

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-10
May 20, 2025
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 Richard D. Lara

City Staff

Acting City Manager, Joe L. Gomez

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Assistant Finance Director, Paula Rodriguez

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item E-10 [3:44 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission approving a purchase and sale agreement to include certain key terms with Eugenia S. Schmid, as trustee of the Eugenia S. Schmid Declaration of Trust dated August 7, 1998 for the purchase of an undeveloped parcel of land located at 1031 Valencia Avenue; waiving certain requirements pursuant to Section 2-1089 of Division 12 of the Procurement Code; providing for a severability clause and providing for an effective date

Mayor Lago: E-10. I apologize, go back to E-10.

City Attorney Suarez: E-10 is an Ordinance of the City Commission approving a purchase and sale agreement to include certain key terms with Eugenia S. Schmid, as trustee of the Eugenia S. Schmid Declaration of Trust dated August 7, 1998 for the purchase of an undeveloped parcel of land located at 1031 Valencia Avenue; waiving certain requirements pursuant to Section 2-1089 of Division 12 of the Procurement Code; providing for a severability clause and providing for an effective date.

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Mayor Lago: Do we have anybody from staff.

Acting City Manager Gomez: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. As you know, Mr. Mayor, this is the empty lot adjacent to Salvadore Park. We entered into negotiations with the property owners. They came back with a final offer of, or what we thought was the final offer of \$3.2 million, and we came back and countered with a firm and final \$3.1 million, and they accepted our offer.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Manager, thank you very much for your hard work. I appreciate that. You and I have been working on that for probably the last two months. And at one point there we thought we weren't going to be able to get the property. They had it under contract with somebody else. We were able to get it back. I think it's a wonderful addition for the city, especially a park that needs a little bit more space, and this is a key piece of property that is perfectly placed and hopefully we can expand on this piece of property in the near future and my vision would be to vacate the city, excuse me, not the city, I apologize, vacate the street and then be able to even make the piece of property even larger. So again, this is a two-step process. Maybe in the near future another Commission would be able to address the other adjacent piece of property and then we would have something, again, that could really be made into something really, really special. Again, the reason why we're doing this here is because I wrote a piece of legislation a few years ago, where we were able to get park impact fees, point five percent is on a permit, and you have these monies there. This is not coming from tax revenue, from tax dollars from residents, correct. It's coming from park impact fees, so I want people to understand that. Madam Director, am I correct or no. Am I correct? This money, where's it coming from? Just want to be clear on that because I'm very proud of that legislation.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: Paula Rodrigues, Assistant Finance Director for Management and Budget. Yes. The funds that we have are coming from our purchase of land which the majority comes from impact fees that are dedicated to being used for the purchase of land.

Mayor Lago: And also from the permit fees, correct.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: From the permit fees. Impact fees that are collected as part of our building permit fees.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for that.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: Thank you.

City Attorney Suarez: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

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City Attorney Suarez: If I could just add. The key terms that will be incorporated in the PSA are attached in the letter of intent that was signed. We have sent a PSA to the seller and will be finalizing that between first and second reading. So, when it's approved on second, we'll have a final PSA for you all to review and consider.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. I need a motion and a second.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it. I'm thrilled.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Mr. Clerk, do you have any public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor, but can I verify who second it.

Commissioner Lara: Second.

City Clerk Urquia: Thank you, sir.

Mayor Lago: Any public comment, excuse me, any comment from the Commission.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes, Mr. Mayor. Madam City Attorney, these funds, just to add clarity, can only be used for the purchase of parks, of land for parks, correct.

City Attorney Suarez: I will defer to the Finance Director and the Budget Director on that. He has a question about the funds. So, the funds in this account are just the park impact fees?

Mayor Lago: So, and also can you talk, explain to the Commissioner when we wrote this legislation that then Vice Mayor Mike Mena amended it and made it a blend of 65-35, am I correct, so that he understands exactly what this money is.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: So, the park impact fee is a split of 65-35; 65 percent of the impact fee goes to the purchase of land and 35 percent goes to park enhancements, and so the park enhancements go to the enhancement of parks that are because of capacity, right. So these fees are tacked on to the building permit or development service permits because any development could impact has a growth to the city and impacts the city, and so, currently the impact fees that are collected for the parks impact fee, right, because there are different – we have mobility impact fees, we also have public safety impact fees, and so the portion that is collected for the purchase of land, every year as part of our budget process, allocate those funds to a capital project title purchase of land, and so, currently we have \$1.8 million dollars in that purchase of land project from impact fees, but we have a total of about \$5 million dollars in the project. So, a portion of those funds in the purchase of land are from unrestricted funds, right, are from general funds or other fees that have been able to accumulate and be put into that project. We also, and just to report, the most recent number that we have is, we have an additional \$420,000 that we've collected that

has not been appropriated and typically we would appropriate within the budget process, unless another purpose came along; and so, during the budget process in our Capital meetings we'll talk about appropriating that \$400,000 that we've collected this year to that same project. So, in short of the about \$5 million dollars that we have in the purchase of land project, just under \$2 million is restricted, because its impact fees and the other \$3 million is general fund revenues that have come in and that we've appropriated to that project over the years.

Mayor Lago: So, this is a vehicle that's been used, Madam Finance Director, ten times already to buy parks. We bought the one, Dorothy Thomson; we bought the country club on Granada corner; we bought the entrance feature on 37th Avenue; we bought the Vinny Torre piece that was a lot split, remember that piece.

Assistant Finance Director Rodriguez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: That was a little beautiful, small, 5,000 square foot park. So, we've been able to use this mechanism to buy parks in residential neighborhoods. This has nothing to do with the six or seven parks that we are going to have downtown that are forthcoming. Those are agreements with developers in place, the moment that the development agreement is struck here on the Commission. So, this is an example of the legislation that I wrote which is again, bearing fruit and another opportunity in the future where people are going to be able to see the expansion of Salvadore Park in a way that's going to make everybody really, really happy.

Commissioner Fernandez: Have we spoken to the neighbors of this property to make sure there is no objection to that property being a park?

Vice Mayor Anderson: I had a meeting with the residents directly across the street because we were also discussing the Salvadore dog run, and they will be ecstatic if that is maintained as a park.

Commissioner Fernandez: But I mean the two adjacent properties.

Mayor Lago: Talk through the Mayor.

Commissioner Fernandez: I was still talking.

Mayor Lago: Talk through the Mayor. You can still talk through the Mayor. Just say through the Mayor.

Commissioner Fernandez: I got the time. You interrupted me. Have we spoken to the two neighbors adjacent.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, I'm asking, go through the Mayor.

Commissioner Fernandez: I am going through the Mayor. You recognized me.

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Mayor Lago: I didn't recognize you.

Commissioner Fernandez: You did, and you interrupted me.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, I'm asking you nicely. Please go through the Mayor.

Commissioner Fernandez: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: There you go. Perfect.

Commissioner Fernandez: The second time. Don't interrupt me this time please. So, the two adjacent properties, Mr. Manager, have we spoken to those neighbors, because that is a property that's on a corner and has two homes that are adjacent to it.

Acting City Manager Gomez: To answer your question, Commissioner Fernandez, no, we have not.

Commissioner Fernandez: So, I'd be concerned about buying a property when we haven't even spoken to the neighbors adjacent to it about it becoming a part of a park. I also think if we are taking, there's an item on here to take \$7.1 million dollars away from a park that is already in the works that needs to get completed, we should take the \$3.2 million dollars that is unrestricted in this fund and apply it to Phillips Park, instead of buying another park that we have no plan for right now or in the near future.

Mayor Lago: Are you done, sir.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Those are apples and oranges. One thing has nothing to do with the other. We will talk about Phillips Park now in a few moments when we get there. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to expand when we may need parking in the future, or we may be doing something else in the future. This is an asset that you don't, you do not let slip away. Commissioner, your vision gets clouded in an effort to stop anything that I do which is good and it's a shame because we have an opportunity to bring forward so many good items here to the Commission and you don't have one item on the agenda. So, I would concentrate on that, I would concentrate on that instead of just trying to say, find every nit-pick and every problem with everything, which again, this is a piece of property that's a once in a lifetime opportunity to buy adjacent to a property that everybody will tell you and staff that its sorely needed for multiple different reasons. So, we have a motion and a second, so please call the roll, Mr. Clerk.

City Attorney Suarez: Mayor, this item does require a four-fifths vote because of the amount of the waiver of procurement.

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Mayor Lago: If we don't the four-fifths, we don't get it. Its not on me. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to buy this property. Mr. Clerk.

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: No

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 4-1)

Mayor Lago: Very smart move. Thank you.