

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item C-4**  
**May 27, 2014**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Jim Cason**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Frank Quesada**

**City Staff**

**Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal**  
**City Attorney, Craig E. Leen**  
**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**  
**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Meg Daly, Founder of the Friends of the Greenlink**

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C-4 [Start: 9:36:50 a.m.]

Resolution of the Coral Gables City Commission endorsing the Greenlink proposal for creating a ten (10) mile linear park along the Metrorail corridor; further directing the City Clerk to transmit a copy of this Resolution to certain designated officials as listed herein.

Mayor Cason: Alright. In the consent agenda there was a Resolution supporting the Greenlink.

Commissioner Lago: C-4.

Mayor Cason: C-4. Do you want to...Is Meg here? Why don't you come up and tell us a little bit about...

Meg Daly: Absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: This is a great project.

Meg Daly: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: So I need you to highlight this that is why we called you up.

Meg Daly: Well thank you for allowing me to speak today. Every opportunity that I get to talk about Greenlink I do, as you all know, and I am the founder of the Friends of the Greenlink and our initiative is to transform the land underneath the Metrorail from the Miami River by Brickell Station down to Dadeland South. So, for anybody who doesn't know, and hasn't ran that course which is currently called the M-Path the current condition is a path that it is about five feet, six feet wide, it is winding, it is not lit, there are no amenities. Our goal is to create a 15-foot wide trail, really a world class urban trail with accompanying park nodes. We don't know what the number is, as you know we have sort of gone beyond concept to initiative and roughly two miles of the Greenlink, which is about 10 miles long, fronts on the City of Coral Gables. So we are trying to turn this underutilized land into a public asset. Research has shown us and really there has been a number of initiatives throughout the Country and worldwide that have taken underutilized land and turned them into public assets. That have an economic impact, health impact, of which two of them we are doing studies at the University of Miami this fall, so you all are fully aware of what we are doing and if you have any questions for me...

Mayor Cason: In the UM School of Architecture...

Meg Daly: Yes, so we have really engaged the community and the University of Miami stepped up in many ways. The School of Architecture did an exercise to take the track of land and do a vision plan of what could be, because it is really important to take this from words and into some visuals. A number of agencies were involved in that project and we are going to have an exhibit throughout the community starting with MCAD in June and then we are going to move it to the History of Miami and that will show all of those visuals in different places throughout the community.

Mayor Cason: Is there a webpage or someplace people can go to for more information?-and if they want to volunteer?

Meg Daly: Absolutely, and they can sign up to be a friend it is [www.thegreenlink.org](http://www.thegreenlink.org), we also have a Facebook page and a Twitter feed, and people can signed up to show their support, they can also volunteer. We have 100 people who have volunteered and we want to build on those numbers. We have over 500 friends and we want to build that into a real force.

Mayor Cason: And a number of cities have passed Resolutions supporting Greenlink is that correct?

Meg Daly: Yes. The City of South Miami passed their Resolution about a month-and-a-half ago to endorse, the Village of Pinecrest endorsed, City of Miami just passed theirs last Thursday, and now it is in front of you all today, I hope you all support us and we are working on a MOU with the Transit Department. As you know this is County land and the steward of that land is Transit

and so we want to make sure that if we do all of the things that we are supposed to do, by the way we are a nonprofit, and our role is to usher the project forward involving the necessary agencies as well as the community and we will be raising dollars on the private end to support this effort.

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you just a few quick questions and I made some observations after our meeting this past week which was I spoke to several business after our meeting and to say they were enthusiastic is not being gracious enough because they border the M-Path and they see the potential in the M-Path specially that park that we discussed which is currently blocked off near Merrick Park underneath the Metrorail Station. If you look at the High Line in New York I was doing a little research after our meeting and there are a multitude of examples where businesses, developments, construction, the private sector has thrived due to the High Line coming in. Not only the art community, it is extensively for public art shows which are currently on the High Line and below the High Line. Do you foresee that the M-Path could be used in the same fashion, in regards to the High Line that they use it for art exhibits, for public art spaces?

Meg Daly: Yes, and one of the drivers of the success of these type of initiatives is ongoing programming and so our organization would be responsible for programming the space, ten miles is a lot to program. So, imagine on any given day x number of years from now, I hope it is sooner rather than later, you can take the 8 transit stations that pierce the track and actually get on and off and have activities at those transit stations. You mentioned the green space being a driver for economic growth and it is the High Line, the Chicago 606, the Indianapolis Cultural Trail, the original one was the Promenade Plantee in Paris. There are real hard numbers that show that property values increase, tax receipts increase because of increased property values and then you have all of the beautiful stuff like reduction of carbon emissions and so forth. So, one of the things that we are going to be working on this fall with the MBA Program at UM is really coming up with some projections of what the economic impact could be of the Greenlink.

Commissioner Lago: Just to finish my statement we are not reinventing the wheel here, it has been done before and the return on investment is pronounced, it is there, like you mentioned in Chicago, you mentioned New York, Indianapolis, I think that this is an incredible opportunity for all municipalities and the County to get behind it, not only the municipalities that are part of the M-Path, but for everyone to support this because right now in the current state of the M-Path, it is nice, but it could be a lot better and I have used it on a multitude of occasions to run, to bike, but if you are able to achieve this with our support and with other municipalities support I think what we are looking at is an incredible return on investment.

Meg Daly: Right, and one of the beauties of this vision is that there is no land acquisition cost.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Meg Daly: And that is really one of the biggest hurdles to overcome when you are carving out 10 miles of anything. So in the High Line's case there was no land acquisition cost, but 40 percent of their expenses went toward shoring up the structure and we don't have that investment either. What we do have is 28 intersections to contend with. I think the School of Architecture did a really great job of envisioning how those crosswalks could be redesigned so they favor the pedestrian and bicyclist bringing attention to the fact that when you come to that intersection someone is going to be crossing the street and as you also know Miami-Dade County has some pretty bad numbers regarding bicyclist and pedestrian mortality rates.

Mayor Cason: Great, thank you very much. We support the project and good luck.

Meg Daly: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you for your commitment.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: I would like to congratulate Meg for having the vision that she had, and she didn't just think about it, she did it. She came forward and she put a group of people together and has really taken this to the next step, and I think she has the community buy-in, I know she has all of the cities buy-in and I know she will be successful. She comes from a family of great civic activists that have brought much to our community, so thank you so much.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.