

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item M – Discussion Items
May 22, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

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

City Staff

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item M [3:44:31 p.m.]
Discussion Items

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you have a comment?

Commissioner Keon: I have under Discussion Items, can we do? I'd like to start. I went to the meeting at St. Thomas that the staff held with the residents of Hammock Lakes last week. There were about 40 people there that were willing to have a discussion about lot coverage, but were very, very upset about the way that it was done and the way it was done with only lot coverage. So, I think Ophelia...who is an architect who also lives in Hammock Lakes, I think she sent each of you this document. So, I would ask for your support from my colleagues to direct the City Attorney to make, to draft a resolution for zoning in progress for Hammock Lakes that would be on the June 12th agenda, to give the residents of Hammock Lakes, along with our staff to look at what they are proposing with regard to lot coverage. They themselves had wanted to increase lot coverage. What they want to make sure happens is that, that the aesthetics of their neighborhood or Hammock Lakes are not significantly changed by changes to the zoning code. If you read this, what you can see is they very much understand the need to increase or the desire to increase the

lot coverage, particularly for one-story homes. What they don't want to see is because you can under the current now, under the lot coverage on an acre lot, you can build up to a 14,000 square foot box on a lot size. We know that we have a very, very attractive and desirable City to live in. So people are buying up properties, they are building spec houses and that is always the concern. If we – there will be increased lot coverage. I think what they want to look at is the ability to regulate, to not allow you to create a box. They spoke to Ramon about this, I think. Ramon said, under the current zoning with just the lot coverage, you have no way to prevent that from happening. You will rely on the quality of the architect and their design and the client to have good taste in order to do that. And, I think the residents there don't want to be so dependent upon just the good taste of a neighbor or the quality of the architect that happens to get chosen, when maybe the larger, the bigger could be of competing interest if its built as a spec house. We have received now numerous e-mails from the people of Hammock Lakes expressing themselves that they would just like this opportunity to participate with staff in order to refine that item, so that they believe and are comfortable that it will maintain the aesthetic of their community. So, I would ask you to please support my request to ask, to direct the City Attorney to draft a resolution, a zoning in progress resolution to come back to us in June and we can come back in July with the actual recommendations. We don't have a meeting between June and July, I'm sure they can sort these things out by July, so this is not two years later this happens, that isn't the case. To my knowledge, there have been no applications filed for any development. There has not been a variance request in ten years in that area, according to our Building Department's records. Anyway, it will achieve the increase in lot coverage where it's contemplated. I don't know that it will go to 25; I think they are looking at 23; I think was the number they came up with....

Commissioner Lago: I think it's 18, no its 23 on one.

Commissioner Keon: No. Its 23 and 18. But, allow them the opportunity to have input into what happens in their neighborhood.

Commissioner Lago: I just want to be clear, as you said it several times. We did have public meetings.

Commissioner Keon: The only public meeting you had that allowed, that notified these people what was happening was a courtesy notice that the Manager wanted put out on this issue of Snapper Creek and Hammock Lakes; and I know it has been said that this has been in progress for well over a year and I want to tell you it was not in the discussion for well over a year. The issue with regard to the residential zoning code was an issue that I had asked for probably a year and-a-half ago, and sat down with Ramon and went through some of the items that were seen particularly with regard to spec homes that were coming up and ask that we would look at those,

he put a group of architects together, they did address it. The first time that it came to us – and Snapper Creek and Hammock Lakes weren't even included in it and it wasn't until we went to the workshop that we had the workshop that Hammock Lakes or Snapper Creek were ever brought into this issue, so it had never been discussed before. It had never been discussed with the residents. I mean that's why you had the outcry that you did from Snapper Creek, because they had never, the first notice they ever received was the courtesy notice that the Manager had said she would send out before it came back to the Commission, not even the Planning and Zoning Board. It was before it came back to the Commission. That was after it was passed on First Reading by the Commission for Hammock Lakes that was after First Reading, it was before Second Reading and it was before First Reading for Snapper Creek. So, all I'm asking is that you now give the residents in Hammock Lakes that same opportunity and we'll do it in an abbreviated fashion. So, I know that there are people that would like to expand, they will have that opportunity. It is probably – we will ask that it come back to the City for approval in July.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: There was an ordinance passed on First Reading, two or three meetings after that, it passed on Second Reading, where were they when they said they weren't notified? It was very, very much discussed. I have no objection, but if you are trying for us to annul our ordinance, I think that's....

Commissioner Keon: It isn't to annul it. I'm only asking that you make it a zoning in progress. That means that until they have the opportunity to make input.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Did we pass the ordinance?

Commissioner Keon: Right – but you can amend an ordinance. So, all I'm asking you is to allow them the opportunity to have input, to have that input, and come back, they'll work with staff and for staff to make a recommendation based on that and at that point, you can either accept the amendments or you can't, but it's to give them the opportunity to have input into what will happen to the aesthetics of their community. That's all.

Commissioner Mena: Look, I understand. But you said yourself, there hasn't been an application yet, so you are perpetuating a bit of a myth that just because this has passed that these floodgates are open and they didn't have a chance for input. They just had a public meeting a few days ago.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Mena: They can continue to discuss these things with staff and the idea...

Commissioner Keon: But Commissioner Mena....

Commissioner Mena: Like to finish. The idea that if somebody submits an application in the interim its somehow going to change the entire character of their neighborhood is I think a little extreme.

Commissioner Keon: Commissioner Mena...

Commissioner Mena: Go ahead.

Commissioner Keon: The issue here is, is that yes, you passed; you changed the zoning for their community. If we have a resolution for a zoning in progress it will stay that recommendation or that ordinance until they have the opportunity to have input. It's a two month period of time, all I'm asking is to allow them to come back to have input into that. Now if they do, if they are, if staff works with them and if there are some changes to that blanket 25 percent coverage, then they will make those amendments, they will come back. You can either deny them, deny them that opportunity or allow the ordinance as it stands to stand. We have never, never gone in and changed site specific zoning in any area without community input, we have never done that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They have had the opportunity.

Commissioner Keon: They did not.

Commissioner Mena: We had several residents come meet with me, reach out to me before – after what you labeled courtesy notice, which I don't know why that label is necessary, because notice is notice, courtesy or otherwise, notice is notice.

Commissioner Keon: What other notice did they receive, what notice did they receive?

Commissioner Mena: The courtesy notice that you just described.

Commissioner Keon: That's it. That was after First Reading.

Commissioner Mena: Understood. So then we had a Second Reading, during that time period we were all approached by a variety of different residents, both against and in favor. I just want to reject the premise of what you are saying, which is that we didn't consider a lot of these things that we didn't speak to people, and that we weren't thoughtful in how we went about this. That's not to say that everybody agrees with us, that's not to say even that it's the most popular decision, but there was thought and there was notice.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, there was notice and there was participation by the neighborhood.

Commissioner Lago: And if I can express one thing, this is my only point on this matter and this is why I'm going to vote no on it. We are trying to find a happy medium to meet the request of a few and many residents in that area that have come and spoken to all of us in regards to what they require of me, and we've put that out on multiple occasions, we've laid it out there why we went to 25, while the entire City is 35.

Commissioner Keon: It's irrelevant what the city is....

Commissioner Lago: But let me just finish Commissioner. I've been listening to you for the last ten minutes; I just want to have a moment. It's relevant. I'll give you an example why it's relevant. For example, I voted no in the North Gables to go from 50 to 100 units an acre, my position was 75. We had a recommendation, from not only staff, but we had a recommendation from multiple architects who spoke here and said listen, go to 75 and a moment here on this dais we went to 100 and we voted on it and that's why I voted no. So, there are decisions that are made and there are significant jumps that affect the neighborhood and they are made on this dais right now. So, literally the staff recommendation was go from 50 units to 75 and I said I'm in favor of it. I'm going to vote for it.

Commissioner Keon: Alright.

Commissioner Lago: Hold on – and then we went from 75 to 100, because I still remember who the architects were here that spoke in favor of it and I said I can't vote for this. There are certain decisions that were made.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion?

Commissioner Keon: Ramon please, how many meetings did we have on the North Gables?- how many meetings did we have in the North Gables?- how many charrettes did we have?- how many public meetings did we have with the residents in the North Gables while those things were...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That is irrelevant. That is irrelevant to this issue.

Commissioner Keon: That is most relevant. It is most relevant.

Commissioner Lago: I'm not going to say if it's relevant or not and I give you the common courtesy. I'm not debating that whether it's relevant or not. What I'm saying is that we made a

decision as a Commission, because even though I voted against it, we are the Commission as a body. We made a decision to go and double the density in the North Gables area when staff was recommending only to jump up by 50 percent. So certain decisions are made here that we have to live by, I may have opposed, but I'm not coming back and saying hey, let's reconsider that issue. I respect what my colleagues voted.

Commissioner Keon: I'm not asking you to reconsider it. I'm asking you to give them the opportunity to have input.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK. Make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: Once they have input then decide. Give them that chance.

Commissioner Mena: But you again, feeding a narrative and you are operating under a premise that they don't have input and they do. They just had a public meeting and they can continue to talk to staff, but you are assuming that...

Commissioner Keon: Commissioner Mena...

Commissioner Mena:...you are saying that a moratorium is necessary in order to prevent what?

Commissioner Keon: It's not a moratorium. It is a zoning in progress.

Commissioner Mena: It's the same thing.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion please.

Commissioner Keon: But the reason is, for them to continue to meet serves no purpose, no purpose, because the decision has already been made.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It has been made and....

Commissioner Keon: So that's what I'm saying to you. Give them the opportunity, hold it, stay it, give them the opportunity to have input, give them the opportunity to come back.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They had input.

Commissioner Mena: You are saying there was no opportunity when we met with several people, including the President of the HOA before the Second Reading.

Commissioner Keon: And what did they say to you?

Commissioner Mena: They gave us their opinion and we made a decision anyways, but we made a decision.

Commissioner Keon: I would like to direct the City Attorney to draft a resolution for a zoning in progress, to draft a resolution for zoning in progress for Hammock Lakes for the June 12th meeting to come back by the July meeting with whatever their recommendation based on community input.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK – is there a second to that? Is there a second? OK, there is no second; it dies for lack of a second.

Commissioner Keon: OK. Then you explain to the people why they don't have any input to the zoning specifics in their neighborhoods.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Come on.

Commissioner Mena: Again, I think that's a really unfair statement for you to make. That's a very unfair statement, because I've spoken to multiple people...

Commissioner Keon: And it's a statement of fact.

Commissioner Mena: No, it's not a statement of fact. How do you know who we have spoken to? How do you know who we've spoken to?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's very unfair. And it's a personal attack...

Commissioner Keon: How many?

Commissioner Mena: Many including Ophelia... at 9 a.m. the morning after that meeting, including Bill Ogden, the President of the HOA, including all the e-mails that we get in responses. I think it's very unfair for you to say no on a vote and then come back and ask us to reconsider.

Commissioner Keon: Tell them no they cannot have a community meeting, but whereby you....

Commissioner Mena: No, we asked for the community meeting. We asked for that.

Commissioner Keon: A community meeting to tell them what has happened to them, not...

Commissioner Mena: To answer questions that they had.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But, not a community meeting whereby they had the opportunity to have input and make a decision.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ladies and gentlemen it died for lack of a second; it died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Mena: But, I think it's unfair for you to say that they didn't have any input. I think that's unfair.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It died for lack of a second. Anything else to come before the meeting?

Commissioner Mena: The President of the HOA spoke to us...

Commissioner Keon: And they will tell you they had no meeting.

Commissioner Mena: That doesn't mean it's true.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Come on. Vice Mayor please.

Commissioner Keon: It most certainly is.

Vice Mayor Quesada: ...Miracle Mile, Giralda, different locations and I know there were one or two vendors that had put in, I know we had been discussing, this was when Javier Betancourt was here, so I would just like to see if by next meeting we can have that figured out. Obviously, Miracle Mile is up and running.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: A piggyback contract that we were interested in jumping on. We'll find out where that was.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Again, I forget exactly the details, but again, I saw this board and it made me think of that; and for those of you who do not recall, this is to put in similar screens like that on Miracle Mile and Giralda where it tells you where to go. Almost like in the mall back in the day that has a screen, "You Are Here" it tells you where to go to a restaurant or a shoe store or

something like that, an electronic that works with your phone. I played with one of them in Denver, probably last year and it's really cool.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's not soil Miracle Mile with all of these things.

Vice Mayor Quesada: No. There are existing locations for it. If not, it's going to be a huge eyesore, but again, staff has been looking at it for probably about a year.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'd like to see it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I just want to bring it back to us at a future Commission meeting to determine if we are going to do it or not. That's it.

Commissioner Lago: I agree with you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK. And one last thing. I sent you a thing about it; a Sister City relationship with the City of El Salvador which is very, very much alike to ours and has developing technology, etc. They even have, as I said, a historic cemetery, I'm going to send it or I'm going to ask the IACC to consider it, to bring it before us in the second meeting in June.

Commissioner Lago: OK. I have just a few quick points. I need your ratification. I'm making two appointments, Alexander Bucelo for Code Enforcement Board and Jose Rodadi, Parking Advisory Board, both Coral Gables residents, both young attorneys. Their resumes have been submitted to the Clerk, if not Chelsea has them or she was going to submit them. I also like to invite you all to attend having a town meeting. It's going to be super fun, I'm telling you. Free beverages and pastalitos for everybody.

Commissioner Mena: Are you doing it at the Senior Center again?

Commissioner Lago: At the Senior Center. Thank you to the Senior Center. We have a guest speaker, Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, Xavier Suarez. He's going to talk about all the great things that the County is doing to represent the City of Coral Gables and hopefully how we are going to figure out transportation. So, June 14th from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. I'd love to have everyone there. So that's that. And the final point is, I'd like to make you all aware and congratulate Kevin Kinney and his staff in reference to the application for the TPO SMART Plan demonstration project that was submitted yesterday. The project that was proposed was an extension of new "Freebie" routes to connect riders with Coral Gables Trolley. I don't know if Kevin is here, I just want to give him a little more credit, but don't worry if he's not. This is going to be a two-year pilot program and hopefully they are going to cover, I think it's about 50

percent of the funds to extend the “Freebie” route and this is just hopefully one of the many endeavors that we are going to be able to do in conjunction with the TPO. So, hopefully we’ll find out that our application was picked and we can deliver on this incredibly successful “Freebie.”

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very good. Anything else to come before the meeting? Meeting adjourned. Thank you.

[End: 4:03:35 p.m.]