

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C – Mayor’s Comments
March 14, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner James Cason
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parking Director, Kevin Kinney
Assistant Director for Mobility Hub, Matt Anderson
Development Services Director, Suramy Cabrera
Assistant Director of Public Works, Deena Bell-Llewellyn
Police Chief, Ed Hudak
Finance Director, Diana Gomez

Public Speaker(s)

Maurice Classen, US Lead for JOLT Charge
Eddy Martinez
Gonzalo Sanabria

Agenda Items C- [9:30 a.m.]
Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Lago: The second thing, just before we tackle 9:30, the time certain that we have, which is item F-1, I’d like to discuss Mayor’s Comments, C-3, and the reason why I’m doing this is because the representatives are here, and they have to catch a plane. It’s a discussion regarding electric vehicles charging solutions by JOLT. I wrote a memo, and all my memos are posted online, so the community can view them and give us their guidance; and it was a memo that was dated February
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28, 2023. It was a formal memo discussing with my colleagues what their ideas and what their interests were in proposing JOLT, which is an electronic vehicle charging units, which has two different components to it. So, this would be fast rapid charging, but we have to take into consideration that there is some sort of electronic advertisement, digital advertisement on it, and also the second part is the public safety aspect of it, because you do have a cable that comes off of a box and it is plugged into the car. I think that this is something and I'll give you an example. As a person that drives an electric car, you can't always make it to areas, we don't have enough areas, in my opinion, in Miami-Dade County that has super charging opportunities. I think that as more and more cars, people go the route of electric cars, we need to continue to build up our infrastructure. Do I think that this is for every single street corner? – I don't, but I think that there has to be an opportunity where maybe we can take, for example, I was thinking about the parking lot adjacent to Abbracci, and we could potentially take maybe 5, 6, 7 spaces there, which are tucked away in a surface parking lot, not on the street, and put some of these charging stations there which are, again, less in your face and have less pedestrian walking, so that you wouldn't have an issue with the actual connection into the car. So, I wanted to bring it up today, because I wanted the representative to come up and we can kind of talk a little bit about what other cities are doing, kind of gauge your concerns, your ideas, if you like the program, if you don't like the program. Just give me a little bit of feedback on that.

Mr. Classen: Thank you Mayor, thank you Commission.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being with us. I know you came down for this. I appreciate it.

My name is Maurice Classen, the US Lead for JOLT Charge. You should have a copy of the proposal, and obviously the Mayor summarized it well. By way of background, JOLT charge is an Australian based provider of fast charging utilities with staff in over five countries. There were over 3,000 chargers under contract in some 40 cities across the globe and roughly a \$100 million dollars in commitment from Black Rock as one of its first renewable energy investments across the globe. We also have chargers under contract in Sydney, Toronto and London. Our model is straightforward. Its sustainable fast DC level free-fast charging, supported by ad revenue. The company has had long term leases with cities and private partners to provide 15 minutes of free charging to all residents and visitors daily, which matches about a daily commute. Visitors and residents can pay more if they'd like to keep going on charging with 15 minutes, its free which amounts to about a daily commute. At core, the ___ provides four main benefits for the city; free infrastructure, which is paid for by JOLT; revenue for the city for each charger; free energy for residents and visitors; and free advertising for cities top issues....We also provide open data to the city to see how...is being used and multi-modal units that can charge both e-bikes and e-scooters on the docking stations to make sure there is no street clutter. Thus far, we've had very fruitful conversations with several city staff and discussed a number of suitable sites across the city, to address some of the concerns that the Mayor raised. We can provide chargers at both open parking

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lots, as well as parking structures. We also can provide way-finding units if necessary; and ultimately our model itself helps address the major concern around tripping and ADA, because not only do our units actually self-protract, but because we have ad revenue, we can actually promise the city 95 percent up time and response within 24 hours to any concerns that you might have regarding safety. We're very excited about the opportunity to partner with the City of Coral Gables and welcome your questions and guidance for the next phase of our partnership.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here. So, there are some concerns, obviously, we're a city that has very limited advertising, something that we pride ourselves on, that visual pollution, minimizing it. Also, we want to have the issue of being safe. Somebody tripping on the cord, but I charge in the parking garage using our existing infrastructure. It works well, but it doesn't charge fast enough, but it gets the job done if you go have lunch or dinner, you have about two hours, you can get a little bit of battery if you're in a tough bind. I think this is a good opportunity, but it's got to be in the right location, and I think it has to be in downtown, and I think it has to be potentially in a parking lot that we have that we will designate a handful or maybe ten spaces just for this type of charging. If you go to the charging stations, and Kevin can give us a little bit more background on it, every time that I go there I feel like there's almost all the people are charging and there are more and more cars, electric cars on the street. Mr. Kinney, would you give us a little bit of background and Matt, Mr. Anderson, a little bit of background in regards to, I think electric cars, I don't want to say it's the wave to the future, but you're seeing them more and more and more, and they are becoming more advanced.

Parking Director Kinney: Just a couple of quick big picture items. We are in the process of looking at quick charging. We actually have several vendors, manufacturers who are speaking with the city and we're currently evaluating those. Matt can tell you; I think – how many times have we spoken to JOLT? – we are very interested.

Mr. Anderson: We've spoken, we've had about four or five meetings at this point.

Parking Director Kinney: But there're also other vendors out there that are interested in partnering with Coral Gables. We are very attractive for the EV industry, because as a city we have more infrastructure than any other city, and I'm not saying any other city our size. I'm saying any other city.

Mayor Lago: Can I interject there, if I may. So, the other day, I was on a highway and my car ran out of battery on the way down from Ft. Myers from work. I had to get towed. I missed getting to a Walmart by literally a mile. I couldn't find, through the system, I couldn't find a super charger and the reason why I could have gone to a regular charger, but I did actually go to one, but it would have taken so much time, I would have missed one of the meetings that I had at night here in Miami, as I was driving down. So, I had to go and intentionally risk finding a super charger and I found it in a Walmart. That's I'm aware of, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but can we also

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just have a discussion. I've been trying, let's be fair, I've been trying for five or six years to try to get Tesla and we've had multiple meetings, there has to be a dedicated place in downtown for us to do this. We've been talking about it for years and it's a problem already. Let me give you an example. It happens to all of us. If you have to drive back to, let's say Doral, in an hour and-a-half of traffic, you live there and you're doing business here locally, and you only have 15 minutes and you just realize, I didn't charge last night. It happens to all of us – very busy, we have a lot of things on our mind and our schedules. You now have to wait, potentially two or three hours for the system to charge to make it back in heavy traffic to Doral. Some people don't have that time. So, I think that we need to take the next step, because as I sat there for 30 minutes and charge my car, almost up to 100 percent, Walmart was full of people, I mean, every stall was busy. People were waiting to come in, because of the velocity of the charging that was offered at these Walmarts. So, I've been talking about it for years. We're trying to find the perfect fit. I remember with Mr. Kinney, we talked about on the top of one of our parking garages, because we didn't want to give prime spaces. We talked about the cost associated with it. I think we need to really move forward with this, because we're falling behind on the super charger aspect of it.

Parking Director Kinney: We would be happy to meet with you and go over the proposals that we're reviewing now, but as I said, JOLT is one that we've taken several meetings with, and we are still in conversations with them. So, I do believe within – we have another one that's getting very close to a decision point and if those things happen you will see a large number of super chargers in the city, and even with the infrastructure we have within the next couple of years, we're looking at over 150 charging points within the city.

Mr. Anderson: Coming online.

Parking Director Kinney: A few of those will be super chargers.

Commissioner Cason: I have a question about the advertising. Who controls what kind of advertising, you have restrictions, can you advertise Marijuana cigarettes. How much advertising.

Mr. ____: No, we don't advertise things like that and that's by agreement with the city. So, it would be part of the negotiations about what things are actually advertised.

City Manager Iglesias: Commissioner Cason, we have Ike, which are the advertisements that we have, the little kiosk that we have on the Mile and the one I showed you yesterday, and we developed a method of controlling that advertising so it's appropriate to our branding. And Mayor, our Mobility Hub is geared towards EV charging, so once we do that Mobility Hub, we'll have a tremendous – actually it will be geared to having 100 percent EV charging in that facility, that's why we think it is a critical facility. And as far as these proposals, I agree with the Mayor, we need to get more super chargers, more charging in our city. I think a very large percentage of our city uses electric vehicles, it may be much more so than other cities, and so, we need to work on that.

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I think what we can do is look at the rest of the various proposals and bring them back to the City Commission, if not the next meeting, the meeting in May.

Mayor Lago: So, what I would like to do, Mr. Manager, with the support of my colleagues on the Commission. Go ahead Commissioner.

Commissioner Anderson: What I want to do is I want to echo some of the points, because it's been a long, long time that we've been trying to push charging forward. Matt, I know you and I have been talking about this for a long time. My 2017 volt has been paid off. I'd like to move on to bigger and better things, but the reality is we don't have enough charging. In the Mobility Hub, I don't think is going to have the super chargers in it anyway. So, we need to expand this vision and some advertising is good for our downtown, our restaurants could use it, for instance. I stop and park, because I want to get charged, my next question is where am I going to go to eat, because that's why when I'm traveling, I will combine charging with eating so I can relax when I'm charging, but if I can only charge a little tiny bit, why stop, why stop there. For me, I have a gas backup engine, I'll just keep going. I won't be charging. So in order to open up these options and to make it a more robust economy for our restaurants, you can stop, you can charge; the advertising can be on there for the restaurants so I can see what I want to eat, if I want to eat Asian, Italian, etc., you can select the menu, and we can have a discussion about what advertising is appropriate on there, the size of the advertising versus the information for our local businesses.

Mayor Lago: I agree with you wholeheartedly. I think that we have to, obviously, curate the type of advertising, but I'm asking you please, through the Manager, it's time to move forward. Time to bring it to the next Commission. I've asked for my colleagues on the Commission to please support me with this. Pick a parking lot in downtown, if you don't feel comfortable with it being on the street, but we need to have real super chargers. We need to have this type of technology offered to our residents and to our visitors, because the Commissioner brought up a great point. People who drive through the city, we have 700,000 people that drive through our city every single day, I want them to stop and spend some of their hard-earned money in our downtown. Our downtown subsidizes our budget to the tune of 27 percent, so I'd rather have them come here, spend their hard-earned money in our downtown, get the charging that they need done. Electric cars from what I've read, correct me if I'm wrong Matt, you know better than I do, is only continuing to grow. Some manufacturers are even phasing out combustion engines. So, while we have done a great job and we are leading the charge in regards to EV infrastructure, I've been talking about this for 5, 6 years, it's never going to be perfect, but we've got to do something that's tasteful but that pushes the ball forward.

Parking Director Kinney: I do want to make sure we don't miss the opportunity to speak about the good things that are happening. One is, within three months we've got 25 brand new charging ports in the new garage, and in the Mobility Hub specifically, we are responding, Mr. Anderson,

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yes, super charging is part of the plan. On the second level of the plan is to have several super chargers.

City Manager Iglesias: Interesting, in my discussions with FPL, we looked at super charging the entire new portion of that facility and FPL was not able to provide the power to do so. So, I think we have some grid issues that we have to take care of, but if we spread it around, I think we can get certainly a lot more super charging than just at one location, but it's interesting that the grid hasn't kept up with that need.

Mayor Lago: So, moving forward, we have direction through the Manager, let's bring this forward to the next Commission meeting. I ask you to please sit down, meet with JOLT, please meet with the other companies. I want to do something comprehensive. I want to see different opportunities that are tasteful, they are curated tastefully, taking into consideration Coral Gables, and that are done appropriately to meet the needs that we have today, okay.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we'll provide a full presentation next Commission meeting.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Thank you for coming. I appreciate it.

Speaker: Thank you for having me.

Mayor Lago: Thank you for being here.

[Note for the Record] The Mayor went onto time certain item F-1 and then resumed Mayor's Comments.

Mayor Lago: Moving onto Mayor's Comments, item C-1, I'm going to try to fly through these. I would like to have lunch at 1 o'clock if possible. That gives me – I've got five items to go over in eight minutes. I'm going to be very brief. Item C-1 – discussion regarding traffic ad speed calming on Milan Avenue. I'd like to be very clear with staff. I've been going back and forth; I just want to put this before my Commissioners here.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we have an associated presentation on item I-1, which is the traffic calming and police response time, so that was associated with.

Mayor Lago: Okay, we'll jump into that one after.

City Manager Iglesias: So, if we could do that, its I-1 Mayor.

Mayor Lago: C-2 – just want to put this on your radar. You wanted to say something.

City Clerk Urquia: I'm sorry, Mr. Mayor, before you continue, on C-1.

Mayor Lago: You wanted to say something.

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City Clerk Urquia: He wishes to speak on Public Comments, but on C-1, we did have a gentleman here, John Nelson, I believe he's sitting here, he wanted to speak to you.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Go ahead John, I'm sorry, I apologize, come forward sir. I was just going to hear I-1. I didn't know we had somebody here, I apologize. It's your time, you've been very patient.

Speaker: I live at 1434 Milan, and I think we've been e-mailing back and forth for a year or so.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Speaker: And I understand that the traffic calming has been approved for that 1400 Block, based on design.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Speaker: Which was probably last November and just wanted to see, inquire about.

Mayor Lago: The issue that we are doing here today is putting it on the record, we are having a conversation. I'm ready to move forward with traffic calming. I've asked staff to move forward, this is critically important. It's been too long. This area is a speedway. To be frank with you, I'm just getting bombarded with residents and I respond to every single one, like I responded to you, and it gets to the point where there is no answer. It's a cut-through street coming all the way down 57th Avenue and I need to get this addressed. The issue is, and I want to put it on the record, and this is what the Manager will talk to me about, because again, public safety is just as important if not more important than the traffic calming. Staff is concerned about the implementation of all the traffic calming that's being put and how that would affect response times for police and fire. It's a catch-22, you understand, and it's a decision that we have to make as a Commission. I'm ready to move forward, especially on Milan, I think its critically important that we address the traffic calming, but we need to make sure that the residents are aware that our engineers, our Public Works Director, our City Manager, our ACM, all our staff has a concern, they brought it to the Commission, and I think we need to move forward on traffic calming, but I wanted to bring it to the attention of my staff. And we are going to have a full-fledged presentation after we come back from lunch, if not, I think the Commission will pass out, but I'm ready to move forward on traffic calming on Milan, okay.

Commissioner Anderson: You may want to stick around for the presentation.

Speaker: I'll be here, no problem. I sat through this last.

Mayor Lago: Alright, thank you. Listen, I'll be very quick. On C-2, discussion regarding parking and food delivery scooters. I'm up to my last wits with scooters and delivery drivers, all over

downtown, cutting people off, throwing garbage in the bushes. They are taking up parking spaces, they park behind Hillstone, they dirty the alley, they park in front of Starbucks. I've been talking about this for two years now. I need staff at the next Commission meeting, please Mr. Clerk, I need staff at the next Commission meeting to find me a designated area in the city where we can work with Uber Eats, so we can push these scooters to park somewhere, while they wait for their phone calls so that they can then move to pick up the food and then go and deliver where it is. They cannot take up all the parking spaces in front of Starbucks, they cannot throw garbage, they cannot be in like 10, 15, 20 deep in an alley blocking the alley behind Hillstone. I need a resolution and I would like to have that at the next Commission.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor we have someone on Zoom wanting to speak on this, Mr. Eddy Martinez.

Mayor Lago: Perfect. Mr. Martinez.

Mr. Martinez: Hi, how are you.

Mayor Lago: How you doing sir?

Mr. Martinez: Hello, my name is Eddy Martinez, at Bliss Imprints and Gifts on 293 Miracle Mile. I want to start by thanking you for the opportunity to speak. Our building is directly on the alley, and we have a parking issue that is daily, if not hourly. Oftentimes, we find ourselves weaving in and out of scooters just to get in and out of our store or get hit by a car when it comes in. After...there is no way to absolutely politely ask anyone to move their car, because they are extremely aggressive and mean. I've been threatened, I've felt threatened. They've been aggressive. I mean I can't even tell you what experience we're having. The scooters and cars line the entrance, as you can probably see behind me, yes, behind me, they are everywhere. They block everything and, in some cases, they are very hostile. One thing is clear, they are here to stay, so I agree with the Mayor, saying they need a designated staging area. It is not just the scooters though, there are cars also, they are constantly all over us; and again, I can't even walk out without getting cars right in front of me. I appreciate you guys looking into this.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. What I would like to see is, if possible, I did not expect this gentleman to be here, but that's very nice, I appreciate the face TV – technology. What I would really appreciate, Mr. Clerk is that at the next Commission meeting we need to find a place, and we need to work with Mr. Kinney and his team. We were talking about this for years, it's time to do something. Code Enforcement, Police, we need to notify Uber Eats, we need to notify these Apps and say, what are other cities doing to address this? – how are they streamlining the process and pushing people in an area where we can finally get this clutter, because people call me and say, Vince, I can't park on the Mile, because the three parking spaces in Starbucks are used. I'm having problems traversing alleys, like this gentleman just said, or the amount of garbage. I'm tired of

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picking it up, because I spend my time picking it up, along with other members of the community who have been there; Belkys has been there with me, Mark Trowbridge has been there with me when we've gone, and we've collected immense amounts of garbage and they literally just are standing there looking at you. They drink their drink, and they throw it in the bushes instead of walking five feet to a garbage can. It's got to come to an end. I want a resolution by the next Commission meeting please, okay. C-3 is done.

Mayor Lago: C-4 – tree mitigation. This is a very easy one. I need to understand that – I didn't bring the picture of the tree. I'm the one that called Code Enforcement on the tree on University, in front of Doctor's Hospital where there was a tree that probably was around this wide, Black Olive. The gentleman called the landscaper on a Saturday and had the tree cut down, because he has a beautiful car, a beautiful Porsche and he was upset about the car getting dirty. I understand that, but it's a tree and we have to be respectful and there's a process, and it's on the swale, the tree belongs to the city, it doesn't belong to the resident. Now, there is a tree planted there and it's probably about the size of my pencil, okay. My understanding, from interpreting the code is that when you take, when you have to replace a canopy, I'm pretty sure if you do the exercise, I'm not the expert here, it's probably one-tenth of the canopy. So, what happened here, what are the laws on the books. I went over it with our City Attorney. These are things that I want to get addressed, because I feel like they are falling through the cracks, and they are not getting addressed; and I think the fine is way too lenient.

Development Services Director Cabrera: So, the fines used to be \$500 for all trees. About a year ago, I changed that when I realized what was going on and we actually now request the maximum which \$5,000 per tree. The Code Enforcement Board has been hesitant to impose the full fine of \$5,000, but we have fined about \$3,500 per tree in the right-of-way.

Mayor Lago: In regard to the University one, was a massive tree that was cut down and a tiny little tree was planted. How did that happen?

Development Services Director Cabrera: I don't know which case exactly that one is, but I can tell you that we are requesting the maximum fines. We are requesting that if the tree was hacked that they monitor for five years and if it dies, they replace it at their own cost. Usually we are requiring that, but I don't know exactly how the mitigation, Deena do you want to.

Mayor Lago: Before we get into that. Madam City Attorney, did we find that information about the tree?

City Attorney Suarez: I know the Manager was going to look into it. I don't know if we found the specific location or the property.

Mayor Lago: Did we find out? This is literally right on University, three houses down from Blue, facing the hospital, and right now there is a little tree that's there staked off; and Code Enforcement went, because I saw Code Enforcement. I called Code Enforcement since I live a block away, as they were cutting the tree down on a Saturday.

Commissioner Anderson: Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Can I just add a few comments. I've seen how DERM's acted in the past where someone's taken out a tree on their own property and they had to replace it with three to be able to replace the canopy; and there's also concepts of minimum mandatories and other types of penalty provisions. If the Code Enforcement Board is so hesitant, we should establish a criterion for X number of inches a minimum fine for removal of this type of tree, assuming that it was non-permitted, it's a city tree. It was healthy. It wasn't ready to fall down on top of somebody. Still, they should contact us to be taking down these trees due to liability concerns on a removal basis as well. We removed a couple on Palermo, for instance that were very diseased on an urgent basis. We've removed trees in other areas on urgent basis where they were dangerous, but nothing that I recall from this tree indicated it was unhealthy, that it was dangerous, and that anybody reached out to the city. My yard is covered with trees and in order to preserve my car from all the staining from both the Black Olive tree, multiple Oak trees, and a Mahogany tree, I put on a car cover. I wash my car and I put on a car cover, saves a lot of problems.

Development Services Director Cabrera: So, we treat the trees on the property differently than in the right-of-way, because the trees on the property, there is a preemption from the state that there's a hazard and they have an arborist report, it can remove it without requesting a permit from us and all that. The trees in the right-of-way do not fall under that exemption.

Commissioner Anderson: Right.

Development Services Director Cabrera: So, we always recommend to the Code Enforcement Board that we fine \$5,000, the absolute maximum per tree.

Mayor Lago: So, this is what I'm going to do. Mr. Clerk, I'm going to continue item C-4. I'm going to go take a picture of the tree today, I should have done it this morning, missed an opportunity, and I will get the address and I will send it to staff, so we can look up the code violation and we can understand a little bit more about how they were able to plant such a small tree when it was a massive tree that was cut down, and now you have a gaping hole where there is no canopy and it's just the heat island effect is an issue there. So, let's continue that. I'll get the information and I'll work with staff to have a viable presentation and I'd like to work with the Commissioner, whoever else would like to join me on writing a real piece of legislation that

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addresses. If the Code Enforcement Board is not willing to fine somebody who intentionally cuts down a specimen tree, they should be fined \$5,000. It shouldn't even be a question. The tree belongs to the city. This is what happened in this case. It's not on your own property, that's our state preemption. So, moving on, okay. Thank you.

Assistant Director: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: C-5 is very, very simple. I sent you a memo dated February 28th in regard to the TikTok ban. Obviously, you've seen this get a lot of traction, the federal level finally. I know that the Manager has taken it upon himself a while back ago to not allow TikTok on any city phones. I would like to make it – I'd like to codify it, not just make it for the Manager. So, if anybody's interested in this type of legislation. Do we need a legislation, is it a resolution?

City Attorney Suarez: It would be a resolution setting forth a direction that TikTok would not be allowed on city phones.

Mayor Lago: That's the resolution and I make it. Anybody second.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Mayor Lago: I will pass the gavel to the Vice Mayor.

Commissioner Anderson: Second.

Commissioner Cason: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. And I have one last thing before we go to lunch and that is and you'll speak now, I got it, I got it. Would you like to come up before we have Public Comment. Go ahead.

Mr. Gonzalo Sanabria: I'm Gonzalo Sanabria, 944 San Pedro Avenue, Coral Gables by the Sea. I'm here on an official capacity, actually ask the director of the board in charge of government liaison, and we have a problem ladies and gentlemen, we have a very severe problem, and the community is up in arms about this, and we haven't seen a viable response and its very simple.

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You, the elected officials are accessible, you listen to us, and you try to do your best, but other facets of this government are not, and us, is a community that can be called a donor community, and by that I mean very simply. We are a donor community because of the enormous amount of real estate valuations that has happened, therefore the taxes, therefore the payments made, therefore the receipts of those monies into the City of Coral Gables. In exchange for that, we get very little, we just get the basics – garbage, some other things, but nothing that is a minus in your books. And we are not happy with the police deterrent and law enforcement presence in our neighborhood, because we have had a rash of car thefts, a rash and unsolicited vendors that are scoping our homes, walking around our backyards, looking at everything that we have, and we don't know who they are or what their intentions are. We have drag strips on our roads – Lugo, San Pedro, Bayavistad, drag strips where kids come, burn their tires, go like 80-100 miles an hour and they don't care, because Mr. Mayor, they don't care. I'll tell you. They don't care because they know that there will be no police presence or no police response in time. We don't need to be reactive. We need to be proactive. There is no Safety Aide in our area with those yellow lights and the electric vehicle and why not, we are Sector 12, we should be taken care of that. So, the problem is very serious and if we don't see immediate and by that, I mean today, response on a permanent basis of police presence and deterrence, we will request a formal hearing and we will fill this auditorium with the neighbors, because we're not being taken care of. Now, on another matter, marine patrol. There are only two boats in marine patrol covering 43 miles of waterway, 43 miles of waterway. Now how is that going to be a deterrent. How is that going to be a good reactive position for a city where the waterfront also generates an enormous amount of revenue for the city and in return they get nothing, because if you have to call marine patrol and the gentlemen are top professionals, they don't get there for a long time, and we are at the mercy of that kind of thing. Now, I tried to make an appointment with the Manager. I went to his office, left him a note, told him what it was about. I haven't heard a word from the Manager. Ditto with the Finance Director – nothing of any contact to try to talk to me about these things. So even though you, the elected officials are being receptive, and congenial and cooperative, I find some issues with this. So, please I want an immediate response on behalf of our community, and I don't want to get this to a position where we are going to be enraged at the lack of response.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mr. Sanabria: Thank you. One more thing. I'd like to see, Mr. Mayor, and you're a creative person so are all the colleagues on the dais, to start a committee, actually start a committee where the members of that committee are HOA members of the different sections of the city and have a monthly or quarterly meeting where those members can meet with their respective Public Works, Police and Fire on a formal basis in an advisory capacity.

Mayor Lago: Let me do this Mr. Sanabria. Thank you for your comments. I'm going to have the Chief come up, because he was going to speak about other issues before we go to lunch, okay. Chief how are you sir. How are you doing?

Chief Hudak: Good.

Mayor Lago: Good. It's been a long morning. I know staff is dying to have lunch, so are we. Let's see if we can do this under ten minutes.

Chief Hudak: Sure.

Mayor Lago: I wanted to just talk about, before we talk about what this gentleman brought up, which wasn't supposed to happen this way, but it will happen this way. So, we recently had the opportunity to attend a gathering where candidates, it was a candidate forum, and I was there and I spoke about what we're doing in the city and different things, achievements and hopefully our initiatives for the future. There were a lot of things that were said there by one individual in particular that I wanted you to clarify, because I think its critically important so that people in this community understand where we are in regard to policing, response times, what we're doing, the efforts that our police are doing; and I know that everybody wants to get elected. I know that everybody wants to find an item to get elected and push it forward and scare people and say, this is the savior, the knight in shining armor to come and resolve everything, but the truth is the truth. Like I'm going to have our Finance Director come up here one minute and I just have two very simple questions that when I ask, she'll probably look at me like I should know this already after being here ten years, but I have to put it on the record, because it's actually embarrassing that these things were said in the public and they need to be cleared up here. Can you talk a little bit about some of things that we talked about.

Chief Hudak: From your office, I guess some of the issues that were brought up and I can talk them in the order that they got. I was not at that meeting. I don't know what was said, but I can address some of the issues.

Mayor Lago: Yes, please.

Chief Hudak: Our current crime statistics and what we do is we call, and I think I sent them all to you last week our focus crimes and what we talk about.

Mayor Lago: And by the way, please, can you repeat that again. You sent it to us last week.

Chief Hudak: I think I sent you all the focus crimes.

Mayor Lago: Because that was a previous issue that they said that we weren't getting the statistics and that kind of stuff.

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Chief Hudak: Correct. We sent you. The NY...reporting which you all know, and I know Mayor Cason you remember the UCR reports, which is validated by the FBI and FDLE. That system has changed now to NY.... So, one incident may have three or four markings, if you will, on what types of crime happened on an incident. So, it's a little bit deep dive into that. As I've said before, in front of you all, there are slight upticks from time to time with crime without. What we focus on burglaries, both residential and non-residential and thefts of curtilage, that's a burglary of a curtilage when somebody goes onto your property, takes your package and leaves. Domestic disturbances – Again, in 2020, we had an uptick of 158, which is coming out of Covid; 147 and we're about 151 now for 2022, and I'm talking about strictly 2022. Robberies were armed, armed car-jacking, home invasions, robberies strongarm, and I really need to explain this, because we say robbery a lot. Robbery is the use of force to take something, that's not breaking in your house, that's a burglary. Theft of automobiles which is probably our biggest increase over the last few years, busses, trucks, SUVs, motorcycles, bicycles is also considered in that, as well as theft of other vehicles or boats; and finally, thefts from autos which are auto parts, theft from a motor vehicle, theft from a boat, theft from shoplifting and theft of unsecured construction equipment. This is something that my team looks at every day and this is what we focus on, where we need to put our resources. I can tell you that most of these have trended up one or two cases and cause and effect. I can talk to theft from motor vehicles, we had 292 in 2020; we had 265 in 2021; and we're at 306 now. A majority of those, probably about 60 percent of those cars where doors were unlocked. You've heard me say this before in my eight years, this is carhopping, they're looking for whatever they can get. We write reports on those. We want to know.

Mayor Lago: Like I've said Chief, I was a victim of that, and they took my sunglasses. I didn't lock my car. If you do not lock your car and you have a new car where the windows come in, that's what they're looking for.

Chief Hudak: Right, the sideview mirrors, yes.

Commissioner Anderson: Side mirrors.

Chief Hudak: So, to put it in perspective of what we're talking about which is the numbers, the raw data, and you know I've never wanted to talk about numbers because you can talk about these a lot of different ways. In 2022, we've had 74 residential burglaries for the year, of those, 14 were cleared by arrest, that's a 19 percent clearance rate. Burglaries of non-residential, we had 29 with 10 closed by arrest, that's a 34 percent clearance rate. Burglaries and theft from curtilage, these are the people jumping up on your lawn, 59 for 2022, with 10 arrests. Domestic disturbances, in the 151, we made 28 arrests for other crimes other than just the domestic disturbance. Armed robberies, we had 5 in 2022, we had 2 arrests; we had no car-jackings; we had no home invasions; we had one strongarm, I'm sorry, we had 7 strongarm robberies, three of those were arrested. Some of those were boyfriend/girlfriend. Sudden snatching, which is somebody comes and grabs

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something and takes off, we've had two of those. Theft of automobiles, we had 70 in 2022; theft from the auto vehicles, we had 14 arrests or 20 percent clearance rate. No busses. Theft of the trucks or SUVs, we had 40, five arrests on those; theft of motorcycle, 11, 3 percent of those; theft of a bicycle, 75, we made 7 arrests on those. Some of those were organized groups. Theft from other vehicles, we had 32, with 11 arrests. No thefts of a boat and no clearance. Theft of auto parts, these are catalytic converters, things like that. We had 40 incidents throughout the year, those are airbags, as well. No arrests on that. Theft from motor vehicles, we had 306 thefts from motor vehicles with 15 arrests; and the shoplifting cases which is something 219 with 60 arrests. Now, the shoplifting is part and parcel depending on the business and what their process is. There are some corporate policies that will not allow their store people to call us until the theft has occurred and they've left the area. They don't want to turn that into a robbery, physical force turns that into a robbery. Some of those have changed and we partnered with them. We had a summit a few months ago, led by Lieutenant Morano, who was charged with doing that, to try and work on how to contact us further. That's the Publix, Target, things like that where they are going and grabbing. So, those are our current crime statistics, as again, we've ticked up. We really don't have a good handle in law enforcement on what exactly the curfews worked during Covid, things like that, and what those numbers are. The response to the burglary on Santa Maria, which was also brought up, that there was an eight-minute delay. To put it in context, we didn't get it as a burglary in progress, alright. We got this as a suspicious person knocking on my door. A woman with a dog, that's how we got it. It is a routine response, routine response. It is not somebody is coming. We did not know that. When we got into that area and if we queue this up as well, please Billy. When we got into the area, the last place she was seen was running towards Tierra Court. We got several phone calls from Tierra Court. At that point, and I know you've heard me talk about this, we launched the drone. If you look to your monitors, I believe the drone footage will come up and this is something that we do more than anybody else. This is the drone leaving from Fire Station 2. This is an edited version and stepped up. So, I just want to show everybody and for people who think it took us 8 minutes to get there, this drone in flight time is there over the top, two minutes, already looking at the golf course.

Mayor Lago: Just to touch upon this. Are any other cities in Miami-Dade County have this technology?

Chief Hudak: They have this technology; they do not have the way we're using it. We are partnering with a company to fly this. The officers on the ground can see what you're looking at. Right now, you're looking at the rear of the house, on the corner and that is Riviera Golf Course. Now you will see, it will change over and again, this is sped up, I don't want to make it sound like it flies that fast. Now as we got calls that they ran across Bird Road and they were in backyards, we start to check the backyards.

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Mayor Lago: And during this whole time, the drone operator is providing information to the police officers.

Chief Hudak: They are seeing this.

Mayor Lago: For their safety, for their safety, obviously, so they are not running into a person who is obviously armed and potentially is going to harm our officers.

Chief Hudak: Correct.

Mayor Lago: And can lead them in the right direction using the eyes in the sky.

Chief Hudak: Correct. So, as the officers are going to go into the house, because we didn't have this as a burglary yet. We had this as a woman ran, left her dog, which we ended up seizing her taking the dog and her phone; and as you see, there were two people, you can't see it in this version of it, two people walking up Granada. So we start to send officers up Granada to Tierra Court. We still haven't gotten to the house yet, because we didn't know, it didn't go out as a burglary in progress. That is backed up along with some of the notes that we have in the system as well. It wasn't until much later that we realized that there were two other people in the backyard where the ladder was found. I don't know if we can speed up just a little bit. If you see on the left-hand side of your screens as the cars are coming, and this is part of the technology that we're using whereas – speed up a little bit more – at night and this is at night, this is 8:30 at night, so it's pretty dark already. Underneath the trees you can actually see people walking and if you focus on the upper left-hand corner you will start to see as it moves forward, you can go regular speed, you'll actually see somebody walking in the backyard to tell the officers there's somebody walking in that backyard. This is the technology safety, not only for us, but to help check these areas. This is what I've always wanted to do, and we've always wanted to, have at night, to check a larger area before we even get to the house. We don't necessarily go right to the house. So as the drone is continuing to search under the trees with this technology, you actually at night you can see that the cars that are running or have been running are warm and show up. So we can even tell an officer what it is. Just as you start to see, you will see somebody start to come from the back of the house circling on now, as we flip back right after this. You see the person walking in the dark spot there. There's somebody walking in the rear of that house. The officers are in the front side of the house. The drone operator is actually being able to send this to the officers, that bright color underneath is where the police officers' car is. Checked it out, it was somebody else. It wasn't the persons that we were looking for. However, this was going on in the eight minutes it took us to get there; and again, our average response times and we've talked about this before, our average response times year-to-date on our emergency calls, we average overall 2 minutes and 54 seconds.

Mayor Lago: Where does that put us in the county, Chief.

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Chief Hudak: Not even close.

Mayor Lago: I'd like to put this on the record. Where does it put us with the county?

Chief Hudak: Listen, I think the county has a much broader area to cover, so I mean, we're running like that lights and siren and that's what it takes us to get there. On our non-emergency calls over the last year, year-to-date today, has been 7 minutes and 38 seconds travel time.

Mayor Lago: So, the importance of bringing this up is because everybody wants to build a platform, everybody wants to get noticed and everybody wants to talk about why they are the best candidate to run for public office. There's a danger when you talk about public safety and there's a danger when you mislead people, and you tell people that the city had a nine-minute response time to a situation like this. So, I wanted to bring you up to talk about that. I wanted you to bring up in regard to our crime statistics, we will talk about them in public and be very clear where we stand. Can you talk to me a little bit about where we're at right now in regard to hiring and the police officers, because this is another thing that was brought up saying that there's going to be 15 vacancies next year, and that we don't have a plan to address it.

Chief Hudak: There is a group of individuals within the police department that are mentoring people to move onto other agencies, and I understand that.

Mayor Lago: Why are they doing that?

Chief Hudak: I can't answer that.

Mayor Lago: I will put it on the record. They are doing it because they feel, they feel and whoever has the privilege to serve after these two gentlemen leave office, are going to have to face the situation, and that is called negotiations between a union and the city. We are willing to do things professionally and negotiate with the union, certain people are willing to do things that are very underhanded, and we must understand that this type of behavior undermines our city, it undermines the City Beautiful, and that's why I'm talking about this on the record. So, Mr. Chief, please elaborate.

Chief Hudak: Currently right now, in the academy we have five people in the academy; two graduate April 14th; three graduates September 1st. The next academy class starts in April. We expect to have a minimum of two recruits, we already have one hired and in waiting. The backgrounds are in process for hiring ten police officers; four actual vacancies which is what we're talking about here. Officer McCalla, after a long tenured service retired, Officer Freed, Cardenas, and Gonzalez moved onto Miami-Dade Police Department. There are six additional officers that this Commission approved in Fiscal Year 2023.

Mayor Lago: Wait, you jumped the gun Chief, remember, the comments were that this is a fiasco. It's a fiasco in regard to the police. So, this Commission is the first Commission that I'm aware of, I've been here ten years, in 15-20 years, that has open, Mayor Cason has a little bit further experience than I do on that. We're not just filling positions, we're adding positions, correct.

Chief Hudak: Over the next three years we've added 15 positions to the police.

Mayor Lago: And I want to be clear so the people here who are listening who are in the audience today understand that you're not going to be the "White Knight" in shining armor stepping in here saying that you fixed this, when you don't know about the drone technology, you don't know what's going on, you don't know about the positions that we're adding, you don't know what we're doing with the police, you are not aware of the resources that we're spending, the money that we're allocating, but you're out there scaring the residents and the businesses who are writing me e-mails, along with my colleagues on the Commission saying, I heard at a forum that you know, our response times which used to be the best in the county are now at nine minutes. That's not the case. You just heard it from the Chief, under three minutes.

Chief Hudak: Our emergencies are under three minutes and our non-emergency numbers are under eight minutes, that could be hours some other places. The last thing, Mayor, that we talked about were the backgrounds in process. We're in the process of hiring five Communication Operators; four actual vacancies; one operator is retiring April 30th, and background is currently working on three Communication applicants. So, we are continuing to move forward on that. We also handling 11 Firefighter backgrounds; a crime scene technician and 11 firefighters. The other conversation that was brought up is that we are understaffed. We are not understaffed. If the deployment of the resources, whether it be on marine patrol is my decision. If it is something of great significance, I will obviously bring it through the Manager to you all, as I talked about when we talked about the extra 15 positions is the downtown unit, to focus on exactly what we talked about in the previous item, which was dealing with those people that are parked in the area for too long of a time. And I can address the last issue that came up.

Mayor Lago: Please address it.

Chief Hudak: I've been the Chief here since 2014. I think all but one of the HOA meetings in Gables by the Sea, I've attended personally. I have been down there every time, and I use this. At one point I got it from the HOA committee that the blood of their children is on my hands if I don't slow people down. We went down there – one edic I can't do, I can't void a ticket, but I can control the officer's discretion. If they go seven miles over everybody writes a ticket. We did that for 24 minutes, before I got another call from a resident asking, wait a second, I just got a ticket. Second issue that came up in this neighborhood as well, was people going around a school bus. We set up a decoy detail, as parents and people were driving around school bus that had their lights out, we wrote tickets. That lasted maybe a day. So, we have very much interacted with a lot of HOAs,
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especially this one. We look forward to continuing to work with all of them. Some of the resources down there that we have, the marine patrol is – it has two boats right now, as you have all said, the Manager knows, we’re working on getting that third boat up and again. It was a donated boat that just went to end of life. We have people on the marine patrol now, we have partnerships on the water on a regular basis with Fish and Wildlife, Coastguard, whatever assets we need in that area, we’re there for. So we continue to, not only just to respond but to be down there. When we look at the issues that came up, most of the offenders that we’ve talked about, including the people that are painting green swastikas on the road yesterday. We seem to believe they are residents, children of residents that live down there.

Mayor Lago: Which by the way, just for the record, that e-mail I think came to the entire Commission or it just came to me, and I forwarded it to the Manager and to the Police Chief and we addressed it within 24 hours.

Chief Hudak: And listen, the speed is the issue throughout the city, we understand that, and we continue to address that in a comprehensive way, but Gables by the Sea is one of my favorite communities. I’ve been down there personally. We talked about signs; we talked about crime watch signs. I don’t know exactly how many we had, but we also meet in Pinecrest with both HOAs from the Pinecrest HOA and this one. I understand they may not see them, but I know how many area checks that unit is down there, and if they are not actually in that area, they are no farther than Station 2, because they have to do that area, they have to do King’s Bay and other places. We have talked to them as well about increasing or bettering their camera system at their gate shack, so they would have it, but we have a pretty good partnership with them as well.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Before we address the issue, I know you want to speak again, but let’s have this outside. We’ll have a conversation between the Chief and the Manager and myself and you, the four, which we’ll go to my office and we can have a lunch break having a conversation.

Mr. Sanabria: [Inaudible – off mic]

Mayor Lago: Its 1:30, we haven’t had lunch and I need to...

Mr. Sanabria: I just want three minutes.

Mayor Lago: You will with me privately. You will with me privately.

Mr. Sanabria: No. That’s not what I want...[Inaudible – off mic]

Mayor Lago: I told you, you will have three minutes, you will have three minutes with me, the Manager, and the Chief.

Mr. Sanabria: I want to do it in this forum right now...

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Commissioner Anderson: Can we break for lunch first. Can we break for lunch first?

Mayor Lago: You explained the situation very clearly to the Chief and to all of us. We're addressing it. We're here, we're front and center, we're addressing it amongst everybody.

Mr. Sanabria: [Inaudible – off mic]

Mayor Lago: Go ahead sir. Go ahead.

Mr. Sanabria: Chief Hudak is a great person and so is everybody in the police force. They are all top-notch people, and Chief Hudak is accessible, but Chief Hudak has his arms tied behind his back in certain ways and that's the way it is, and because he wants to do something, he cannot do something because he's being curtailed. He's being curtailed in some face here and perhaps it's the Manager's fault, because we only have two boats for 43 miles. The actual deployment and I can be corrected by Chief Hudak or whoever is an expert on this, should be four boats and six or eight personnel. So, we have three people and two boats. We've had this a very long time for 43 miles of waterfront.

Mayor Lago: You're asking...

Mr. Sanabria: Wait one second, wait one second. A safety aide vehicle, we have never seen one in our neighborhood, not once, and Chief Hudak might be aware of that or not. I talked to Sergeant Jenkins is in charge of that, never. I don't understand that. We pay for all this. We contribute to the revenues of the city. We need response, we need response now.

Vice Mayor Mena: I have a question.

Mr. Sanabria: Yes sir.

Vice Mayor Mena: Just if I may. Specifically on the, first of all I disagree with him having any arms tied behind his back. I think he has the full support of this Commission and the Manager. But with that said, specific to the point about the NSAs, which you brought up now a couple times. When we do the special taxing districts, as I think all of the neighborhoods in South Gables have now done for the guard gate.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Attorney Suarez: So Gables by the Sea is...

Vice Mayor Mena: I think he's talking about Gables by the Sea, correct.

Mr. Sanabria: Yes sir.

City Attorney Suarez: It's still currently under the county's control, is that correct.

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Unidentified Speaker: [Inaudible – off mic]

City Attorney Suarez: Its going through the process transition and over to the city's control.

Vice Mayor Mena: Okay, and once it does that, the tax revenues that go into that district are utilized for the guard gate, but they also utilize for the safety.

Chief Hudak: Well, not the safety aides. Whatever their security...

City Attorney Suarez: Whatever their district is for. So if the district was established and I believe Gables by the Sea is only a guard house district, if I'm not mistaken, its not under our control so we don't know. But if it's a guard house district its just for the guard house. There're other districts that have the roving security.

Vice Mayor Mena: Got it. I don't want to go off on a total tangent.

Mayor Lago: We're not going to do this. We're not going to do this. One of the few things...

Mr. Sanabria: In any event, I hope that we get some immediate response, I hope, and we will require that we do. Thank you very much.

Chief Hudak: If you get a ticket, I don't want any calls.

Mayor Lago: I'd like to see you after, please, if possible. Madam Director, please. Okay. By the way, before the Finance Director, I asked her two simple questions on the record. Again, more stuff that was debated at this forum is very misleading. Suppose they were in a fiscal crisis here in the city, that there is an audited financial on the website. Mr. Fernandez says that there is an audited financial on the website. Do we have our financials, do we have audited financials, yes or no.

Finance Director Gomez: We do have audited financials. We are finalizing the audited financials for 9/30/22.

Mayor Lago: As we do every year.

Finance Director Gomez: We issue them every year. We issue them on or about March 31st of the year. We are finalizing, they will be issued.

Mayor Lago: Are we still one of three cities that have a triple, triple bond rating in the State of Florida, one of three?

Finance Director Gomez: That's correct.

Mayor Lago: Can you explain why do we have a triple, triple bond rating and why we're the envy of every other city if we're supposedly in a fiscal crisis.

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Finance Director Gomez: I don't understand. Diana Gomez, Finance Director. I do not understand what financial crisis we're under, because we are, to my knowledge, we are not under any kind of financial crisis. We have sound financial practices; we have balanced budgets; we have reserves at levels where they are more than acceptable. We pay our bond payments; we make all of our payments; we have revenues that are sustainable coming in.

Mayor Lago: We are paying down our pension debts.

Finance Director Gomez: We're paying down our pension debts. All these things are the things that the rating agencies see and evaluate when they look at a city's to give them triple A bond rating, and so.

Commissioner Cason: And you get annual prizes for your financial statements.

Finance Director Gomez: For our financial statements.

Mayor Lago: From independent companies that we're not paying; they review us and they say that we're up to standard.

Finance Director Gomez: Every time we have to issue bonds, yes, the rating agencies, there is a fee we pay, but we don't pay for the rating. They do an independent rating on the city and we have triple A with all three rating agencies. Again, I don't see where...

Mayor Lago: I just wanted to put on the record. Thank you. Before we go on the record, I also want to mention to my colleagues on the Commission, the wait time for a permit at the permit counter is three minutes, three minutes, this past week, correct, three minutes. So, we continue to get better with our digital system; 427 is beautiful, we're meeting with residents every single day, we continue to evolve in the process and offer worldclass service. Before we go to lunch, we will come back at 2 o'clock. I would like to be very clear. Guys its political season and everyone wants to be the hero, but don't be the hero misleading this community and tarnishing the reputation of this community, because when you say things in public and you don't have the facts and you don't have the data, after years of going after employees and tarnishing employees names and families and reputations, please, no one's going to take you seriously when you say falsehoods about the police, the fire, employees, our finances, our permitting, in an effort to elevate yourself by standing on the shoulders of the city. That is disingenuous and its pathetic. I'll see you at 2 o'clock.