

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-8
May 14, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant Public Works Director, Al Zamora

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item G-8 [0:00:00 p.m.]

A discussion regarding illegal dumping on Red Road/57th Ave and an update on city-wide trash pit assessment.
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. A discussion regarding illegal dumping on Red Road/57th Ave and an update on city-wide trash pit assessment.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you, Mayor. This is just -- we'll briefly discuss, and I wanted to show you certain things that are happening on 57th Avenue that I've been privy to and that I've actually caught with my own eyes and with video camera on a Saturday evening of what certain individuals in this community are doing. And if you can watch the monitor, you can see -- this is across the street on 57th Avenue where you have workers coming onto the City of Coral Gables to illegally dump on a Saturday morning at 8:30, 9 o'clock. And you'll see some other videos that we also were able to get our hands on which shows very similar activity where landscaping debris is actually, after a long day, collected throughout Miami-Dade County and then dropped off in the City of Coral Gables in someone's residence. That video should be coming up shortly. So, what we're doing here is I want to kind of get a little bit more educated in reference to staff's position in regards to this, what we're trying to do and how we're trying to -- here's the other video I was talking about -- and what we're trying to do. This was sent to me by a resident. What we're trying to do to not only limit the amount of trash pits, but also, the amount of illegal dumping that's occurring on 57th Avenue.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Good afternoon, Mr. Mayor and members of the Commission. Al Zamora, Assistant Public Works Director for Sanitation. We did do a survey along 57th Avenue. Obviously, that's one of our main corridors. And we have 93 potential trash pits on that strip of which we filled in about 57 of them, hopefully, to encourage people not to use them. We also, in addition to that, knocked on anybody that had a side elevation -- in other words, a corner lot, and asked them to please move the trash pit to the front of their homes. And that was done for two reasons; first, aesthetics and also, the broken window effect, where usually these piles, what happens is you start off with maybe a couple of palm fronds, and all of a sudden, you have a huge pile. And then the other thing is, obviously, on 57th Avenue, it's a major thoroughfare and it takes time for us to stop the truck and pick up these piles. And in turn, we create a problem with traffic. One of the things that I have observed is the amount of yard waste that's picked up in a city this size. Just to give you an idea, we're picking up 32,000 cubic yards of yard trash a year. The prior city that I worked in, yes, the canopy is not what it is here, but it's -- in some parts, it's not too far off. We were doing 11,000. The Commissioner asked me to run preliminary

numbers. I've ran preliminary numbers on what the cost is to the department on the trash function. Right now, it's at about 67 percent of what residents are paying for their total garbage bill is going towards picking up trash.

Commissioner Mena: What percentage? Say that again.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I'm sorry?

Commissioner Keon: Sixty-seven.

Commissioner Mena: What was the percentage?

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Sixty-seven percent. That's my numbers. We're doing a compensation study and it looks like the preliminary numbers are right there with me...

Vice Mayor Lago: So, for example...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Of what Kessler's doing.

Vice Mayor Lago: Just, for example, a person like myself that a year ago filled in my trash pit and beautified my swale at my expense, I'm paying the garbage fee and I'm not -- I'm having my landscaper take away the grass clippings and any tree cuttings or anything like that. Anything that I have to throw away or that I feel that I have no longer use for, I take to either, you know, to have it donated or to someone that can reuse it, so I'm not really getting that -- that 67 percent doesn't apply to me, but I still obviously pay for it. And we're seeing that it's -- that -- again, from our discussions, that this is only getting worse because the gig is up. Everybody realizes what's going on here in the City of Coral Gables.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Well, as you can see in the videos, yeah, you're right. The word is out. Bring it to the Gables; they'll take care of it. And I think at one point we probably need to stop the bleeding, to be honest with you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But there's a difference between Code Enforcement and preventing what you're talking about...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Which is very much necessary and telling people that they can't have the pits. I want to continue having my trash pit, and I think that most people in North Gables want to continue having their trash pit, as opposed to the alternatives.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, but I don't think anybody's saying -- I mean, again, I'm not saying to remove the trash pit. What I'm saying is that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You're going in that direction.

Unidentified Speaker: Well...

Vice Mayor Lago: I think there's things that we could do to streamline it. For example, you can have one trash pit between property lines and that would be a major beautification project, which would be significant for the city. We're moving in that direction for cardboard. Cardboard is a product that can be recycled. It doesn't need to be included in our waste stream. It helps the environment. It also helps the bottom line. And also, for example, these side pits, like the one that I had in my home, people should have it in their front yard. Maybe you'd be a little more considerate in regards to what you throw away when you see it every single day and it's not in

your side yard. And I think that's going to happen on 57th. It's already happened, as you mentioned, 57 pits have been filled in, except for...

Commissioner Mena: But we're not requiring it, right?

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no, we're not requiring. Except, obviously, for the homes...

Commissioner Mena: We should.

Vice Mayor Lago: For the homes that face -- there's a few homes that face 57th Avenue in between Coral Way and -- I forgot the name -- is it Coral Way and...

Commissioner Keon: Miller.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Well, actually, from 8th Street...

Vice Mayor Lago: Miller?

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: All the way up, yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah. So, there's a few homes...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Lago: They could keep their trash pit there. They can keep their trash pit there because they have no other choice. But I think we have to try to find a way to streamline the process and limit the use of the trash pit.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: The issue I see is not the residents using the trash pits. It's our gardeners and other people using...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: The illegal dumping that's happening here, I think, is really compounding the problem. I don't...

Vice Mayor Lago: So, either we can keep paying more...

Commissioner Mena: At what point -- and at what point -- you know, to the Mayor's point, I understand his point that some people want to keep it. But at what point should we be providing or incentivizing for people to get rid of it? You know, if you want to have...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What's the alternative? I mean, if you...

Commissioner Mena: Well, if I close my trash...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If you propose...

Commissioner Mena: If I close my trash...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Whoever proposes having the black containers or the green containers, I'm not going to propose that. I'm not going to...

Commissioner Mena: I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Propose that and whoever proposes...

Commissioner Mena: I can tell you...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That is going to be...

Commissioner Mena: I can tell you the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Unpopular person in the City of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Mena: I can tell you the alternative. I closed mine. I asked my gardener to start taking the debris away. He said okay. He didn't charge me any more, and I stopped putting things out and I planted grass.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I...

Commissioner Mena: And I'm still paying the trash fee...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: Sixty-seven percent of which is going to basically subsidize all of those who want to continue to have it. So, I think there's room for a discussion about possibly incentivizing people getting rid of it by giving them maybe a break on their trash fee or something like that. I think it's a worthy discussion to have.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: And by no means am I saying eliminate them, but maybe control them.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I'm happy you said that because...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm all for that.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'm happy you said it because...

Commissioner Keon: I agree.

Vice Mayor Lago: I just want to put on the record -- and I agree with Commissioner Mena's comments. Once you get rid of the trash pit, it's like, you know, you're released.

Commissioner Mena: It's pretty easy...

Vice Mayor Lago: It's easy.

Commissioner Mena: Honestly.

Vice Mayor Lago: It's easy. It's not that difficult.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What do you do with your newspapers, your bottles, your...

Commissioner Mena: Recycle.

Commissioner Keon: Those are recycled.

Vice Mayor Lago: I recycle everything. I recycle everything. And what I've -- for example, even my Publix bags, you know, plastic bags -- because sometimes my wife shops outside the city and brings them in -- I save them and I take them back to Publix. That's just me. Number one, I will never advocate removing the trash pits. I don't want to be enemy number one here in the City of Coral Gables. But what I want to...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

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Vice Mayor Lago: I just want to be clear to the Mayor's comment.

Commissioner Mena: I might.

Vice Mayor Lago: But Commissioner Mena's right. Look, when we're paying 67 percent, we're subsidizing. Why not give an individual, let's say, like my two other colleagues on the Commission and say, hey, we're going to give you a reduction in your trash fee if you remove -- I know it's a lot more work for staff. I know it entails keeping track of who has a trash pit and who doesn't, but we -- there's got to be a better way of doing things.

Commissioner Mena: It's a major...

Vice Mayor Lago: There's got to be a way of doing it.

Commissioner Mena: We spend so much time...

Vice Mayor Lago: It's only getting worse, the money wise.

Commissioner Mena: We spend so much time on the beautification, on orchids, on...

Vice Mayor Lago: Swales.

Commissioner Mena: Traffic signs, and then we let trash pits run rampant?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Mr. Mayor, if I may.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: (INAUDIBLE) -- I'm sorry.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: So, regarding 57th Avenue, we do have a policy in place where if it's a side elevation, you must use your front elevation. In other words, you cannot continue to use your side elevation for a trash pit on 57th Avenue. Is that not correct?

Vice Mayor Lago: Is that an ordinance?

Unidentified Speaker: Is that a request or ordinance?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: That's a policy. It's a policy.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Now, that we've researched the Code, it does give the City the option to enforce you moving the trash pile.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: It's policy on our part.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Originally, we had gone out and knocked on doors and asked nicely. We got some people that complied. We have some people that told us to -- you know, no.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: So...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: But we do have this.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I think...

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Lago: And I think, by the way, what we talked about before with Brook about the trees and the landscaping that's forthcoming on the swale on 57th Avenue, I think that's also going

to deter people from dumping. I mean, if you're going to come here to illegally dump and you're going to dump over, you know, some nice ground cover and the trees that are there, I mean, that's -- that would be, you know...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: And in connection to illegal dumping, I think that we can work with Police and IT where there are hotspots where we can actually have cameras in place and see if we can catch some of these perpetrators in the act. And then that will -- if we have an enforcement policy which has some teeth in it, then that might discourage some of the players from doing this.

Vice Mayor Lago: So, what do you need from us in regards to enforcement policy?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Well, we'll have a discussion with IT and Police to see how we can deploy cameras, that they are discreet and so that we can actually catch folks doing this. And then after that, we need to have the enforcement act of reaching out to them saying, listen, if you continue to do this, we're coming after you for illegal dumping. So, I think that might actually work in our hotspots.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: And one of the bright spots is just recently we added a right-of-way inspector, which is an ex-Code Compliance officer. And I think, on the educational piece, that's going to help us, I mean, a lot. So, we're making some strides in trying to educate people on, you know, the difficulties of us dealing with this problem that we have.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I know we have a study going on right now, but could you do me a favor and -- just to educate myself and the entire Commission. Al, send us the last three years or five years to see how the trash pit waste, the green clippings, where -- the direction that's headed because it's only increasing. And we all have a fiduciary responsibility. At one point, we have to say, okay, can we continue to subsidize -- like the videos that I've shown -- the dumping that's occurring here.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: The one thing I want you to keep in mind is when I send you these numbers is you're going to find out that in 2017, because of the hurricane...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: The numbers are skewed.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: But -- and as we recover from that, you're going to see that the numbers are going to keep rising as far as, you know, trash -- amount of trash put out on -
- because things start growing and things start coming back.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Mena: But again, I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Mena: I still -- I don't want to take away anybody's trash pit.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: No.

Commissioner Mena: But I want to incentivize them to get rid of it...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Mena: If they will do it voluntarily, so how do we do that?

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Commissioner Mena: Maybe it is a break -- what's so bad about that?

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I'm not proposing eliminating the service. Maybe you get 12 a year on call. I mean, there's a lot of options out there...

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: That you can discuss.

Commissioner Keon: That trash pits are a -- they are so near and dear to people's hearts...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: In the city. You are asking for...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's absolutely right.

Commissioner Keon: I don't...

Commissioner Mena: So, don't get rid of them.

Commissioner Keon: Think it's worth it. Okay, I don't. The problem is...

Commissioner Mena: Keep it.

Commissioner Keon: If you start incentivizing people or you reduce your fees because you choose not to have them, the only way you're going to continue to -- if the bulk rate isn't going to go down so much from your one or two individual ones that you're going to start increasing, you know, people that have them and we've deemed it as a city service, so you may voluntarily choose not to participate in that service, but citywide...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm not going to be part of that, yeah.

Commissioner Keon: They do. And so, I don't think you want to do that. What I do have a question about when you went in along 57th Avenue and you filled in those trash pits, are they trash pits that are being vacated, or you're just filling them in?

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: We're just filling it, and hopefully, the idea is that, you know, now that it's not a hole anymore...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: That they'll...

Commissioner Keon: But are the residents that live along there, are they using those trash pits?

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Yes, they are using them.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, they're using it?

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Of course, they are.

Commissioner Keon: Because I think we really need to look at -- and I know I've had a discussion with both Ed and (INAUDIBLE) about the areas in the City where you really shouldn't vacate. Those trash pits that should be vacated and sodded over, and particularly, all of those areas that are where the trash and garbage is from Waste Management. It's not the City. They're not paying the City for any trash or garbage because they pay Waste Management. And a lot of them are the smaller buildings and the duplexes throughout the city. There is a trash pit on the side yard of every one of them and they dump stuff there and our City crews go and pick them up. They should be filled and sodded over and vacated and management or whoever has those buildings need to know that they need to talk to Waste Management about removing their debris. The City is not going to remove that debris. So, when you identify those, they really -- they should be -- and any place in the city where there's a vacant lot, there should be no trash pit. It should be vacated, and it should be sodded over. So, those are, you know, some spots that you can very easily take out of the system and not even provide the potential for illegal dumping.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, let's...

Commissioner Mena: That's the enforcement of the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's go on to...

Commissioner Mena: Well, hold on. Enforcement of -- we have a requirement -- I forget the exact language now, but there's a requirement on the size, right, of the...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Of the pile.

Commissioner Mena: Material, like four by four or something.

Vice Mayor Lago: Cubic yards.

Commissioner Mena: Cubic yards or something.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: It's actually three by three right now.

Commissioner Mena: Okay.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: One cubic yard.

Commissioner Mena: And that gets just egregiously violated.

Vice Mayor Lago: Every day.

Commissioner Mena: And that's...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: But how do you enforce something like that, though? I mean, I think me and the Manager are working on a number that's a little bit more...

Vice Mayor Lago: Realistic.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: Enforceable.

Commissioner Keon: Realistic.

Commissioner Mena: Okay.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I'd have to enforce -- I'd have to have an army of Code Compliance officers to enforce one cubic yard. I mean, that's...

Vice Mayor Lago: I agree.

Commissioner Fors: I do like the idea of incentivizing it.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I don't want to tie people's hands.

Commissioner Mena: Right, right.

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: I just want to manage it.

Commissioner Fors: I like the idea of incentivizing. I think it's worth looking into. And even if the bulk weight, the mathematics don't work out, we don't necessarily have to incentivize people with that full 67 percent.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Fors: A certain -- you know, up to a certain point may be enough of an incentive. I don't know what -- exactly what that number is, so...

Vice Mayor Lago: I mean, we're the City Beautiful.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Guys, we're going to get into trouble. I warn you...

Commissioner Fors: I just have one question.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You were just elected, but you're going to get into trouble. You're going to become a very unpopular person because people love their trash pits.

Commissioner Fors: No, my father loves his trash pit. My wife hates it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Fors: So, we're a house divided.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: He's not going to like you.

Commissioner Fors: But my question really, which I forgot to ask is with the incentivization, how -- the immediate thing that came to mind is how challenging would it be to keep track of who removed it, kept it removed and is not taking that benefit unjustified to prevent tax -- trash pit fraud, if you will?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: That would be tough.

Vice Mayor Lago: Well, but listen, can you do me a favor? Because you have a lot of experience and you've worked in this county for a long time in regards to trash. Can you -- maybe the better word is sanitation. Can you do me a favor and educate us, as a Commission, on what other cities are left that are doing what we're doing?

Commissioner Mena: Exactly.

Vice Mayor Lago: Especially -- again, our name is the City Beautiful.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Lago: So, I want to educate my colleagues...

Commissioner Mena: It's laughable at this point really.

Vice Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: If you drive the County and you find trash pits, you know that they're doing what we're doing. I think right now Miami is the only other...

Vice Mayor Lago: Out of 34 municipalities, the City...

Assistant Public Works Director Zamora: City that I know of that's doing what we're doing. The city I come from, which is Miami Beach, we gave the residents seven free pickups included in their price a year. We can make that 12. We can make that 15. The problem is we need to manage it so it's not almost the broken window effect is what...

Vice Mayor Lago: And another issue too that I want you to help me out with, please -- and I know I've asked for a few things to get information for us. There's also the issue of pollution. I mean, people -- I've seen paint cans. I see all kinds of products that are -- the liquid that are in bottles that you don't even know what that is. Is it gas? Is it -- whatever it may be, it's polluting the swales. At the end of the day, our drinking water, you know, it's an issue.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But we're talking about trash pits. I mean, that's (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, but that's...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Lago: Falls into it.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: That's where our enforcement officer comes in and you'll be working on issues like that.

Vice Mayor Lago: On the way here today, I wrote to Chelsea and said, listen, on Alhambra, there's a house with a trash pit that has three, five 2-gallon -- I think it's 5-gallon buckets of paint just sitting in the trash pit. That shouldn't be...

Unidentified Speaker: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: That should be properly disposed of.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: There's also an educational outreach component to that as well.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Maria Cruz wants to speak.

Commissioner Mena: I hate to say it, like the education idea is nice, but...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: I know I can't do that.

Commissioner Mena: You and I both -- it's -- listen, it's embarrassing. I mean, it's really embarrassing. Drive around the entire county and we're the only city you drive through that has these heaping piles of trash on people's front yard. It's unbelievable, honestly. And it's gotten to the point, I'm sorry, but I see it...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And if you drive...

Commissioner Mena: Left and right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If you're driving in Miami on certain days, you see this big, huge green buckets or blue buckets in the middle of the street.

Commissioner Keon: No, no, no, no, no.

Commissioner Mena: Those are two different issues. That's garbage and trash.

Vice Mayor Lago: That's garbage.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's almost as ugly as...

Commissioner Mena: That's garbage versus trash. And then the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well...

Commissioner Mena: And...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: But Miami...

Commissioner Mena: What's worse? I don't know what's worse?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Miami does have bulk pickup.

Commissioner Mena: Hmm?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: And they do have the problem with pits.

Commissioner Mena: Right, but you call for it, right?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: No. No, they have the problem with pits.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, but they're -- look, like if you go to Key Biscayne and you go to Pinecrest...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Vice Mayor Lago: You go to cities that are similar -- I'm sorry to say this -- but caliber of what the City of Coral Gables and what we aspire to be, you know, there comes a point where you think to yourself, okay, how -- we call ourselves the City Beautiful. Is this in line with the aesthetics that we -- you know, we're trying to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is in line with livability, yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, I know, but I'm...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: This is just as important.

Vice Mayor Lago: But I think -- I'm not saying to -- I'm not advocating to get rid of people's trash pits. What I'm saying is let's incentivize people financially to find a way to say, okay, let's start chopping away at this number.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: I did it without -- just because of the bottom line because, again, it's environmentally sound and I thought that aesthetically, when I went to my side yard, I didn't want to see a massive pit. And I woke up one day and there was a bunch of debris in my trash pit. There was about 200 roof tiles on my trash pit. And I remember telling...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Whoever put that there should be fined.

Vice Mayor Lago: But how...

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: But they never will be.

Commissioner Mena: You know they won't be.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Ms. Cruz, you want to say...

Commissioner Mena: I don't have a dog, but somehow, there were little bags of dog poop in my trash pit...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Let's...

Commissioner Mena: All the time, so you know.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let Ms. Cruz say -- have her say.

Maria Cruz: Once again, you're touching on very sacred grounds here. You have people that one of the things that they love about this place is they do have two pickups -- you know, that you have pickups every week. If you start talking about reducing, changing, you're going to be on very, very difficult place; number one. Number two, when you're talking about incentivizing, alright, think about what you just said, Mr. -- Commissioner Lago. You convince this person to remove the pit, but I want to keep mine. You know where her garbage is going to go? On mine because that's what happens. There are people that do not have pits, and guess what? The neighbors think that that's the community pit and they put it all there. So, you're not solving the issue. The issue is, if the pits are for green matter, you know, vegetation or whatever, it should be only for that, and

that's what needs to happen. There's nothing wrong with having yard clippings in front of your house. To me, that's -- you know, that's normal.

Commissioner Mena: It is normal...

Ms. Cruz: It's not ugly.

Commissioner Mena: Here.

Ms. Cruz: It's not ugly, okay. But when you start having furniture and...

Commissioner Mena: Refrigerators.

Ms. Cruz: Other stuff...

Vice Mayor Lago: That's...

Ms. Cruz: Well, then enforcement is the issue, okay. Enforcement is -- you know what, you have the way to charge -- you know what, maybe instead of, you know, a little warning or maybe instead of \$100, it should be \$500. Make people think that I cannot do that. And you know what, Code Enforcement, when they do -- and let me tell you, they can figure out where the garbage came from. I have seen them going through the trash and they have found labels and they have found - - and they have gone after the people that dump in there. It can be done, but you need -- you know what, you don't want the clippings in front, get a container that can be put in and they can take it. You know, there are some issues. We're still waiting for the recyclable -- covered recyclable so we can get rid of the paper and the cardboard, okay. So, there are ways to do it. And do not -- please do not compare our city with other places, how they do it. If we wanted to be the same as everybody else, we wouldn't be living here.

Commissioner Mena: Well...

Ms. Cruz: Okay?

Commissioner Mena: I hate to break it to you or anybody else, but we're not the best at everything. There's things that...

Ms. Cruz: Well...

Commissioner Mena: We're not the best at.

Ms. Cruz: Well, we should be the best.

Commissioner Mena: And we should be embarrassed at this issue because we're not the best at this.

Ms. Cruz: But there's some (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Mena: That's the reality of it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: And anybody that wants to deny that I think is in denial. I think...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria.

Commissioner Mena: Just drive around.

Vice Mayor Lago: Maria, we do...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria.

Vice Mayor Lago: You and I -- you and I...

Ms. Cruz: (INAUDIBLE) solutions.

Vice Mayor Lago: Maria, you and I agree on many things, but look, we do rear pickup here, which is not -- not many other cities do that, but we do an exceptional job in reference to that and that's something that we need to do in perpetuity forever because it's...

Commissioner Mena: Agreed.

Vice Mayor Lago: It's a -- it symbolizes what we stand for. Listen, I don't have an issue or a problem leaving pits for clippings. If I have an issue to throw away a chair, for example, and I -- it can't be recycled, or it can't be given away to, you know, the American Red Cross, whatever it may be, I leave it on my driveway and it comes and it gets picked up. But the idea that -- and I see it when I'm with my daughters in our street using the bikes and, you know, skateboarding and roller skating. I see random pickup trucks and white vans roll up to the house, open up in the side -- I don't know who these people are -- and they start rummaging through our garbage, happening up and down our street. Do you know who these individuals are? I don't know who they are. Do you want these people -- I'm not saying they're bad people, but at the end of the day, they're looking for, you know, material and items to recycle. You know, I -- it's just we could do better. And I don't think it hurts us at all, especially as we have the study going on now, to look into these things. Maybe we can see what other people are doing and what has worked and what hasn't worked. But I'm not advocating -- and I want to be clear, again -- and I don't think Commissioner Mena is -- getting rid of people's trash pits. Let's incentivize it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Let's go on.