

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items F-11 and F-13 are related
September 26, 2023
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 Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Parks and Recreation Director, Fred Couceyro

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Karelia Carbonell

Ed Santamaria

Agenda Items F-11 and F-13 are related [3:10 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission directing that City Staff amend the proposed Annual Budget of estimated revenues and expenditures for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024 prior to the Second Reading of the ordinance adopting said budget in order to reallocate funds in the Capital Projects Budget from Phillips Park to the restoration of the Alhambra Water Tower.

(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

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(Sponsored By Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Moving on to F-11, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: May I ask if we can, at least for presentation purposes, do F-11 and F-13 at the same time because the analysis is similar?

City Attorney Suárez: I'll read them both into the record then and we can do them together. So, F-11 is a resolution of the City Commission directing that City staff amend the proposed Annual Budget of estimated revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024, prior to the second reading of the ordinance adopting said budget in order to reallocate funds in the Capital Projects Budget from Phillips Park to the restoration of the Alhambra Water Tower. F-13 is a resolution of the City Commission directing that City staff amend the proposed Annual Budget of estimated revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024, prior to the second reading of the ordinance adopting said budget in order to reallocate funds in the Capital Projects Budget from Phillips Park toward the City Hall Complex windows.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, the City Clerk provided you the papers to hand out, and the City Attorney's already got her copies, and then we can bring up these items to discuss this in a chronological fashion.

Commissioner Menendez: You couldn't have made the print a little bit bigger on this?

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's why we have the one that's going to come up on the big screen. One day, I hope that we have screens here like South Miami does.

(COMMENTS MADE OFF THE RECORD)

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah.

Commissioner Fernandez: Or a projector.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Whatever. So, you know. How did that get unrotated? Okay, turn your head. Wait, I put those in the right direction. No, you have to be upside down. Maybe someone can rotate them.

Commissioner Menendez: There you go.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You know, my trick is you use the phone and put it on picture mode.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct. And then you'd snap it and then, yeah.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, and you can zoom in. So, this is a reproduction on the first page. Clerk, can you guys rotate those? Because I rotated them before I sent them.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes. They're doing it right now.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: Or everybody turn your TVs sideways.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, we'll pause for a second. I think it'll go a lot smoother if we just wait for a moment.

Commissioner Menendez: There was actually a David Lynch comedy years ago that had that happen. Everybody at home was turning their TV sideways because the camera turned while they were filming a show.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah, when you were capable of turning your TV sideways.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes, now it's a laptop.

Commissioner Fernandez: True.

Commissioner Menendez: That's true. Now...

Vice Mayor Anderson: I mean, I've done that with my laptop. I've held it sideways.

City Clerk Urquia: Ma'am, you might want to go on. It's taking them a second to rotate it.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Wow, I'm sorry. I was a little quicker. Since Commissioner Menendez just stepped off to use the restroom...

Commissioner Fernandez: No, we don't have quorum.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, no.

City Clerk Urquia: You don't have a quorum.

Vice Mayor Anderson: A picture is worth a thousand words. So, do you have your reading glasses, sir? That might help.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll just put the paper really close to my eyes. It's okay.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Well...

Commissioner Menendez: We're good, we're good.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Look at the first page. This was our July draft budget and at that time I discussed with you shuffling or moving the money around instead of holding it in reserves for -- prioritize the City Hall windows. So, essentially, you take the -- a portion of the \$4 million that's being held for next year on Phillips Park, move it up to finish the City Hall windows. And instead of funding City Hall windows next year or City Hall projects next year, we move the money back down. We fund -- we finish funding Phillips Park. And the same analysis equally applies on the water tower. Now, if we have some other money come in down the line, we can reshuffle things back and forth to make sure that we maintain these projects being on time. I don't know about on budget, but on time. We'll cross that bridge when the time comes, depending on what the cost of cement is. and we have a resident that emailed us today with their opinions about, you know, Phillips Park. So, we all can digest that in the meantime, you know, before the presentation time. So, where does the money come from? So, staff put together on page 2, the before and after effect. And there's no loss of money here. Right now, on the top part of the page, you show there's \$4 million. I put in the word escrowed because that's essentially what it's doing. It's holding the money. It's a place marker. We can't do anything with it in the meantime. We need to wait for the rest of the money to come in to finish out the planning stage. Not that we can't do some more planning and have meetings in the meantime to make sure we launch on time, but it's escrowed. Essentially escrowed doing nothing there. It's like a reserve. So -- and it's not a hurricane reserve. It's just a reserve for Phillips Park so we can shuffle things back and forth. The bottom of the page has the proposed alternative. The windows get fully funded. We can, you know, flip the switch and get these ordered this year. Going through the process, applying to the Historic Preservation Board to comment in it. But we can actually get it going because there's lead time, as you know, for everything going forward. I've -- Manager, you can correct me if I'm wrong, but you know, if we were ready to order the windows today and we finished all the design with everything else, it's going to take, what, six months to nine months to get it them in?

City Manager Iglesias: Your order will be at least six months.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And then we've got to get them installed, et cetera. So, I'd like to get the ball rolling sooner rather than later. Same thing happens with the water tower. I mean, I went by that on this tour and it's in really bad shape. Same thing with this building. You can see the water damage below the sill levels, you know, seeping into this building. So, it's not just the cost of the windows that we're talking about, but you know, abating and stopping the continued damage to this historic structure as that water is getting in and affecting, you know, the building itself. Because we all know that water erodes rock, water erodes buildings. You know, we wouldn't have the Grand Canyon but for water. But you know, it does have its erosion effect and that's why we have caves and that's why we have streams underneath our city itself. Next year, '25, instead of the money, there's the red dollar signs there where the money is not being needed for the water tower, where the money is not being needed for City Hall. It goes right back into Phillips Park, and it's fully funded at that point. It's not a stall tactic to -- it's not retribution. This was something I asked for back in July. As directed to the windows, I know that some folks have misread this as being, you know, retribution for this or retribution for that. I take every issue separate, okay? This is all good stuff. All these projects are great. We'd like to get them done sooner and that's what this is about. So, I'd like to go ahead and take comment, and then we can, if appropriate, I'll make a motion on the -- which one's first, F-11? We should probably do...

Mayor Lago: Yeah, we'll do F-11 first.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We can do them in order. F-11, we'll do F-13 afterwards.

Mayor Lago: But I think also something besides the fact that this is something that we've been talking about a long time already, you know, the benefits are key in regards to the insurance valuations and protecting the City and the envelope and, you know, a beautiful City Hall. Outside of aesthetics, which we're having serious issues here, we took care of the roof last year. This will be the final piece in ensuring the envelope is secure. Mr. Manager, I'd love to understand, maybe by the next Commission you can provide just a little bit of guidance from insurance in regards to what could we potentially see as a benefit if we get these windows done.

City Manager Iglesias: Well, in this building, we probably save 15 to \$20,000 a year.

Mayor Lago: Right. So, besides that...

City Manager Iglesias: Because of the impact protection that it provides the building.

Mayor Lago: Well, you -- that's another positive benefit. You'll see a cost savings in regards to insurance. It'll be a safer envelope and it'll protect the building. Again...

City Manager Iglesias: In addition, Mayor, it would be mold and...

Mayor Lago: The purpose of bringing this resolution forward, like the Vice Mayor said, is very simple. It's not to defund another project, it's to -- while we wait for design, public comment, construction documents to be taken care of, which will probably take four to five months, you have to take that out to the street. We're not going to start for this park for a year to a year and three months, a year and four months. We could potentially have this building shored up in a good condition probably in nine months because I imagine, Mr. Manager, it's not only ordering the windows. When the windows come in, we have to probably prep each window by itself.

City Manager Iglesias: It'll be quite a bit of carpentry work.

Mayor Lago: Yeah, so it's probably going to be about three months. I don't want -- three months is just a guesstimate. It's probably going to be about three months. With how many windows do we have, you said like 90?

City Manager Iglesias: A hundred and something.

Mayor Lago: A hundred and something windows.

City Manager Iglesias: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Lago: Just the amount of window prep -- the amount of window prep after so many years is going to be extensive. So, that money would be immediately placed back into the project, which it was taken from, the line item, and you'd be able to kill two birds with one stone and not have to continue potentially risking a massive hurricane or who knows, another weather event coming in, and you know, hurting this beautiful historic building.

Vice Mayor Anderson: One more benefit, before you start, Commissioner, is the noise level too. Air conditioning and noise.

Mayor Lago: You save money on air conditioning. Again, you're running less air conditioning, so you're save -- you're not running that much electricity.

Commissioner Fernandez: My office is a sauna every morning when I get into it because...

Vice Mayor Anderson: I know.

Commissioner Fernandez: The air conditioner is warm at night.

City Manager Iglesias: And if...

Commissioner Fernandez: Oh, I'm sorry.

City Manager Iglesias: Well, I'm sorry. If I can say, it's a very messy project because we have to reinforce the wall as much as we can. We have to have a window that meets the historical issues plus is impact and can take the hurricane pressure. And then we have all the carpentry work that we have to do, so it's quite an extensive project.

Commissioner Fernandez: Alright, so I agree. This hardening of City Hall has to be a priority. Water tower has to be a priority. I actually visited the water tower yesterday with our Public Works staff. It's impressive how large it is from the inside. It looks a lot smaller on the outside. But I was able to see the scope of the work that has to be done and staff was able to give me an idea of where the bulk of the money is going to go and it's really towards the scaffolding that has to be built outside in order to do the work and the actual painting of the murals outside, which in some places are completely faded or gone. But I did have a conversation with the Public Works Director on timeline and what realistically can be done in Fiscal Year '24. So, permitting and -- design and permitting is probably going to take about 10 months is what I was told. So, realistically, construction can start in Fiscal Year '24, but let me -- and he's here, you can answer the questions, but realistically, it doesn't look like we can. I asked him about pre-purchasing products in order to have them ready and the concern was if the design and products are not approved beforehand because this does have to go through historic, those are products we probably wouldn't be using for something else. The ballpark figure that I got for the design and permitting phase was just over \$150,000. So, I think there may be something that can be done and that's why I had put both these product -- projects in my capital improvement project plan, which we'll be discussing briefly later. Because I do think that these are projects that we need to prioritize and get them done as soon as possible. If realistically we won't be able to start construction on the water tower this year, we can still maybe budget some money for that, for the design and permitting phase, and complete the budgeting process as is scheduled for next year.

City Manager Iglesias: If I may say, Commissioner, the water -- the problem with the water tower is it's not a mason structural. And most of -- and you saw it from...

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct.

City Manager Iglesias: From the inside. The -- it's a structural frame and then it's framed construction on the outside and there's also the cupola and so forth that we have to reconstruct. Fortunately, we found -- I think we can find the drawings from the prior work so that we can speed this work up quite a bit because those have all the necessary requirements from a historical point of view.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: So, we're looking to see how we can speed it up and we're looking to do a structural assessment as soon as possible. That is a structure that will require continuous

maintenance. It's not obvious from what it is, but when you look at it from the inside, you can see...

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct.

City Manager Iglesias: Some of the issues there.

Commissioner Fernandez: And it's also part of the way it was designed. You know, you're not talking about, you know, 90-degree angle walls. They're at an angle which only adds to the water intrusion into the facility. The conditions of the doors, I mean, some of them have literally had pieces that have fallen off and we've replaced it with a piece of plywood just to keep it up and prop it up. There's definitely work to be done there, and I agree, we can't continue to kick that can down the road. We need to get the process started. Staff does not believe realistically it would be completed by the City centennial. I think that's a goal that I had. I don't know if we're going to get there, but I'd like to see a way where, again, I'm proposing a plan where we would be able to fund it and not have to take money from another project, but we'll be discussing that later.

Commissioner Menendez: I know Fred stepped out. I think he was taking a call. There he comes. Fred, sorry. Could you just rehash the timeline for Phillips Park? I want to engage everybody in this. I want to have a healthy discussion.

Community Recreation Director Couceyro: So, we did the concept design. We presented the concept design to the Commission in the past. We are -- now our capital improvements team is working with the designer to have a contract put in place so we can do the -- go beyond the concept plan and go to actual design, get actual construction plans. Once we get that actual design where we show specifics, which is specifying playgrounds, the water park, fixtures, all that stuff, then we're going to go to a community meeting. We're hoping, since we're doing the negotiating now, that we can get to that community meeting either -- I mean, at the beginning of the first quarter of 2024, you know, in the January, February. And then from there, obviously, there's the finalized permitting, there's procurement to go through to get a contractor, and then when you're ready to build. So, you are looking to close to the end of -- I mean, to the next fiscal year. You're getting there.

Mayor Lago: So, can I ask you a quick question?

Community Recreation Director Couceyro: Sure.

Mayor Lago: Do you think that you're going to have construction documents done by what date?

Community Recreation Director Couceyro: I don't know. I couldn't tell you when.

City Manager Iglesias: Construction documents, Mayor, will be done sometime in '25.

Mayor Lago: Okay, okay.

Community Recreation Director Couceyro: Oh, '25, okay. I thought you said '24.

Mayor Lago: And you're going to hard bid this or are you going to do like a CM or some sort of design build? What's your plan?

City Manager Iglesias: We have not decided, Mayor. We need to look at the project a little better.

Mayor Lago: '25, that's a while away.

Community Recreation Director Couceyro: Yeah, it's a big project.

City Manager Iglesias: Because of the community meetings and then from the community meetings we have to go into design, procurement, and the project is about 9 to \$10 million.

Commissioner Menendez: So, I guess the first question is to, I guess, the City Manager, and also Fred. If there was support for the legislation, one or both of the items, you could still fulfill your plan as written for this upcoming fiscal year in terms of moving that project?

City Manager Iglesias: We are...

Community Recreation Director Couceyro: For -- yes.

City Manager Iglesias: This -- the original plan calls for construction in '25, and I think we can meet the construction in '25.

Commissioner Menendez: Okay. And just so everybody knows, I sat down with the City Manager -- I think it was yesterday?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: And we went over this plan, and I appreciate the time you spent with me going over this. I'm looking for -- and first off, on the record, for anybody who has any doubt, every single one -- every single member of the City Commission is absolutely -- has historic preservation at the top of their list. We are known for the Biltmore, the City Hall, iconic historic, our water tower, the museum. There's no one here that at any point, at any time, puts historic preservation in the backseat. It's always in the forefront. And it's just a matter of balancing a great many needs across the spectrum of what the City is about, what our history is about, and what our community today uses. And that's why there are a lot of projects like sidewalks, Phillips Park, that we need to address as well. So, I'm looking for a way to balance things and bring some

semblance of sanity to the whole process. And in the spirit of cooperation, I'm open to the item that Vice Mayor has regarding funding for the windows because it sounds -- based on what Commissioner Fernandez said -- that that's the most urgent, most pressing, the one that it can actually get started fastest, soonest, if I'm not mistaken.

City Manager Iglesias: We're trying to move as fast as possible with meeting all the require...

Commissioner Menendez: But in terms of that versus the water tower. The windows basically...

City Manager Iglesias: I'm trying to -- we're trying to move quickly on both.

Commissioner Menendez: Yeah.

City Manager Iglesias: We're going to move quickly on both.

Commissioner Menendez: I'm looking for balance. And by the way, I was at a gala for the centennial for Coral Gables Preparatory Academy, Coral Gables Elementary, and I went there for a few years. People are in shock I even went there. And I had a lot of parents, a lot of families go, we've used Phillips Park, we need Phillips Park to be improved. It's part of our life as parents. So, I just want folks to know that there are voices on the other side asking for Phillips Park to move forward. But with the assurance from the administration that Phillips Park will move forward, it will not be delayed. And I also am looking forward to my colleagues' plans for funding. I'm open to your item regarding the windows. I'll be supportive of it. I'd like to, you know, split the baby and see what the water tower -- see what we can do for funding, perhaps the plan, the design, the things that you were talking about. So, I'll be supporting you on the item regarding the windows and the money from Phillips Park.

Vice Mayor Anderson: No, I appreciate it. I just have a few more questions for staff so I can have clarity. Because I absolutely do want Phillips Park to break ground on time. And you know, we all are in favor of historic preservation. But there's interests of many to deal with. We're never going to make everybody happy. Manager, as far as the water tower is concerned, if there was money available earlier, in other words, in this budget, realistically, what could be done?

City Manager Iglesias: First thing we need now is an engineering assessment to the current condition.

Vice Mayor Anderson: How much money? How much money do you need?

City Manager Iglesias: The construction of the water tower is going to be a continuing cost because simply of the way that it was originally built. And then we're looking for...

Vice Mayor Anderson: But I'm going to ask you to pause on that.

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City Manager Iglesias: We're looking for the original drawings to -- because they have a lot of information that we would not have to duplicate...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, so...

City Manager Iglesias: From a historical perspective. So, if we find those drawings, which I think we can, then that would speed up the -- and use the same consultants that we used last time, which are available now, then I think we could speed up the actual working drawing portion of it and get into the procurement portion of it. We're working on that now.

Commissioner Menendez: How much is needed for 20 -- this upcoming fiscal year, this current fiscal...

Vice Mayor Anderson: That is basically what I'm trying to get down to. If we find the drawings within 30 days, hypothetically, and hopefully less -- I would hope that we could find them in less. But can we get this project started and how much money do you need for what you can get done by the end of this budget year that we're going to be voting on?

City Manager Iglesias: I have to look at this project a little closer, but one thing that will not be affected would be Phillips Park because we have enough money to proceed with the design process. And we cannot go out to bid on a project unless we have all the money. Hence, the fiscal '25 for Phillips Park. So, this should not affect Phillips Park because I believe that we can move with the full design and then get into procurement in '25 when it's fully budgeted. So that is what we propose to do. All we're doing is reshuffling finances. We're currently providing -- we're taking \$3.5 million in '24 from Phillips Park, providing \$1 million for the tower, \$2.5 million for City Hall, and then in '25 we're putting that \$3.5 million back into Phillips Park. So, from a perspective of construction, it's not affected because of all the requirements. There's going to be a lot of public outreach. It's going to be -- it's a very large park. So, we realistically are not going to get these drawings done until '25 when we do have -- when we're fully budgeted, and we have enough budget now with what we have to get all the working drawings done and get the park designed.

Commissioner Fernandez: One point I forgot to make.

City Manager Iglesias: So, it becomes a really a non-issue.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right.

Commissioner Fernandez: The \$800,000 that we currently have in the budget is insurance money, which can only be used to cover insurance purposes. So, it's not money that we can use for the design phase. It's money that we will get reimbursed, at least that's how it was explained to me,

once the process gets started, we can get reimbursement during the construction process for the items that are part of the insurance coverage.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, so...

City Manager Iglesias: We'd be probably in the neighborhood...

Vice Mayor Anderson: You gave me...

City Manager Iglesias: Of \$2 million for that facility.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You gave me a very, very long answer to a very short question. So, let me get to Part B.

City Manager Iglesias: It's a complicated point.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, well, you went between water tower and Phillips Park, you know, it was a little hard for some folks maybe to discern which one you were talking about.

City Manager Iglesias: I was talking about Phillips Park.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I know you were talking about Phillips Park, but not everybody follows you as well. So, let's go back to the water tower. How much money do we need to get the first phase done, to get the design done?

City Manager Iglesias: We should have enough money for that but the point I...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Wait, wait, wait, wait. Before you go taking off on a long explanation.

Unidentified Speaker: You want a dollar -- you want the actual...

Vice Mayor Anderson: I want a dollar figure. We can come back to the Commission and say, okay, we're ready for the next step. You know, can we borrow an additional whatever from what we're holding in escrow for Phillips Park to do the next step, and then so forth and so on. So, you know, we're not prematurely doing things back and forth. Because I know that we have some other monies coming down the line that may be eligible to be used for these items.

Mayor Lago: So...

City Manager Iglesias: What -- I guess, I think the point I'm trying to make is that it doesn't really matter. That we should just put the \$1 million into the tower and -- because from a project

perspective for Phillips Park, as long as we take the 3.5 in '24 and put the 3.5 back in '25, there is no issue.

Mayor Lago: Let me ask you a quick question, Mr. Manager. What if when we go to Tallahassee, if we explain that we have these two projects already pre-funded, does it provide us maybe a little bit more leverage when we try to chase down dollars, maybe? Maybe we want to have conversations with some of the leadership over there.

City Manager Iglesias: We tried funding for the towers, and we were not successful.

Mayor Lago: But we can always try -- we can always try again.

City Manager Iglesias: But we can always try.

Mayor Lago: Again.

City Manager Iglesias: We can always try.

Mayor Lago: So, why don't we do this? I think we have consensus on the windows. Why don't we come back? I just want to try to get to the meeting. We have a 5 o'clock budget hearing and we have a lot of items left. We can come back and tackle this and let the Manager have a few moments to kind of drill down on a number.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right.

Mayor Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

City Manager Iglesias: But, Mayor, what I'm trying to say is that we can have the full -- we have \$800,000 now from insurance, which we could use. We have the additional million dollars, it would be 1.8. And then, so we're just taking it in '24 and putting it back in '25. So why not just have it there and proceed as fast as possible?

Mayor Lago: I agree.

City Manager Iglesias: That's all I'm saying.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, my...

Mayor Lago: That's the reason why I brought it up, and obviously, and the Vice Mayor too.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay.

Mayor Lago: It's pretty simple.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'm going to, based upon our discussion at this point, we can come back to F-11 later. I'm going to move for approval of F-13.

Commissioner Menendez: So, what's happening?

Vice Mayor Anderson: There's a motion on F-13.

Vice Mayor Anderson: F-13, City Hall windows.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes. Did you move?

Vice Mayor Anderson: I moved, yes.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Did you see me move?

Commissioner Menendez: No, I was talking to this gentleman over here.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Oh, okay, with the very long answers.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes, that's him.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, before we vote, we have members of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Good afternoon again. I used to say -- Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I used to say we love to do smoke and mirrors. And I just remembered, we did have the money for City Hall. We did have the money a few years ago. We could have fixed them. We could have done what we needed to do at the price at that time. But lo and behold, we came up with a very creative move and we made City Hall, the City Hall Complex. And then because it was the City Hall Complex, we were able to move the money that was supposed to protect our historical building that was being damaged. We moved it to do -- to fix the 427 building that nobody had even thought about using that money for. Because we play games, we move money and I'm sorry. You know what, listening to the conversation today, I wonder if we're ever going to go to Phillips Park. Because you know what? Prices will go up, expenses will be more than we expect. And you know what?

Kirk Menendez is not playing ball with us. So, what's the rush with Phillips Park? Who cares about Phillips Park? Let's do what we want to do. And maybe something else will come up in the horizon that is an emergency. And you know what? Phillips Park is not an emergency anymore. So, unless in 2025, we have elections again, and we elect people that really say what they mean and mean what they say, we're going to be here again talking about Phillips Park, because you know what, this administration is very good at playing games. And we could have had City Hall fixed years ago. But we chose -- we, the administration, chose that 427 was more important. And we were able to do 427 and we were able to buy a whole bunch of stuff for 427 instead of fixing City Hall. I'm sorry. Enough is enough. Stop moving money around. Use the money for what it's meant to be. And I'm sorry, Mr. Menendez, I know you like to be very congenial and very nice, but guess what? They're not being nice to you because you know what? You're not playing ball with the same rules that they do. (INAUDIBLE) writing blood instead of ink, you will never see Phillip's Park fixed. And write down the date and the time and you will see that eventually Maria Cruz will be right again because that's how we play the game. I'm sorry, this is serious business. People are watching, we're listening. You know what? I have the minutes when we did the budget that we had the money for the City Hall, not the City Hall Complex, not 427, the City Hall. But that was not important. It was better to let City Hall get damaged than to fix it at the right time. I'm sorry, I don't believe, I don't trust. And Mr. Menendez, you're paying the price for not playing by the same book. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Karelia Carbonell.

Mayor Lago: Hi, Karelia, how are you? The floor is yours.

Karelia Carbonell: Hi, everyone. Can you hear me?

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Ms. Carbonell: Hello?

Mayor Lago: Yes, we can hear you.

Ms. Carbonell: Okay, well, thank you for giving me time. My name is Karelia. I'm president of the Historic Preservation Association, but I'm also, you know, a long-time resident. I have been listening to the City Hall windows for years and City Hall restoration for years. And I do appreciate that there's a conversation about funding, whether it's funding from one area to the other. I mean, it all is going to, you know, come out of some -- somewhere. But I do want to put this on the record. And I -- what I hear is that now there's a rush, a rush to order windows for City Hall. Now, when -- you know, as far as what I understand is City Hall is a historic structure and it has to go through a historic process. And all I hear now is we're ready to order windows. That should be unacceptable. And I'd like to read into my -- into the record how I feel and the preservation community, I believe, is also, you know, very -- questioning this kind of talk. And

today I've heard it over and over and over again. So, the acceptable solution is for the original window at City Hall and the annex cottage, which I haven't heard at all, to be restored and preserved. The windows are original and have withstood every storm since the 1920s, including Andrew and Wilma, which devastated the area. The recommendation is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards and Recommendations of the current and former Coral Gables Historic Preservation Officers. City Hall is one of the most significant structures in the City and occupies one of the most visible and traverse locations at Biltmore Way and Le Jeune Road. It should also be remembered that this was the last major structure in the City with which George Merrick was involved, a star in our downtown area. City Hall was designed by premier architects, Paist and Steward, and is one of the few buildings included in the City's official Mediterranean handbook. Furthermore, this is one of the few buildings in the City that is both locally and nationally designated. Simply put, City Hall is one of the most recognized and iconic buildings in Coral Gables. On top of this, City Hall is one of the few buildings in the City that retains its original fenestration. The Secretary of the Interior notes, as one of the few parts of a building serving as both an interior and exterior feature, windows are nearly always an important part of the historic character of a building. In most buildings, windows also comprise a considerable amount of the historic fabric of the wall plane and thus are deserving of special consideration in a rehabilitation project. Now, please do not continue to say, let's order windows. This needs to go through a historic preservation process. And I will continue to hold this. And as Commissioners, I know it's important, obviously, for the funding first. And I thank everyone for making it a priority. But it's got to stop about ordering windows, please. I have not heard from the City Manager, any at any moment, talking about historic, historic preservation, and how these windows are going to go through the process. So, thank you for listening. And please consider this. It's a very important landmark that we need to steward correctly. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: To answer the Vice Mayor's question, short -- with a short answer, \$250,000.

Vice Mayor Anderson: For what?

City Manager Iglesias: For the design and moving forward with the tower. We have \$800,000 but we cannot use that, we don't have that right now. That will be available from the insurance for construction.

Mayor Lago: Yep.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, so you need \$250,000 for this next fiscal year.

City Manager Iglesias: For the design portion of the tower.

City Commission Meeting
September 26, 2023

Agenda Items F-11 and F-13 are related - Resolutions of the City Commission directing that City Staff amend the proposed Annual Budget of estimated revenues and expenditures for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024 prior to the Second Reading of the ordinance adopting said budget Page 16 in order to reallocate funds in the Capital Projects Budget from Phillips Park to the restoration of the Alhambra Water Tower and the City Hall Complex Windows.

Vice Mayor Anderson: And you'll come back to us if you need more for something, right?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: I have a proposal.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Sure, I'm all ears.

Commissioner Menendez: That's good. Me too. That's why we're working well. And I'm glad.

Vice Mayor Anderson: They've gotten bigger as I've gotten older, so it helps.

Commissioner Menendez: Everything gets bigger as you get older...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah.

Commissioner Menendez: You know, the nose and everything. Trust me.

Vice Mayor Anderson: My mother warned me.

Commissioner Menendez: I don't recognize the guy in the mirror sometimes. Looks like my dad. I'm -- I think I can help, or we can help with regards to the 250.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Alright.

Mayor Lago: Well, that's very generous of you.

Commissioner Menendez: I think there's a line item for -- thank you. I'm glad.

Mayor Lago: No, just you...

Commissioner Menendez: I'm on a good day.

Mayor Lago: You think you can help -- he's going to help with...

Vice Mayor Anderson: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Menendez: There's a line item for the Youth Center design.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right.

Commissioner Menendez: And we can split the baby there, 250 for the Youth Center design, 250 for the tower. And I think we -- I think everybody walks away feeling that we're in a better place.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yeah.

Mayor Lago: That's very, very generous. I appreciate that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Good idea.

Mayor Lago: Great idea.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Excellent idea.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, before you move forward, we do have one more member of the public wanting to speak on the item.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

City Clerk Urquia: Ed Santamaria.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Santamaria, the floor is yours.

Ed Santamaria: Good afternoon, all. So, I'm very happy to hear that there is the bandwidth in terms of handling these very important projects. I was there at City Hall, and I personally experienced the condition of those windows. I was also there at City Hall when the amount of people, the load that was imposed by the amount of people that were visiting the Development Services Department was just causing an extreme amount of wear and tear on the building and facility. And that is one of the reasons why we -- and I say we because I was there at the time as part of the team making decisions -- we opted to move forward with the 427 project. Not only because the residents and the industry asked for, but also to reduce wear and tear on City Hall. I think it was a great move. I think it was excellent to protect this historical asset, which is our number one historical asset. And I just want to set the record straight on this, contrary to what you may have heard. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: All right.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, we have a...

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, as we co-sponsor this, I think we have a roadmap...

Vice Mayor Anderson: We do.

Mayor Lago: To addressing these two important projects. I want to thank the generosity of our Commissioner for, you know, helping us finally address these two projects as we continue to address Phillips Park and we can finally, hopefully, you know, bring in for a landing these two incredibly important projects that have been much needed for many, many, many years. So, thank you for that.

City Attorney Suárez: Mayor, I believe we have a motion and a second on F-13.

Mayor Lago: I know. I just wanted to add my two cents. I haven't said anything since this moment. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Moving on to item -- do we need to hear the other item or that was...?

City Attorney Suárez: F-11.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Well, it's been read but I would need to modify the motion to be consistent with Commissioner Menendez's idea to utilize, instead of funds from Phillips Park, he used -- utilized it from the Youth Center. And with that modification, I guess we move the amount to...

Commissioner Menendez: 250.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Manager, you said you needed 250?

City Manager Iglesias: \$250,000, of which will be half of what's going to the Youth Center, which is 500.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay, \$250,000 to be able to move forward on the water tower. I'll move it.

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Castro: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)