

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-6**  
**October 24, 2017**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Frank Quesada**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark**  
**Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Craig E. Leen**  
**Deputy City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**  
**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Public Works Director, Ed Santamaria**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Maria Cruz**

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Agenda Item G-6 [0:00:00 p.m.]

Request for update on bulk trash pick-up and debris clean-up.  
(Sponsored by Commissioner Mena)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm going to change the order a little bit and have Commissioner Mena's G-6 item and -- which has to do with garbage pickup and everything. I think that Commissioner

Mena and the Commission wants a comprehensive report on what's been going on. And Commissioner, it's your item.

Commissioner Mena: Yes. I asked for an update on bulk trash pickup on this agenda for, I think, obvious reasons, but there were two main reasons. One is, you know, I think we've just gone way too long without trash pickup at this point. It's been six weeks. Obviously, we understand the circumstances, but as you drive around, the situation is just getting worse and worse. You know, there's certain places you drive and it's embarrassing, frankly, the things that you're seeing out on people's swales. You know, I think we have to have a broader discussion about trash pickup. But, there's two things I wanted to come out of today. One is, we need a commitment to a date certain of when we're going to recommence trash pickup, so people can see the light at the end of the tunnel and we can get back to business as usual on that front. I think it's important. I think our residents demand it, and I think they deserve it. So, I think we absolutely need to commit to a date coming out of here today. At the last meeting, you know, we were told, well, it could be two weeks. It was a little more uncertain. I think I'd like to leave here today with certainty as to when we're commencing trash pickup. The second part of it is -- you know, and I provided a list of questions that I think Mr. Iglesias is going to address most of, if not all of. And obviously, you know, my colleagues, I'm sure, have additional questions of their own. I know Commissioner Lago sent out a very thoughtful letter about his thoughts on some of these issues. But, we're going to need to get to the business of figuring out how we do this better in the future. Because, again, to go six weeks without trash pickup is problematic. The explanation we received last time was basically that once we recommenced bulk trash pickup that, you know, it jeopardized potential FEMA reimbursement. I think we need to understand that more clearly. And so, the questions which are attached to the agenda -- and Peter, I don't -- you know, I don't need to read the five of them out loud, but if you can at least make sure to address them in your comments, I'd appreciate that. And then, obviously, if anybody else has any follow-up questions, you know, they can add those questions asked to you. So, Mr. Mayor, do you want to have Mr. Iglesias...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah. I want to...

Commissioner Mena: Come up or...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Add something, unless somebody else has a comment. I'd like Peter to give us a very comprehensive, from day one, report on what's been going on, why, and what the steps has been the first round, the second round, the third round of pickup. Because I, like most of you, got many emails complaining about pickup on this street and that street. And they came once, they came twice, but then they didn't. Peter, a very comprehensive report and, believe me, we will challenge you with questions. So, please come right forward.

Commissioner Lago: Two -- just, if I may, Mayor, just two quick points. Commissioner Mena, in reference -- stated that he would obviously like -- and I think I join him on that issue -- of having a hard date in regards to when we'll start the bulk pickup. Just like all of you, I've received hundreds of emails just in reference to letter that I sent out. I probably sent out -- I probably received about a hundred plus emails, along with phone calls, and actually, a few handwritten notes. That was actually very kind of the individuals to take their time to send a little handwritten note. But, from my understanding and from an email -- and maybe the Manager can correct me -- from an email that she replied to a resident that I was copied on, the expected date is October 30, correct, that we're expecting...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Lago: To commence...

Vice Mayor Keon: Monday.

Commissioner Lago: Bulk pickup. I think the key thing that we need to come out of here today -- and I agree with you -- is revamping the process. And, I think that that is -- not only is today

important, but I think the most essential part of the process is going to be the blue-ribbon panel. So, one of the -- and one of the memos that I sent out last week, I was asking my colleagues to make your appointments. And, I kind of gave a framework of a timeline of how I'd like to see that, so that we can give the City enough time to finish up the collection, finish up the process, and then we can really take an in-depth study in regards to pre- and post-Irma. So, I implore you and I ask you -- just all of the Commission -- I know Commissioner Quesada's not here. Make your appointments as quickly as possible to that board.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I agree with you, and that is a very, very important point. But let's deal first with what's been going on, and then we will get to that very important point...

Commissioner Lago: I just wanted to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: For the future.

Commissioner Lago: As a reminder.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah. Peter.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission. Ed Santamaria, director of Public Works. I'm going to give a brief presentation that outlines some of the occurrences during the Irma debris pickup that will form the basis of the report that you requested, sir. And, then Peter will fill in with details and answer any questions that you might have, and I'll be available, as well. I did pass around a copy of the report. You may have it at your desk right now. And, I'll start off by saying that on the weekend of September 9 and 10, Hurricane Irma impacted South Florida with sustained -- oh, I'm sorry. Could you please start the presentation? And so, on the weekend of September 9 and 10, Hurricane Irma impacted South Florida with sustained tropical storm winds and Category 1 hurricane wind gusts. The storm would eventually affect every county in the state. And on September 10, Miami-Dade was

given a disaster declaration by FEMA. The fact that the impact was statewide placed a great strain on available debris management resources throughout the state. Prior to the storm, the City of Coral Gables had two debris management contracts in place, one with AshBritt International and the second with Ceres Environmental. A contract for debris monitoring was in place with Witt O'Brien's.

Vice Mayor Keon: Who is Witt O'Brien's?

Public Works Director Santamaria: Witt O'Brien's is a debris management company. They oversee the operation and ensure compliance with FEMA standards.

Vice Mayor Keon: So, it's for FEMA?

Public Works Director Santamaria: That's correct.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: They're the monitors, Vice Mayor, the monitors.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: They monitor our program to make sure it's in compliance with...

Vice Mayor Keon: To ensure that we're in compliance with FEMA and can be reimbursed.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: That is correct.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay, thank you.

Public Works Director Santamaria: Prior to Irma's landfall, the City alerted its two debris management contractors, AshBritt and Ceres, of its intent to mobilize them in response to the storm. Open purchase orders were issued to both contractors. Being the primary contractor, AshBritt, was mobilized, and their local subcontractor, SFM, deployed crews, which were embedded with rescue recon teams prior to the storm. These crews rode out with public safety departments and other city departments and participated in clearing roads after the all clear. On the morning of September 11, as soon as the all clear was given, City rescue recon crews fanned out throughout the city to clear roads and establish citywide access to emergency vehicles by clearing at least one lane -- one travel lane of pavement on all roads. Subsequent rescue recon passes were made to clear the entire pavement width to facilitate debris removal, utility restoration and overall vehicular movement throughout the city. With the exception of localized areas where powerlines prevented such, full pavement width clearing concluded on Friday, September 15. As the roadway clearing transpired, the Public Works Department, in conjunction with AshBritt, SFM and Witt O'Brien's, set about establishing its first debris management site, known in the industry as a DMS, at the Southwest 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue facility. By Saturday, September 16, the first loads of collected debris began to arrive at the site. On September 21, a second DMS opened, followed by a third DMS, on September 25. So, some of the milestones associated with the debris removal operations. Again, in September 16, that's the commencement of debris hauling operations. On September 21, the second DMS opens. On September 24, the commencement of removal of hangers, which are hazardous hanging limbs on trees commenced. The third DMS opened on September 25. And, the end of our first pass throughout the city to collect debris took place on October 8. By that point, we had already picked up 220,000 cubic yards of debris. The commencement of the second pass occurred on October 9, and we also commenced the removal of leaners, which are hazardous leaning or damaged trees, on October 11. And so, we now expect to conclude -- and this is a hard date -- the debris removal operations on September 30, and that dovetails with...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: October.

Unidentified Speaker: October.

Public Works Director Santamaria: I'm sorry, October 30. That dovetails with commencement of bulk pickup on that same date. Some of the numbers that are important in this analysis and in consideration of what's transpired is that our city right-of-way data includes 244.3 centerline miles of roads in city boundaries. Of these, 31 are roads which are state and county maintained, and we do not have maintenance responsibility, nor are we allowed to do any debris removal on those roads. The debris removal data as of October 22. The total debris removed to date is 325,056 cubic yards. This is equivalent to one and a half years our average annual bulk trash volume that we pick up. We collected this in five weeks and there were zero injuries. We're very proud of that fact. This is enough to fill a football field to a height of 152 feet. The total number of truck loads received at the debris management sites was 8,385. The total quantity of mulch to final disposition to this date is 92,000 cubic yards. Fairly soon, we'll be done with hauling mulch to final disposition. Some of the other numbers include the tree data, as of October 22. Trees with hazardous hanging limbs trimmed, approximately 16,000 throughout the city. Hazardous leaning damaged trees removed, approximately 270 thus far. Large ficus trees removed, 35 or so. And, approximately 300 trees that need standing up and bracing have been identified, of which approximately 60 have already been stood up. But, we have still pending -- and this is going to take a few weeks to resolve -- approximately, three to four weeks -- was 300 tree stumps citywide, which we still need to come back and remove. So, at this point, this concludes my presentation, and we have the floor for questions.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me ask you a question. And, I'm going to make up a fictitious address. I live in 77000 Milan Street. And, I drove by 77000 Milan Street on the way to my house, and there are a lot of piles there still that have not been picked up, debris, tree branches, tree whatever -- dried, of course. When can I expect for that to be picked up or why has it not been picked up?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Let me say, Mayor that we are on our third pass this week, our third.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, but tell me about first pass, second pass, third pass.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: So, we...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But in detail, as it applies to my house.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We finished our first pass October 9. We're getting more and more debris out as we finish.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that was...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: And that was by October 9.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But what was it? What did you pick up there?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We have it in our notes. Our monitors specifically have notes on it. We -- every one of our trucks is monitored in the field, and then monitored as -- you want to make sure that the trash pickup -- from a FEMA perspective and from our perspective is actually trash -- is actually debris, excuse me, generated in Coral Gables. So, we have monitors that are out there specifically making sure that that debris is picked up in Coral Gables.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no. But my question is, what did you pick up in the first pass...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We picked up...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And what did you not pick up.



Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We picked up vegetation.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Vegetation, okay.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Vegetation, and our residents were quite good at that. And so, we -- so, after the first pass October 9, we did a second pass. And now, today, we started on our third and final pass.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Why did you not pick up the second pass and the third pass?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: It wasn't there.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh, it wasn't there.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: This is additional debris.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Keon: I think that oftentimes the first -- it was my understanding that the first pass was the debris that had been pushed aside to clear the roads and the things that -- and the branches that fell or whatever that were blocking roads and blocking sidewalks and that sort of thing. So, the first pass was to pick up the storm-related debris really on public property; on the sidewalks, on the swales and on the streets.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: That's right. We...

Vice Mayor Keon: Because, the first thing they did was go through and open up all the streets. They pushed it to the side. They went back then and picked up all that debris.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: First pass took care of all debris -- we can't go on private property. So, all debris from...

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Wherever it came that was on the right-of-way was picked up first pass.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right, so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: First pass.

Vice Mayor Keon: It was after the debris...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: So, then, in second pass, they put more...

Vice Mayor Keon: Related to the clearing of the streets.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Keon: Second pass, it was my understanding, is that as you started to clear the debris that was on the streets, it was people were starting to bring debris out -- landscape debris, which we encouraged them they could bring out landscape debris and they placed that on the swales from their yards -- from their front yards, from their backyards, when they started bringing their own trees...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: So, that's the second pass.

Vice Mayor Keon: And hangers and -- so, that was...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Keon: The second pass was to pick up the debris that came from people's yards and homes and, you know, in a lot of instances, stuff that was dumped there. But, it was all -- only landscape debris.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Only vegetation.

Vice Mayor Keon: Only vegetation. I mean, throughout this whole time -- and you know, I know that we, as a city and residents, are storm...

Unidentified Speaker: Weary.

Vice Mayor Keon: Weary. I mean, they're tired of looking at it. You -- you know, it's gone through -- the weather is starting to get a little better. You want your homes to look better. You want your streets to look better. You want to replant your swales. You want everything to go back to the way it was and it isn't quite back -- it's not back to the way it was, because it keeps happening. Some of the problem in the second pass -- as my understanding -- is that in addition to landscape debris, people started taking things out of their garages and their regular trash and were mixing it in with the landscape debris. So, they couldn't pick up. They had to separate out the landscape debris from that other debris, because you can't take the other debris to the FEMA sites to have it mulched if it contains anything except landscape debris. So, you know, debris -- there was debris left, because it was mixed with buckets and paint cans and, in some instances, furniture and things, you know, like that. So, that stuff remained, but people were asked not to put out that debris until all of the landscape debris was picked up.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But...

Commissioner Mena: But it's not just what's mixed. I understand people were told not to mix it and that creates a problem. There are also people, frankly, who haven't mixed it but who just put it out there.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: And, that was picked up on second pass.

Commissioner Mena: No, not -- no, no, no, no.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, it hasn't been.

Commissioner Mena: Non-vegetative.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Oh, non...

Commissioner Mena: Pizza boxes.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Right.

Commissioner Mena: Cardboard boxes, chairs...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, but...

Commissioner Mena: Sofas.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: There's still a lot of vegetation debris...

Vice Mayor Keon: We were asked not to put it out there.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Out there.

Commissioner Mena: Right, but it's still out there.

Commissioner Lago: If I may.

Vice Mayor Keon: Then it'll get picked up.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Well, let me...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Wait, wait. One at a time, please.

Vice Mayor Keon: I'm sorry. Let him finish. I'm sorry.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: One at a time.

Commissioner Lago: If I may, just one second, please, I apologize. Because, again, the three of us live in a residential neighborhood. When you live in a residential neighborhood, you have a different experience and a different outlook than other people that don't live in a residential neighborhood. When you talk about it'll get picked up; that's not the answer. And, let me explain to you why it's not the answer. My case in point, I welcome you to stop by my house whenever you like. Everybody knows here what my address is. I have over 150 tiles of white concrete tile -- my roof is gray -- on my swale. There's nobody in my neighborhood that has

white concrete tile. I have a basketball hoop. I have a litany of black garbage bags that, when you open them, it's not garbage from the neighborhood. You can drive down 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue. You'll see couches. You'll see all kinds of different debris from homes that were, again, illegally dumped in our neighborhood. That happens normally in our city -- again, like I've mentioned it before, there's two things that occur in our city that for years we turn a blind eye to it that we don't want to deal with. Number one, illegal dumping and the scavengers that come in the morning throughout our neighborhoods, which again, is a major problem. You don't know who's in your neighborhood. You see them. And if you deny it, I mean, I recommend you go to a residential neighborhood and you can see it firsthand. They're there. That's number one. And number two is the amount of illegal vegetation that is dumped from the gardeners in our neighborhoods after they finish cutting adjacent municipalities, but I don't want to talk about that. What I want to talk about is the fact that my home, in particular, on the corner of San Amaro and Urbino, I have a swale and I have a trash pit that is completely commingled garbage, commingled garbage. So, what -- when they did come to pick up the tree matter, half the tree matter was thrown down the street. And again, I have sent dozens and dozens of emails to the Manager, where I've copied the resident who said, look, this is an issue. The garbage is not being fully picked up. And, I mean garbage -- let me correct myself. The vegetative matter is not being fully picked up. So...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let me...

Commissioner Lago: I want to be clear of that, because it's very simple to say it's, you know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: In address 7000 or whatever it is, Milan -- I'm picking on Milan, because I drove by there this morning and yesterday.

Commissioner Lago: Pick on me, pick on me.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, it isn't commingled. It is vegetation. It is branches. It is branches and they have piles of branches, not as much as the first day, but they have piles of branches there that have not been picked up.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: But let me just say, first pass, we picked up approximately 220,000 cubic yards. Second pass, we also -- picking up the vegetation coming from backyards. We also have our tree crews out there cutting hangers and leaners. There are 16,000 trees that we've done. So, that creates, again, more vegetation out there, and that has to be picked up also. So, not only -- we've already done over 16,000 trees. Now that -- all those tree branches are on the right-of-way. That's picked up also on second pass. So, second pass, we pick up hangers and leaners from the tree-cutting crews. We also pick up the vegetation coming from the yards, and that was finished last week. This week, what we're doing is we're picking up -- we're doing the final pass, and we're picking up everything, and that started -- the third pass -- third pass, in some areas, fourth pass.

Commissioner Mena: Everything vegetative or everything?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Everything. We're picking up everything.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, you will finish picking up everything, mattresses and tiles, whatever it is...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We're trying to make that -- when we start up Monday, on the 30<sup>th</sup>, as quick as possible. We may not finish this week. We may have to work over the weekend to go ahead and finish all the routes. But, the problem is we have 14 square miles of city. There are going to be pockets where we may have missed it because it's 14 square miles. This pass that we're doing today is methodical. It's done by our crews through our sections. So, we're going section by section picking everything up. When we pick up vegetation, we can take

it to one of our debris processing sites. When we pick up mixed debris, it has to go to the landfill. And so, it's a completely different process. FEMA...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And so...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: I'm sorry.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Excuse me, Mr. Mayor. I just want to say that October 30 is the start of bulk pickup. But, even if your day is regularly Monday or your day is regularly Tuesday, we're going to have a lot of bulk pickup that comes out, and so it's possible that if your pickup is Tuesday, we may not get to it until Wednesday, but we're going to get to it, even if we work Saturday and Sunday. So, we know with the several -- the majority of our residents have followed our requests to keep your bulk pickup inside. It's going to take us long because they're going to bring it all out, and we recognize that. So, just know when we say we are resuming regular bulk pickup October 30, we know it's going to be larger and we know it's going to take longer. And so, if you are frustrated, let's say, on your 7000 Milan address, that you put out your bulk pickup and it's Thursday and your regular day is Thursday and you come home Thursday night and you don't see it -- it's still there, we're going to get it. We're going to get it Friday or Saturday or Sunday.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The vegetative debris on Milan.

Commissioner Mena: But, the question that I haven't gotten a satisfactory answer to yet throughout this process is not -- non-vegetative. Why haven't we picked it up in basically six weeks, right? I mean, the approach has been we're going to pick up all vegetative, haul it to the FEMA site. We can't take the non-vegetative there. I understand that, but we could take it somewhere else, right?



Vice Mayor Keon: You take it to the dump. What was the issue with the County dump for a period after the hurricane?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: They would not take mulch, so our mulch has to go to the Pompano Waste Management site in...

Vice Mayor Keon: But, can they -- would they have taken the bulk pickup and all of the trash? I thought that there was a problem with that.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We were trying to -- what we were trying to -- actually; I think the residents were quite good. We did not have -- on the first and second pass, we did have some of that, but we thought we would take care of it on the methodical third pass. And most of -- our -- we estimated initially 170,000 cubic yards. We're probably going to end up having double that.

Commissioner Mena: But you're talking about -- okay, guys, but you're talking about vegetative matter. You're talking about mulch.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay, he's asking you...

Commissioner Mena: I'm asking about non-vegetative matter. I'm talking about the chairs, the boxes, the tiles, non-vegetative. My understanding has been that we're not picking it up because we can't haul it away with the vegetative because you can't process it into mulch at the FEMA site. I totally understand that. My question is, why can't we do both? Why haven't we been able to separately have crews picking up non-vegetative matter outside of the FEMA pickup process, so that our residents don't have chairs and boxes and tiles and things sitting on...?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We...

Commissioner Mena: Their swale for six weeks.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We actually have been. In those areas that are flood zones that those are legitimate pickup items, we did that. We took -- I'm not sure -- we took probably 15,000 cubic yards already to the dump. Yes, we have done that.

Commissioner Mena: But fair...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: However, in the non-FEMA zones, that's not reimbursable.

Commissioner Mena: Right, but we would pick that up normally.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. And that's -- Commissioner Mena, if I may, just two things. I want to answer Vice Mayor Keon's statement. We have been able to -- if we wanted to pick up bulk trash over the last eight weeks, we could have, and the County dump would have picked it up, because I called and I confirmed that, and so did my appointment to the blue-ribbon panel. He confirmed it. So, that's number one, so we could have done that. The issue there was in reference to the grinded up material becomes mulch. The fee for that was so excessive at the County that we looked for a different alternate and we had a problem qualifying a dump site here, so we had to go to Pompano. Correct me, if I'm wrong.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: So, that's one issue, so I just wanted to correct that. We can -- we could have picked up bulk, but we didn't during the eight-week period. Why didn't we? And, this goes back to my statement before. We could not find contractors to do the work. So, what we ended up doing was we ended up getting our crews to assist AshBritt through the process. And again, that's something that we'll discuss in the blue-ribbon panel to see if that was appropriate or not, but I just want to give you -- that's my take of it. And you know, we're all -- we're

playing Monday morning quarterback. But the goal is to, like you said -- I think your exact words were we're in the business of revamping the process.

Commissioner Mena: We're playing -- I mean, look, we're playing six-week-later quarterback.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: It's not Monday morning.

Commissioner Lago: I agree with you.

Commissioner Mena: It's been six weeks, and it's too long. And if what you just said is accurate, the last part, that's what, concerns me. If what's going on is that all of our Public Works people are essentially operating as AshBritt staff...

Commissioner Lago: Subordinates.

Commissioner Mena: Or contractors or subordinates, however you want to describe it; the question to me is why. If we have a contract with AshBritt for them to provide these services, and if we were told legally that we couldn't go to another contractor unless we "exhausted" AshBritt, at what point are you exhausting AshBritt if you're having to supplement them with your own staff?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We went to the dump with about 20,000 cubic yards. We were using our crews in the south area, which was the storm surge area, which had a tremendous amount of actual debris. And, those were going directly to the dump sites. Now, the AshBritt trucks were used for vegetation only, going to three management debris sites. But, we've got 15 to 20,000 cubic yards that went directly to the Waste Management site. And so, we only have 15 trucks and they're very small. So, our capacity to go there and do that is small. So, we were

using our trucks. Some of the areas down south have had four pickups, four passes. It's -- yes, there was a problem getting trucks. Everybody has had a problem getting trucks. This hurricane went from south -- all the way from South Florida, all through Central Florida. So, we do have the option -- I mean, if we wish to next time, pay what we have to pay, we can certainly do that. I made that option to the Commission during a meeting that we discussed on the phone. So, there are many ways of doing it. However, if you want to get reimbursement, we go through this procedure. If we don't want to get reimbursement and you would like to give me carte blanche, I'll be happy to take that.

Commissioner Mena: No, but there's an in between. There's not...

Commissioner Lago: There's an in between, and I think that's where I think we're missing the point. And by the way, in my letter, I was very clear the immense amount of respect that this Commission -- and I was speaking on behalf of the Commission, if I may, that we have for the employees and for the work that you guys have done over the last 45, 50 days. I mean, it's been incredible.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Forty days straight, Commissioner.

Commissioner Lago: You guys have worked...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Forty days straight.

Commissioner Lago: Immensely hard. But again, we are fielding an immense amount of calls and emails from the residents. And living in these neighborhoods, we get a day-to-day feel of what's going on.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Remember also that our estimate was 170, so over double.

Commissioner Lago: But, I will tell you one thing -- and not speaking for the entire Commission; speaking for Vince Lago. I don't have a problem if it would have taken a little bit longer -- and this is what the residents are telling me. If it would have taken a little bit longer to pick up the vegetation if we would have continued with debris removal in the sense of our bulk pickup. Excuse me, I misspoke. Because, again, at the end of the day, you would have soothed some of the tensions in the neighborhoods with the amount of garbage that's there onsite, especially with the illegal dumping that's occurring. I know I keep going back to illegal dumping, but I mean, I don't know if anybody else is sensing this, but it's pretty significant, at least in my neighborhood and certain areas on the peripheries of the City of Coral Gables. But there's a few other things. Like, for example, I would have never -- in my opinion, I would have never put in the Neighbors Section that our residents can go to the dump site and pay a fee to haul their own garbage. I just think -- and I got a few calls about that. Not a few -- I got a significant amount of calls about that. They thought that was kind of -- you know, that was in poor taste, if I can be mildly on that issue. I think we're very concerned about our image. I think we continue -- Coral Gables is a brand that we want to cherish, and I think we've done a great job on a lot of aspects, but I think that we have to use the process, like I mentioned before -- and this is the third time and the last time I'm going to mention it. Let's use the process to find out how we can be better.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very much so.

Commissioner Lago: I think that we fell short on trying to pick up all the debris under the window of the 100 percent reimbursement, but we left our neighborhoods with a mound of bulk pickup and garbage thrown all over the place. Because, again, the Manager will tell you -- because I've written -- every single time I copied the Manager on an email. That's how I found out about the bulk pickup on October 30. Nobody told me from staff that we're doing bulk pickup starting October 30. I found out through an email response that the Manager put. The residents are upset about how the contractors went into the neighborhoods, picked up the vegetation, threw the garbage everywhere, destroyed the swales -- I'm getting a litany of

questions every day about who's going to pay for my grass. Who's going to pay for my swale? You know, my tree was damaged. Why did they cut this tree down?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, the answer to that is that there was a tropical storm that came...

Commissioner Lago: I know, and I ask them...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's the answer to that.

Commissioner Lago: I ask them for patience, okay.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: I ask them for patience, and some of them understand, some don't.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, I think that is precisely the issue. Some people understand and you can give them a reasonable explanation. And most of the people that I respond to, give them an explanation, they say, oh, okay. Thank you very much. I understand. I separated the stuff, I did whatever. I haven't heard from people that remain irate after you have a conversation with them or that, you know...

Commissioner Lago: I'm sorry (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Keon: That I have written to. No, I haven't. And you know, I have the good fortune of living in a condo in a residential neighborhood. So, I have seen what Waste Management has done and how they have reacted and worked in response to requests to pick up -- you know, we also are in a flood area, so we're in an area where there was a major storm surge and there was considerable flooding. And you know, they came along, picked up the bulk waste, the furniture, the chairs, all of that stuff, then came back and worked with the City to pick up.

But I also live in Sunrise Harbour, which, you know, is all single-family residential homes. And you know, to me, every day it looks -- as I drive through the city, it looks a little bit better. Does it look as it did pre-storm? No, and it's going to take us time to get back there. But, they -- the staff put a process in place that they brought to us, told us about. And to be fiducially responsible people, we are trying to get the largest reimbursement from FEMA that we can get. We're looking at a 17 to \$18 million reimbursement from FEMA. Now, we have worked very hard to have reserves of \$40 million so that we can, you know -- we're in a good position when something happens that we have the dollars and the money to deal with it. And you know, to start all over with a \$10 million hole in our budget or \$12 million hole in our budget, because we went off that plan and some debris remains for an extra week, I think you have to balance that fiduciary responsibility that we have to the city with what is happening in those neighborhoods. I know that when a pile was particularly egregious, they went out and picked it up. When there were mattresses thrown out and that sort of stuff, our crews went out and they picked them out, whether it was the regular -- you know, why people continue to put their Amazon boxes out instead of leaving them in their garage, why people, you know, put paint cans out there instead of leaving them in their garage, you know, I don't know. But I think there's also a piece of personal responsibility as residents...

Commissioner Mena: No question.

Vice Mayor Keon: That we all need to assume in an emergency. But you know, we -- they explained what their process was, what their plan was. We agreed as a Commission. I know that you brought forward you asked to hire additional people. They felt that they had enough people, because you can only -- there is a rate at which you can process things and get them through and get them to the dump without, you know, having massive amount of trash, you know, in these sites. I remember after Wilma when in reaction to residents' concerns about trash and garbage and everything else, that instead of -- or separating out garbage and that trash from landscape, they used the Lee Lincoln property over here by the University of Miami, the City did, and they just piled everything there together. They piled trash, garbage and whatever with debris. And

for three months, for three months, it sat there because that's how long it took them to process it once they commingled all of that stuff, and it became a rat pile, because you had garbage that was decaying along with wood and whatever else. I mean, I know that what's happened now is not ideal and everyone would like to see it better, but if you will remember back -- and for those of us that were here in Wilma and experienced that pile that sat for three months and that we didn't get reimbursement for or we didn't get significant reimbursement for and we ended up with a reserve that were considerably lower than what we have now, because that process wasn't put in place. This may not be -- I understand that people don't want stuff on their swales. We -- it is a high-end community. We care about how it looks, but you know, we've also had a storm -- it is -- it was a disaster and this is some of the aftermath. The things that are egregious, yes. Are there things that are overlooked? Absolutely, and they need to be minded and they need to be taken out. But I -- you know, I don't think that it is -- I mean, I think it's six weeks later. We just started the seventh week after a storm.

Commissioner Mena: Right, and...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can I...

Vice Mayor Keon: So, I mean, do I think I think it's going to get better? Yes, it'll get better.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can I ask that we continue this after the FPL discussion? It appears that their attorneys have to leave at 10:20. And, if we can -- not to get away from the subject, but we can continue this after FPL.

(BREAK IN DISCUSSION)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, we go back to our initial item, as they say in French, garbage. And, Mr. Iglesias -- and we had two people that wished to speak on the issue, and maybe we should



bring them together since they've been waiting for a long time. And one is Jorge (INAUDIBLE), and the other one is Maria Cruz.

Commissioner Mena: I think Jorge left.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Maria.

Maria Cruz: I'm here.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you wish to speak?

Ms. Cruz: Oh, yes, I do, even though (INAUDIBLE) was a...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, Maria.

Ms. Cruz: 10 o'clock time certain.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I know, Maria, and I'm sorry. And as you can see, we've been very, very busy, and a lot of people have had to wait.

Ms. Cruz: But with due...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And we wish for you to speak, please.

Ms. Cruz: With due respect, with due respect. We can celebrate -- you know, it's not fair for the residents to be disrespected, I'm sorry. I understand Florida Power & Light was very important, because we're talking about a lawsuit. But, you know what we're talking about our lives. We're talking about neighborhoods. We're talking about the people that really give their blood to this

city. And you know what, I'm sorry, Giralda is beautiful, but you know what, that's not an urgency.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That took two minutes, Maria.

Ms. Cruz: Well, no, I figured that. I thought it was going to be half, because we were so busy using the money. Okay, let me tell you, the more I think about it, the more I say that maybe the time has come to change the way we run the city. Citizens are not important. We elect people that choose to believe what the Administration tells them. And, I'm going to tell you something, Mr. Mena; you gave me faith back today, because I saw what you were talking about. Mr. Lago, thank you. You put some belief in me again. I want Commissioners that are not here to apologize, that are not here to answer questions that the staff should be answering, because the staff is -- the staff should know what the answers are, not the Commissioners. We expect the Commissioners to listen to what the staff has to say and then move from there, not to be here to apologize. Let me tell you, I am fascinated that we have realized that we have a big canopy and we have miles of trees. We had them before the hurricane. When we contracted people to clean up, we should have had that into account. We did not have enough people to clean up; number one. Number two, very good question, why couldn't we do two things? Because our employees that we paid ahead of time, because out of our waste money is the pickup, okay, are going to get paid for from FEMA. So, in fact, we paid for trash pickup of bulk trash, okay. They didn't do it. They were doing the FEMA work. So, the City got our money for the bulk trash. Now they're going to get FEMA for the same people. Come on. So, when are we going to get a refund for the time that we didn't get the pickup? We paid. We're not getting anything in return. Something is wrong. This has been a very creative way to finance some of the stuff that we do in the city. It's wrong. The residents expected the service. They paid for the service, and if the service was not provided, they should get a prorated refund, I'm sorry. You know what, this business of the first round they picked up everything from the hurricane, I suggest that you should look at the rectory at St. Augustus Catholic Church. The things that were there that we, the residents, moved off the way of right is still sitting there. It was still sitting there this

morning, and that is from the first -- that was from the morning after the hurricane. It was never picked up. Let me give you a little scenario. If you -- I guess it was not this Sunday, two Sundays ago. I witnessed on Miller Drive, there were two trucks and there were two drivers. There was one person cutting the hangers, one person observing the person that was cutting the hangers, two certifiers in their cars. So, there were six people for one person to make sure that the hangers were at least two inches and cutting it. Six people. And I personally said, okay, wait a second. How many people does it take? Don't worry. FEMA pays. You know, FEMA is me. FEMA is the money that we pay. This is the attitude. Guess what happened in Zuleta? That Sunday, they went and took the hangers, took care of the hangers. The next day, the same tree that they took the hangers from was cut down, because it was broken. So, twice, they dealt with the same tree. It's a joke. What we're living through is a joke, and this Administration thinks that it's okay. And you're the elected officials. And, I don't care what the apologies are. If you go to the Publix on (INAUDIBLE), there are mattresses right on the street, okay. You know what, our image is important. Last Sunday, in Neighbors, oh, the city, you know all the good things we've done. Go around and see what the city looks like. If that's the image, I don't care what the rating is for the bonds. I don't care what the police department -- at this point, our image is what we see. And this city is in complete, complete disarray. And please, I read the contract with AshBritt or whatever, and it says clean as you go. Clean as you go does not mean pick up and throw in the street and expect the residents to pick up after you. The City has allowed this to happen. This Administration gives you a lot of smoke and mirrors. It is a disgrace. I'm going to tell you, I've driven all over Dade County, and as far as I'm concerned, we are as bad as anybody else. But don't forget, don't bring sandbags and don't bring ice to the people that need it, because our image will be damaged. It's a sad day, and you all were elected to represent us. Step up to the plate and say enough. We need bulk trash pickup now, not by the 30<sup>th</sup>, now.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Ms. Cruz. Thank you very much. Anybody else? Jorge (INAUDIBLE)?

Commissioner Mena: No, I think he's gone.

Ms. Cruz: He had to leave (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: He had to leave, okay. Mr. (INAUDIBLE) can't speak. Alright, Commission, what is your pleasure?

Vice Mayor Keon: For what?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, I mean, do you want to continue the discussion? I think we've had -- you know, we listened to Ms. Cruz. We've had a very comprehensive report, and we'll go on with the agenda.

Commissioner Mena: I mean, I think the -- first of all, I want to make clear -- so, this coming Monday is -- we are resuming...

Vice Mayor Keon: Bulk.

Commissioner Mena: Regular bulk pickup, business as usual, understanding the caveat that the City Manager stated, like when we resumed recycling, that if you're a Monday regularly-scheduled pickup, we may not get to all the regular Mondays, but we will work overtime and throughout the week to get to those as soon as possible in the first week so that, hopefully, by say, the second week, we're a hundred percent back to normal bulk trash pickup.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: That is correct, Commissioner.

Commissioner Mena: Okay.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Commissioner, we also recognize that residents have been storing it up in their garage, so the one cubic yard, which is the normal allotment before people get paid, is not happening.

Commissioner Mena: Is waived, right.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: You know, they're bringing out the weeks that they have not been able to have the bulk pickup.

Commissioner Mena: And then...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright.

Commissioner Mena: Here's the thing that I think got lost in the discussion this morning, at least from my perspective and where I was coming from when I brought this item up. And, then we sort of finished off with Commissioner Keon's comments about being fiduciarily responsible and all those things. I'm still not comfortable with the answer that we couldn't have addressed non-vegetative matter earlier than we did, because doing so would have put our FEMA reimbursement at risk. I read the legal opinion, Mr. Leen, that you circulated. And, I know lawyers and they choose their words carefully. If you read an opinion, it's very specific as to vegetative debris. She says if you recommence regularly scheduled vegetative debris pickup, you put FEMA reimbursement at risk. I understand that. That makes sense to me. If you start picking up vegetation, how do you know which ones the FEMA reimbursed vegetation and which one's not? That does not address non-vegetative. And while I understand, Commissioner Keon, we may have done better than in past times and all that, I still want to do better -- my goal is to do better the next time. And I'm not satisfied with -- and again, I want to make this clear. I can't say this enough times, and I hope we don't have to say it, but I want to say it anyways. I'm not criticizing the effort of people, like Peter Iglesias and Mr. Santamaria. You guys have

worked incredibly hard. What we're talking about now is the procedure or the process. How do we make the process better?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I agree.

Commissioner Mena: And so, I'm not comfortable with -- I don't know about you guys. I'm not -- if we're going into another storm next year, I'm not comfortable saying, hey, it's going to be probably, if we get a tropical storm or even a Cat-1, it's probably going to be two months of no pickup on non-vegetative.

Vice Mayor Keon: But I...

Commissioner Mena: I'm not okay with that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: May I...

Commissioner Mena: I'm not okay with how that played out this time, and I want to see it improved in the future. And so, that's my main goal here.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I agree with you, and I think that that's part of Commissioner Lago's, you know, proposal. And, why don't we put a time certain next time to appoint the blue-ribbon committee and they will establish our procedures.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: May I answer...

Vice Mayor Keon: I'd also like to give the...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: May I answer Commissioner Mena?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, please.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Your question. We normally pick up about 200,000 cubic yards a year. The capacity of our trucks is less than 20,000 cubic yards a month. We have picked up so far about 20,000 cubic yards that has gone to -- not gone to our debris site, but has gone to the county landfill. So, we have picked up this debris and taken it to the county landfill. It's also easier because since they're city trucks, the FEMA requirements don't require somebody at the landfill to measure the truck, because they're (INAUDIBLE). So, we have picked up where we could pick up, because that's our capacity. Now, the other item is picking up that kind of debris with commercial trucking. They would have left, because everybody's offering them a tremendous amount of money and tremendous volume. So, the reason we were able to keep our trucks is because we were turning them around in our sites in 15 minutes. Now, if we have a truck that's going to do one load out there in one day, they're not coming back. So, there was -- that hurricane went from South Florida all the way north, right. So, we -- everybody is looking for assets. Everybody is looking for trucks. Everybody's paying more. The DOT paid a huge amount -- ridiculous amounts of money to go to the Keys. They paid \$2,000 to pick up a refrigerator. So, everybody's looking for assets. Now, we have to get those assets, and when we have them, they need to make money because if they don't make money, they leave. So, what we did is we picked up that debris with our crews. Our crews picked up over 20,000 cubic yards. That's -- so far, that's more than they normally pick up a month. That's their capacity. Now, if we would -- if I would have said pick up small items, they would have left, so it becomes an issue. Now, if we want to pick that up, then we have to say, okay, we're going to pay you -- we're going to take that truck and instead of doing five loads a day, you may do two and we'll pay you for that difference. That's possible, but nobody's going to stay here and pick up one load or two loads when they can pick up five at the county. What we did was we were extremely efficient. Instead of waiting an hour at the county, we get them out in 15 minutes. Some of them left and came back because of our efficiency. Now, we cannot do that if we're

picking up other kinds of debris. We certainly would not have kept our commercial side of it -- our non-city side of it. Our city side of it picked up over 20,000. That's 200 and -- that's equivalent to 240,000 cubic yards a year. Our capacity is 200,000, so we've done -- we used our crews to pick up C&D, take it directly to the landfill. Now, if we wish to use commercial, then we would have had to pay a great deal of money, because their productivity is their profit.

Commissioner Mena: Well, I think what I...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: So...

Commissioner Mena: I just...

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Let me say, there's a huge -- there was a huge amount of issues getting assets at that time, so we used the assets we have the most effectively. It's our crews doing the landfill sites and the commercial crews doing our debris sites, where they could be productive. And, that's how we kept our 80 trucks -- 80 to 95 trucks a day working in Coral Gables.

City Attorney Leen: You know one other thing that we can do here...

Commissioner Lago: Craig, if I may, just one second. I've had multiple conversations with professionals, you know, ex FEMA directors of the state of Florida, and I think we're going to flush all this out once we move on to the blue-ribbon panel. But as you mentioned before, we have 15 trucks in-house, correct?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Correct.

Commissioner Lago: The individuals that I've spoken to and the contractors that I've spoken to have made it abundantly clear that the reason why a lot of them didn't come to the Gables was



because of the reimbursement that was being paid by AshBritt that it was peanuts in comparison to what other cities were paying. Again...

Vice Mayor Keon: That it was what, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Lago: That it was peanuts, pennies, pennies on the dollar in reference to what other cities were paying. I mean, again, I've spoken to a litany of companies that said why would I work for the City of Coral Gables under AshBritt when I can just go work for another municipality and make more money in the trucking. So, to me -- and I'm not going to keep beating this horse over and over again, because I've mentioned it -- I think this is the third Commission meeting I mentioned it. I wrote a letter, an open letter, and now you're bringing it up, which I'm actually very happy about that. We could have done both. We could have done debris pickup and we could have done our standard weekly, you know, pickup that happens in the swales. It would not have been an issue. Other cities did it. The issue is that we would have had to bring in more trucks, not use our 15 trucks to supplement AshBritt. We didn't go that route. But, I can tell you the names of the companies that I've talked to that have told me, Vince, we did not want to work under AshBritt. We wanted to work in line with them, and we didn't have an issue working with them if they would have paid us what we thought was a respectable wage and that was not occurring. So, we had no other choice at that point, but to supplement with AshBritt, because we had a crisis on our hands. So, what had to go by the wayside? And, that was our standard bulk pickup. It's not that difficult to understand. I mean, I -- it's just we made this decision here today. In the future, again, we won't make that decision.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We're going into the future...

City Attorney Leen: Can I just add, Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, let's leave that for the blue-ribbon panel.

Commissioner Lago: No, but I want to give (INAUDIBLE) facts.

Commissioner Mena: One frustration -- before you speak...

Commissioner Lago: It's very frustrating.

Commissioner Mena: Because, I want you to address part of what I'm about to say in addition to whatever you're going to say. Part of my frustration with that, though, is we were told if we recommence, we put FEMA reimbursement in jeopardy.

Commissioner Lago: By the way, that was dealt with in the interpretation that was provided by the attorney, and it was also told to me by the ex FEMA director for the state of Florida that that is not the issue.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Lago: And, I'm not going to continue coming here arguing and fighting the issue when, again, my colleagues disagree with me, number one. And number two, staff's telling me otherwise.

Commissioner Mena: I certainly don't disagree with you. But, the issue is the way I read the opinion you sent us, it was very specific as to vegetative, and it wasn't clear to me as to non-vegetative. And, it's not clear to me sitting here today -- and I'm not an expert on FEMA reimbursement, so I need to rely on professional opinions, and what I was told was it would risk FEMA reimbursement. And, I'm not comfortable and confident in that answer sitting here today that non-vegetative -- if we would have separately engaged in non-vegetative, that it would have put FEMA reimbursement at risk. I understand the answer that it would have cost more money. We would have had to have more capacity. That's a separate issue. One thing is we can't do it

because we're risking millions of dollars in FEMA reimbursement. Another thing is we would need more capacity. And so, I need to understand that.

City Attorney Leen: Well, the way that Carrie, who was our FEMA attorney, explained it to me was that there is no hard and fast rule. I mean, it's not like there's a regulation that says that. What she told me was that when you're doing emergency procedures like pickup, you're supposed to focus on the emergency. And, once you go back to more routine matters, that that can indicate that the emergency is over and that they will only reimburse you for emergency-related matters. That's what she told me. Now, she also did say -- and she mentioned in the opinion it's not a hard and fast rule, and it depends on the circumstances. There's a risk that's involved with that. So, what I would suggest is that, you know, we have the blue-ribbon panel. Also, as was mentioned, other cities have done it differently. What we should do, in my opinion, is follow their FEMA request and see if they get reimbursed or not for that, which we'll do and we'll see -- this particular natural disaster, this tropical storm, Hurricane Irma, you know, raised a lot of issues, so that's why we have the blue-ribbon panel and we'll see what happens in terms of reimbursement. We have a new administration. We'll see how they apply the law. And based on that, we'll be able to give you better advice for the next time. But, she gave you her best judgment. She has told me all along and she told staff -- and I believe our -- I didn't speak with them directly, but I believe our monitor also had view...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Correct, Witt O'Brien's.

City Attorney Leen: That if we started -- Witt O'Brien's -- that if we started going into more routine operations, it would show that we didn't need all the trucks basically to do the emergency stuff, and that that would lead to a potential...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

City Attorney Leen: Not guaranteed, but potential...

Commissioner Mena: But, picking up non...

City Attorney Leen: Risk to our reimbursement.

Commissioner Mena: Picking up non-vegetative separate from vegetative under special circumstances, is not routine, is not what we usually do.

Commissioner Lago: It's not.

Commissioner Mena: It's not within the scope of her opinion, as I read it because her opinion was specific as to vegetative. And even in the opinion as to vegetative, it said that it wasn't black and white, it might. So, I want to understand that -- we need to understand that issue going forward. I also want to understand, Peter, what the cost would have been. If we needed more capacity, if we needed to hire more crews, trucks whatever in order to address that, what would the cost have been? Because, if it would have been a couple hundred thousand dollars, that's a different conversation than if it would have been millions and millions of dollars.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can I make a suggestion that instead of doing this or postponing this blue-ribbon panel and this discussion to the next Commission meeting, why don't we have a time certain 5 o'clock pm Commission meeting to discuss this issue once and for all? It's important enough. It concerns us -- all of us. And Madam -- Mr. City Clerk, will you circulate to see when in the latter part of November we can have a 5 o'clock time certain discussion on this item?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I think that would be very interesting, Mayor, but it's critical that we have our City Attorney's expert that was brought in that we relied on, that we have Witt O'Brien, the FEMA monitor...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Absolutely.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And, that we have FEMA here because...

Commissioner Mena: Sure.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The very first...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Absolutely.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Question that FEMA asked us when we were beginning our debriefing was did you follow pre-storm contracts in your debris recovery, so...

Commissioner Lago: But, let's also...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I agree.

Commissioner Lago: Let's also...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: That will be helpful.

Commissioner Lago: Madam City Manager -- and I understand, and I don't want to go into this back and forth. But, also remember there was a state of emergency in Miami-Dade County, which by that happening, allows you a little bit more flexibility in regards to procurement. We're going to go all -- we're going to go through this in detail, in detail. That's why I'm saying -- by the way, in my letter, I also -- and I'm happy we're together here today. I asked for the ability to call for an outside consultant on an auditing company, which, again, I put that on the table, because I think it's a small price to pay to really prepare for the future to really...

Vice Mayor Keon: To do what?

Commissioner Lago: Well, to see exactly what other -- and if you read my letter, it says to see what we're doing as a city and what other cities are doing not only at the local level, but at the national level. And, I think that's critical because I don't think that the individual that you're going to call or the individual that I'm going to have on that, which, again, used to be the FEMA director and almost went to Puerto Rico last week -- thank God he didn't, because he wouldn't -- he was actually telling me he would not be -- been able to have been serviced -- to service us if he had gone to Puerto Rico. He was chosen, but at the last minute, he declined it, which is, again, a benefit to the City of Coral Gables. Told me very clear that one of the best things that we can do and what he's done in multiple other cities and in other states when there's been natural disasters of this magnitude, which, by the way, was not even a Category 1, he has told me that we come in and we hire the best outside consulting firm, which allows us to really dig deep on all levels. And again, that's our job. Our job is to prepare for the future. That's it. I mean, it's not that complicated. It's simple. And again, when there's a state of emergency by either a local government -- which we're going to discuss that today. Mayor Valdes-Fauli has that item today on the Commission -- or it's at the level of the state, it gives you a lot more flexibility in regards to procurement. And, you'll see a lot of the things that I've been able to find out at the County, what the County's been able to do.

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

Vice Mayor Keon: I ask -- only ask that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, please.

Vice Mayor Keon: You gave the staff...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We're going to discuss this...

Vice Mayor Keon: Time -- before you set this meeting...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Vice Mayor Keon: That you give staff time to -- the opportunity to look at the process and the procedures and everything that was done and allow them to formulate...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Perfect.

Vice Mayor Keon: A report so they also have a report and can look back at how this worked, how they did it, what they would recommend for the future, so when we sit down, we're all working from the same set of facts.

Commissioner Lago: Madam...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, Commissioner Lago, one last comment, and then we'll go on.

Commissioner Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, just as a recap from the letter that I sent out the other day, I was very, very clear -- by the memo also that I sent out -- that stated I don't want to deal with this. I don't want to have the blue-ribbon panel commence today. I want to have it in December, so that we give enough time for the City to get -- you know, to finish up what they need to do and to move in the direction which, again, it'll be more of a comprehensive look. I don't want to start looking at something today that's not even completed, so...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: No.

Commissioner Lago: That's been completely addressed, and that's why I called for the blue-ribbon panel.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, it's just so they have the opportunity to be done also.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Of course.

Vice Mayor Keon: (INAUDIBLE)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Moving on to the next.

Commissioner Lago: And also, the great part about it is that, as I called for in the blue-ribbon panel, every person at the dais will have an opportunity to name somebody. And, I've asked our most important players to have a person on that dais...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Commissioner Lago: From ACM Fernandez to ACM Peter Iglesias. As the Manager is well aware, everybody is going to have an opportunity to make this city better in the future.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Perfect. Thank you very much.

Vice Mayor Keon: I would also like to -- I would like to thank the Administration. I would like to thank the Manager. I would like to thank Peter Iglesias and Ed Santamaria, and everyone in the city that worked as hard as they did for as long as they did to respond to this hurricane, and including our police and fire and everything else. We have -- no one was injured. We had no



loss of life. We had tree damage. And for six weeks out from the storm, the city looks reasonably good.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: So thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much.