

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
March 8, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-1 [Start: 9:55 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people in their struggle to protect their sovereignty and freedom and urging the international community to hold Russia, and Russia's president Vladimir Putin, accountable for breaching international peace and for human rights abuses and war crimes. (Sponsored by Commissioner Menendez)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto G-1.

Commissioner Menendez: Yes. Thank you, Mayor. Can I have the image that was up a little while ago that I brought over. If you look at the image its shocking. On the left side you see people in London hiding underground because of the bombings during World War II, 1942. On the right-hand side, you see Ukrainians hiding underground for bombings in 2022. You see the destruction, the comparisons, the similarities of what's going on in Europe. And unfortunately, we as a society sometimes forget history and sometimes, we look away, and when we look away and when we forget history repeats itself. And what we're experiencing now is a threat, not only to Ukraine but to Europe, all the world and to humanity. You know a lot of people think, well its in Ukraine, it

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doesn't affect me, but just like a wildfire that's 50 miles away all it needs is a shift in the winds and suddenly you are engulfed in fighting for your life. So, in the spirit of fighting for what's right, for confronting evil, and doing everything we can as a country to stop evil, I present this resolution and I will accept the amendment by, suggested by Commissioner Anderson. I'll go straight to the point. This resolution basically reads, the City Commission hereby condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine and express solidarity, expresses solidarity with the Ukrainian people and their struggle to protect their sovereignty and freedom. The City Commission urges Russia to immediately withdraw all of its forces from Ukraine and recognizes sovereignty of Ukraine as an independent nation. That the City Commission urges the Russian people, starting with the Russian military to intervene put an end to President Vladimir Putin's reign of terror. That the City Commission urges the international community to hold Russia and Russia's President Vladimir Putin accountable to the fullest extent of the law for breaching international peace and for war crimes and crimes against humanity. That the City Commission urges the sanctions that sanctions against Russia not to be lifted until Russian President Vladimir Putin and his henchmen are brought before international criminal court in Hague, to stand trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Mayor made a very important point. And the reality is in our community in South Florida and Florida and in the U.S., we have generations of families that fled Europe during World War I. We are the generation. We have families that fled Europe during World War II. They live among us, good people, raised their children in our community. We have people that fled Cuba, Venezuela. We all know someone, or we've experienced it ourselves, or we've been forced out of our own country, we've had everything taken away. We have loved ones killed, massacred. So, I know collectively as a Commission, collectively as a community its part of heritage. We will stand strong with the Ukrainian people, and we will stand strong to confront and stop evil at every turn. Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, thank you. Your pointed words are very well received, and I think it encapsulates what this community feels on many different fronts and what we are facing as a community, not only the Ukrainians but obviously issues with Cuba, 60 years; Venezuela, we are going on over 20 years now without any resolution and what you're seeing in China happen. So, I appreciate both of you adding as a Commission as-a-whole taking a moment to really recognize and do what we can, which is not a lot, but at least we can say that we as a community are standing up for democracy and human rights. Will anybody give a motion.

Commissioner Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Menendez: And I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 4-0)

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Vice Mayor Mena: Absent

Mayor Lago: Thank you.