

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item F-5**  
**December 9, 2025**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, 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)**

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Agenda Item F-5 [Start: 12:44 p.m.]

Discussion regarding contractors with expired permits and the requirement that all open permits be closed out before they are allowed to obtain new ones. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: Moving on to the last item before we go to lunch, F-5. Okay. So, this is a discussion regarding contractors with expired permits and the requirement that all open permits be closed out before they are allowed to obtain new ones. Why am I bringing this forward? So, this is once again me writing legislation to hurt my industry. I wrote the legislation that did not allow exterior construction on Saturdays. I received phone calls from every contractor in town along with multiple different organizations saying, Vince, this is terrible for business, but it's great for quality of life and it's worked out well. Even though it goes against my own personal interest. This is another one that goes against my own personal interest. We are the city that allows contractors to open new matters, new permitting matters, without closing out existing permits that could have been expired. Let me tell you why that's a problem. It's a problem and I learned this from a gentleman who's a building official in the City of Miami named Peter Iglesias, who I went to see one day because I had an expired permit in the City of Miami, and I had just received a pretty

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significant contract in a hospital. And I went to pull this permit and the individual on the counter told me, sir, you cannot pull this permit. You have an expired permit. And I said, well, I went to find out the information. It had been expired for six months. And the issue at hand was an issue in regard to inspections. We hadn't called an inspection in six months. We were waiting for some material to come in. So, my permit had lapsed. That's something that can be corrected by paying a fee. What I want to stop is residents who are selling their homes and think they have a CO, but they have an expired permit. The contractor has moved on and there's no accountability. There's no accountability in my industry here in Coral Gables where a contractor can pull another permit while having an expired permit. So, what I believe it should be incumbent, not on the employee like yourself, should be incumbent on the contractor to clean up all their expired permits. What will that do? That will ensure accountability. That will also bring more money to the coffers because to reactivate these permits costs money. And at one point when Surami Cabrera was here, before she was run off from the city, one of the most capable and competent people I've ever met in my life, and South Miami picked her up in a whim in two seconds when we ran her out of here, there were thousands of expired permits. That was reduced and reduced and reduced, reduced to how many, Mr. Manager?

City Manager Iglesias: Very few, Mayor. Very few.

Mayor Lago: Very few. We're talking about less than 100, right?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Mayor Lago: From like six or 7,000 expired permits, my understanding. Correct me if I'm wrong.

City Manager Iglesias: There were about 7,000.

Mayor Lago: 7,000. So, while I know the facts may not be convenient for certain people, and that's fine, but this piece of legislation will bring accountability and will bring money to the city. And it's something that I will get heat from people who support me, but at the end of the day, it's the right thing to do. Every general contract should be monitoring their permits. You need to monitor your permits. You need to see where you are. How far are they from expiring? Because if you don't call an inspection, they expire. You just can't have a permit open in perpetuity. That's not the way it works. So, this is about compliance, and this is about protecting residents. So, when you go to sell your house or your apartment or your commercial building, you don't get that unpleasant instance where you say, hey, by the way, I have an open permit and an expired permit. I can't do anything about it. At that point, you got to figure it out. You have got to address an issue. Our city's not going to just allow you to reactivate that permit without addressing what is the scope and breadth of that permit. And who knows at that point where the actual process has gone and whether you're in compliance of the new standards in regard to the building code. Things change. Things

evolve. So, this is why I put it on the agenda. This is why I wanted you to talk about a little bit about with you in an effort to write legislation to be able to address this issue. Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: To me, this is a no-brainer. I mean, do we need a vote on this? I'd be happy to move it.

Mayor Lago: I wanted to make a vote on it. Madam City Attorney.

City Attorney Suarez: So, I think we can bring an item back, the appropriate legislation next meeting.

Mayor Lago: Okay. I'd like to hear from the Director if possible.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, I think an item would be good, but we're going to implement that immediately because expired permits are notorious in roofing and pools and additions. As you mentioned, people find out when they sell their homes and they realize that they have open permits and they've been expired for years. So, I think it's great to do this and it really is a huge help for our residents.

Mayor Lago: I also want to commend you, Mr. Manager, because I think for a long time, we had discussed permits, and a lot of permit applications were left blank. Permit entities were not putting their names. Addresses were missing. There were a lot of weird things happening here with permits over the last few years. And I'm happy that over the last few weeks, Lissette Lopez and your team have done an incredible job to really clamp down on that, to ensure that you just can't, you know, submit documents without the proper information. Other cities, when you go to the City of Miami, for example, by the way, that permit, the then Building Official, Mr. Iglesias, did not allow me to pull a permit. It took me almost two months to pull that permit because I had to address it, I had to reactivate that permit and address the situation, call the necessary inspections, close that permit, and then I was able to open the next permit after I had reactivated that permit. We've also been noticing that, and I'm seeing this when you look at the documents and you look at the computers, that there's a lot of permits. The permit information is very ambiguous. A lot of the fields are left blank. There's a lot of things that are happening. Addresses, general contractor numbers, you know, owner, owner numbers, architect names are missing. Those, when they're inputted into the system, it should not be accepted, and that has changed as of the last two weeks, unless the entire information has been provided. And I understand why that was happening before on certain cases, but again, we want to be as transparent as possible, especially when we're dealing with permits. Mr. Manager, do you want to touch on that one second?

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That all open permits be closed out before they are allowed to obtain new ones*

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Mayor. We have taken care of that two weeks ago. When an application is in, once that application has been accepted, it can only be changed internally through the Building Department. We cannot have applications that don't have contractors, owners, and so forth. When you have an application that you don't have an owner, you don't have all that information, it's almost impossible to track. So that has been corrected, and those applications will be either voided or corrected by internal staff.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Fernandez: I think this is a no-brainer. When we bought our first house in the city, when we got married, our closing was delayed two months because of an open permit that the property had on the driveway. And they thought it had been closed out when they had done the driveway, but the driveway company never requested the final inspection. And it took a few months because they had to come back with the drawings, they had to come back and make sure that what had been done, I think it had been 10 years, and it was done the way it was supposed to have been done. So, I think this will save a lot of heartache for our residents and address an issue that continues to grow.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, I'll be presenting this legislation. I'll be working with the Director and the Manager on this front to present legislation at the next Commission meeting. But again, I would like for the Manager to adopt this principle now. I know we're going to codify it in January, but I don't want to waste any time, Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor. We've already adopted it. But I think it would be good to have legislation so that it stays permanently.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: Not subject to any interpretation in the future.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Director, as I always tell you, thank you. I constantly send you residents and business owners, you never say no, you're always helping out. I'm grateful for that. Thank you for your hard work as always. You're a gentleman and your staff is doing an amazing job. We're going to take a break for the next 20 minutes until 1.15. I know we have a one o'clock time certain who's going to get a quick bite to eat. And then I'll see you here at 1.15 so we can commence with the one o'clock time certain. Thank you very much.