

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-3
October 16, 2012
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Maria Anderson

Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera, Jr.

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Mari Gallet, Executive Director, Coral Gables Business Improvement District

Joe Jimenez, Counsel for B.I.D.

E-3 [Start: 9:31:48 a.m.]

Resolution confirming Preliminary Assessment Roll for Business Improvement District of Coral Gables Special Assessment.

Mayor Cason: Let's go to Item E-3; this is a resolution confirming the Preliminary Assessment Roll for Business Improvement District of Coral Gables Special Assessment, and Mr. City Attorney would you please read that.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor this is a resolution confirming the Preliminary Assessment Roll for Business Improvement District of Coral Gables Special Assessments. As part of this resolution the City is also sitting as the Equalization Board today in case there is anyone who has petitioned or requested an adjustment to their assessment. My understanding is that we have received some letters of individuals who are wishing to do that, are they present today?

Mrs. Gallet: I believe so, at least one of them.

City Attorney Leen: So let me just briefly state what the standard is. As the Equalization Board you will be, the statute says applying fairness and justice to determine whether a particular property benefits more, benefits less, and so the special assessment should be adjusted, you are acting in a quasi-judicial capacity and the presentation will be given by the B.I.D. and also the individual or property owner who is requesting the adjustment.

Mrs. Gallet: Good morning Mayor, Commissioners, City Attorney, City Manager thank you for having us here today. I am Mari Gallet, I am the Executive Director of the Business Improvement District at 220 Miracle Mile, and I'm pleased to be here today. With us here today a couple of our Board members are joining us, maybe they are running a little behind schedule, but we also have one of our staff, our Assistant Director is here, Taciana Amador and B.I.D. counsel Joe Jimenez. We have a couple of property owners here, Mr. Bob Gallagher...and there is one other property owner that there is an appeal for in your packages that hopefully will be here as well. Just to summarize – we were originally created in 1997, and we have a sunset provision, so every five years we are up for renewal. This year 67 percent of our property owners affirmed their desire to continue the B.I.D. and only one petition was filed against the reestablishment of the B.I.D. So very proud and very honored that we received two-thirds vote of confidence, it's really a testament to our success in working together as business owners and property owners and we are reenergized to continue serving the district. Just so you know our preliminary tax roll for next year is exactly the same as it is this year; it's 51 cents for ground floor square foot for properties on Miracle Mile and 41 cents for properties off Miracle Mile. We plan to spend \$665,360 in advertising and project expenses this year out of a total budget of \$819,871. These projects as you are aware include TV advertising, billboards, radio, print, online marketing services. It also includes large contributions to the holiday lighting in the downtown, the production of signature events such as Giralda under the Stars, Coral Gables Restaurant Week, and Halloween on the Mile in a couple of weeks. We have also spearheaded the Miracle Mile Streetscape project, over the last 10 years dedicating resources and tens of thousands of dollars in studies and information campaigns to keep the project alive and at the top of our strategic goals. Our project expenses support the centralized valet program, general parking informational campaigns and also community events such as "Gables Bike Day", another one coming up in a couple of weeks on October 28th. As I mentioned, the assessment rate is the same this year as it was last year, our proposed assessment roll as presented in your packages calls for a 4 percent increase in years 2 through 5. I just wanted to let you know that a recent urban retail report by Terra Nova Corporation that was just published, they are one of our largest owners, shows that asking rent in the district is 14 percent up this year over last year, just to give you an indication of how things are doing on the street. So we thank you, the Commission, for your support of the B.I.D. and we look forward to continuing to work with you. We represent 100

percent of your downtown property owners and business owners and our livelihood is directly linked to the success of our main street and the Central Business District, from small business owners that have been here over 60 years to large corporations who recently opened and created new jobs, we ask you to approve our assessment roll at zero cost to the City and to its residents. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Mari, can I ask for just some clarification. On the 51 cents and the 41 cents it's for bottom floor space, correct?- so some of these buildings on Miracle Mile that have second floor space, I know Bob Gallagher that happens to have second floor space and there are several of them that have loft space throughout downtown Coral Gables, more specifically on Miracle Mile, they don't receive the assessment.

Mrs. Gallet: They don't. For example, a typical parcel is about 2,500 square feet that translates to \$1,272.00 per year or about \$100 per month. If you are off Miracle Mile you pay a lower rate and on the same size parcel that's about \$1,017.00.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So your methodology is not looking at the tax assessment records and looking at how the, not the assessed value, but the adjusted square footage is, you actually look at the downstairs space.

Mrs. Gallet: Yes. When we were established originally it was based on assessed value that was in 1997. We were almost victims of our own success because over the years, and especially during those boom years sometimes property values doubled and tripled, so people would be getting assessment bills that were double what they were the previous year and it was hard to plan also for their leases. So now the assessment roll is set for five years, it is this formula so like on the \$1,017 assessment you know that next year it's going to be \$40 extra.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'm perfectly OK with it, I was just trying to come up with the methodology of how you did it, and some of these, for instance a lot on Miracle Mile is 2,500 square feet, you...25 by 100 is the normal lot, and if you have two of them you have 5,000 square feet, some buildings are built that whole 5,000 square feet, some buildings are built 4,000 square feet of that 5,000 square feet, but you've looked at the floor print.

Mrs. Gallet: It's the foot print of the property because that's the number that unequivocally appears in the property records, so it's easy to calculate, and also that's the highest and best use as well, so if you've only built certain part of the parcel, the whole parcel is at that rate.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So you are assessing the land size.

Mrs. Gallet: Yes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Oh, I'm sorry, OK, not the building size. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Do we have any of the merchants that want to appeal or did you reach an agreement?

Mrs. Gallet: We have reached an agreement, I don't know Joe, do you want to talk about the particulars?

Mr. Joe Jimenez: Good morning Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, thank you very much. B.I.D. Counsel Joe Jimenez, law offices at 150 West Flagler Street, Miami. The Board has reached an agreement with respect to – however it's empowered to reach an agreement, but we are recommending the approval of the three appeals that are in your packet whether or not, I've been told one of the property owners are here, but we do support the three appeals that have been filed to you, the letter set forth is standard which was used, these are vacant lots they do not get the same benefit as retail properties or developed properties, and those are the three appeals that we have been made aware of and that our Board has empowered us to stand here and support to you, and if you have any questions we are happy to answer.

Mayor Cason: Any discussion?

Commissioner Quesada: Am I right?- I think I saw on the documentation that the Board unanimously agreed with the appeals?

Mr. Jimenez: Absolutely.

Mayor Cason: Do I have a motion?

Commissioner Quesada: So moved.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Quesada makes a motion, Commissioner Anderson seconds.

City Clerk

Commissioner Quesada: Yes
Commissioner Anderson: Yes
Commissioner Cabrera: Yes
Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes
Mayor Cason: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Gallet: Thank you. I think we'll be back one more time the next Commission meeting to approve the final roll, I didn't think we wanted to be presumptuous about the roll.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor it's perfectly appropriate to approve the resolution, but we should at least open and close the public hearing as to each of the individual appeals.

Mayor Cason: OK. Do we have anybody that wants to speak on either of those?- if not we close the public hearing and....

City Attorney Leen: Why don't we hold another vote Mr. Clerk on the – now that we've had a public hearing on the resolution as a whole, including the three appeals, unless there is any objection from the B.I.D.

Mayor Cason: That's fine.

Commissioner Quesada: So moved.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Quesada makes a motion, Commissioner Anderson seconds it.

City Clerk

Commissioner Anderson: Yes
Commissioner Cabrera: Yes
Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes
Commissioner Quesada: Yes
Mayor Cason: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 9:41:05 a.m.]