership of this.

Mr. Trowbridge: Sure.

Commissioner Lago: I look forward to seeing you on the 22nd and thank you for rounding everybody up.

Mr. Trowbridge: Thank you for inviting and we'll assist with that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much – good job.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Excuse me sir, Commissioner Lago would you mind if we had it after 11:30, whether it's one o'clock, because Matt Anderson's daughter is graduating junior kindergarten.

Commissioner Lago: I want to make sure that I have Matt, Jessica and the whole team from Public Works to make sure that everybody is here.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: That would be great. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Quesada: As a quick side note on the general area of the topic, California just passes a law for all new homes to have solar panels. I read it last night or this morning.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: South Miami.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But it's the entire state though, so that's pretty incredible.

[End: 10:01:55 a.m.]