

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C – Public Comment
June 2, 2026
Public Safety Building, CMR
2151 Salzedo Street, 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)

Maria Cruz
Samantha Gasto
Gonzalo Sanabria

Agenda Item C
Public Comment

Mayor Lago: Moving on to public comment, Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor. First speaker this morning, Maria Cruz. Ma'am, can you turn on your microphone, please? Thank you.

Maria Cruz: You're welcome. Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road, 305-323-2154. This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. After almost every Commission meeting, we hear the complaints about the length of it. I have taken the time to watch some of them, have read our code of ordinances and Robert's Rules, and come today with some comments. There's a word found on both the code and Robert's Rules when addressing the role of the chairperson. Objective, objective. According to our code of ordinances, 2.78 chairperson number seven, it says, remain objective. For the chairperson to make a motion, the gavel must be relinquished based upon these

City Commission Meeting
June 2, 2026

rules and procedures, the gavel shall be relinquished in the following order, to the Vice Mayor, to other Commissioners based upon seniority. And then it continues. The rule against chairperson's participation in debate, and that's a quote, states that the chairperson who relinquishes the gavel should not return to the chair until the pending motion has been disposed of. In situations where there's no second, the chairperson may second the motion for purposes of allowing discussion and vote. During one of the last meetings, the chair made a motion, and it was seconded and voted on. Clearly, the rules were violated, but that was not the only time that it happened. The City Attorney, who I believe acts as the parliamentarian, caught his attention, and she was completely ignored. If the chairperson really wants to run an orderly meeting, he needs to be the example. Rules are there for everyone. By the way, on the positive, I'm very happy that now we ask for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Some of my friends call it the Cruz rule, even though in fact, it's a Robert's Rule. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Samantha Gasto.

Mayor Lago: Good morning. Thank you for being here.

Samantha Gasto: Good morning. Thank you.

Samantha Gasto: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, you have always been a strong advocate for government transparency, and I applaud that. You also lobbied strongly for an Inspector General for our city, which I support as well. Therefore, I'd like to bring to your attention an issue on today's agenda, which requires that you remain consistent with your public statements. Item E-1 26-1629 is being brought to the Commission by one of your chief political consultants, Brian Goldmeier. As you are aware, you and Mr. Goldmeier have enjoyed a strong political relationship for many years, and both of you have been extremely successful. You have been elected and reelected numerous times, and Mr. Goldmeier has been compensated extremely well for working on your many successful campaigns. In fact, since 2024, between your campaign and your PAC, Gables First, you have paid Mr. Goldmeier nearly a quarter of a million dollars. Of course, there is nothing illegal about having a successful business relationship, and both of you should be commended on jobs well done. However, it does cause the everyday residents to question whether you can impartially evaluate Mr. Goldmeier's appeal today. As much as an individual can try to remain objective, it is extremely difficult for someone to evaluate a case like this one and not have such a strong and longstanding relationship impact their decision-making, even if it's subconscious. Therefore, Mr. Mayor, I ask that you show our city that you truly are about government transparency. I ask you to do what is right, and I ask you to recuse yourself regarding the appeal being made by Brian Goldmeier. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Before we move on, Mr. Clerk, Madam City Attorney, would you like to read into the record my request from you?

City Attorney Suarez: Mayor, you'd like me to read the entire opinion?

Mayor Lago: No, not the whole opinion.

City Attorney Suarez: Oh, so, okay, yes.

Mayor Lago: Give a quick synopsis.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes, Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.

City Attorney Suarez: You asked me to provide you an opinion on whether you had a voting conflict with respect to this item, item E-1, and based on the facts that you provided, that you previously had a contractual relationship, contractually, you were in a contractual agreement with an entity that's owned and was founded and owned by Mr. Goldmeier. You advised that that contract has concluded that you currently do not have any contractual agreements or any business relationship with Mr. Goldmeier or any entity that he's associated with, so based on those facts, I analyzed it under voting conflicts under state law, and there's no actual voting conflict under state law. There's no actual voting conflict under the Miami-Dade County Code. Any suggestion that you would be enhanced by this action is remote or speculative. Additionally, because this is a quasi-judicial matter, there is the question that all of you must always consider, which is, can you be fair and impartial, or are you biased? That's a question that each individual Commissioner has to determine for themselves, and that was the advice that I gave you, that if you can remain fair and impartial, then you can proceed.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. I do not have a bias on this matter, and I will not be recusing myself, but I'm grateful that you're here today. Thank you so much. Moving on to the next item. Excuse me, the next speaker.

City Clerk Urquia: Gonzalo Sanabria.

Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Gonzalo Sanabria: Good morning. Gonzalo Sanabria, 944 San Pedro Avenue in beautiful Gables by the Sea. I'm here to point out what I call political malpractice by one of your colleagues, Commissioner Ariel Fernandez. And I want to recall some of the things that Mr. Fernandez has said for public consumption, wide public consumption, in newspapers and Instagram posts. And let's go to one, Mr. Fernandez, that you made on February 18th, 2025. You said the following in an op-ed in Community Newspaper. The subject of this was, quote, "*The politics of intimidation have no place in Coral Gables.*" Yet, a little, like a month before that, this happened. And please play a video that I provided.

[Video Presentation]

Commissioner Fernandez: Policies are put into place. And I'll reserve my additional comments on this, but Mr. Sanabria, you will be hearing from my attorney in the next few hours regarding

your complaint, which was a frivolous complaint filed with the Ethics Commission. And we will be pursuing legal charges and legal fees when it comes to your complaint.

[End Video]

Gonzalo Sanabria: This is made a month before this proclamation that the politics of intimidation have no place in Coral Gables. But I got sued by Mr. Ariel Fernandez on January 14th of 2025. And you made that publicly clear in a Commission Chamber, suing an activist because he objected to you hiring an unqualified city manager that has no business knowledge of running a city. And I'll make this very short. I'll give you a quote from the year 49 B.C. The Roman general, Satanic, in a battle about to take place, told Caesar the following. He said the following three words. She said, Alea iacta est. It's a famous phrase that still lives today and it's very applicable in this case. And it says the following when it's translated. The die is cast. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk. That's it, Mr. Mayor. All right; we'll close the public comment. Thank you very much.