

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item K
November 12, 2024
Police and Fire Headquarters
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Mr. Prescott

Agenda Item K [4:37 p.m.]

Discussion Items

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes, two things. Through the brilliant efforts of our IT Department, today and follow up to the request that I had done to the Manager and IT, we did finally get posted on Google Ways and Apple Maps, construction notice on Granada. So, it is possible to get this done and we can celebrate that it has been done, so when people get in their car in the morning and put their apps on, they'll know about the construction notice. Second thing is, we have a tour of the Coral Gables Garden Club of historic homes with their gardens. Its happening this weekend, Saturday, November 16th from 10 a.m. to approximately noon. You can buy your tickets at Coral Gables Garden Club website or from any Garden Club member. We had one here present during our meeting today and if you still can't find someone, I am a member as well.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Castro.

City Commission Meeting

November 12, 2024

Commissioner Castro: Mr. Prescott is here, and I don't think he's aware that there was a time certain.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Prescott will you join us.

Commissioner Castro: That there was a motion earlier today for a time certain on a following date. Is he aware of that.

Mayor Lago: Yes. I think at the end of the day, he could at least say hello and we'll see him in a few weeks.

Commissioner Fernandez: Well actually, Madam City Attorney, since our motion when residents were here was to table the discussion until next Commission meeting at a time certain. Are we allowed to continue discussing it now?

Mayor Lago: How about this. How about we don't discuss it. How about he just says, you look forward to coming in two weeks when we are having the meeting, you're here, just to not ruffle any feathers. How about that.

Mr. Prescott: Certainly. I'm both here, as I said I would be here, but I'm also, I have been told about the subsequent meeting. I will be there at that time certain. I'm just confirming it's the 12th of December.

City Attorney Suarez: December 10th at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Prescott: Which is Tuesday.

City Attorney Suarez: Tuesday, the 10th.

Commissioner Fernandez: At 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Prescott: At 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner Fernandez: 1-3-0 – 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Prescott: Understood. I will change my plans for that, and I will be here with the team that's here represented as well, but I wanted to be here. Again, I apologize, I understand you did show the video that I had sent forward, outlining the reason as to why not. I'm actually joined today by Mateos Camron, my Managing Director, Dee Malone, who is the designer, associated with the build, and Paul Figg with Berger Singerman, legal representation. My head of engineering, Tony Brown had a family emergency that he could not join us for. Nevertheless, my point is, we want to be here, as we said. I've had the opportunity in the last hour to look at the video from this morning, to make sure that I heard the citizens comments that came forward and the exchange that followed. But again, I wanted to not, not show up, so to say. I want to assure Mr. Holmes, if he's

City Commission Meeting
November 12, 2024

still here that the only chickens that are at the Biltmore that are dead are the ones that came from the farmers that provided to us for outlets. So, I'm here to talk a little bit about what transpired, which I can again repeat. I'm happy to do so next month. I also know that you all are going to get more information at the Manager's direction to compile a list with subsequent walk-throughs, which is fine. We are here to fully cooperate and then we can have the open discussion as necessary, other discussions to go through all of the things that have been raised. I would reiterate what I said in the video to make sure that the Commission hears it directly, as well as the community as-a-whole, which is the responsibility falls on me. I take full responsibility for such action, and it was not done with any malicious intent. I view myself as a steward. My family has been the stewards of the landmark, as you know, working in partnership with the city since 1992. We take that very seriously and personal opinions, you know on design choices and other things of that nature, I understand it gets very heated and emotional, but our intent is to service two purposes; one is to of course maintain the landmark both of its historic nature, but also as an operating luxury hotel. And the way to do that, they can work in tandem, and we intend to talk further about that, in the open, which I know Commissioner talked about, and I welcome that. We welcome that and we will find a path forward to make sure that all stakeholders in this are heard, their voices are taken into account, and we will find that successful outcome. That's what I wanted to say to the Commission.

Mayor Lago: We look forward to seeing you on the 10th at 1:30 p.m. Alright.

Mr. Prescott: Very good.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Commissioner Castro: I appreciate you coming.

Mr. Prescott: Always.

Mayor Lago: Anything else Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Castro: That would be all. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Menendez.

Commissioner Menendez: Right now, just that on Thursday, at 6:30 p.m. is the ribbon-cutting for Birdy Bistro, formerly known as Burger Bob's, so that's Thursday at 6:30. Just wanted to remind folks.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Fernandez: As this is the last meeting that we have prior to Thanksgiving, I want to thank God for all of our residents, our staff here in the City of Coral Gables, for all of our
City Commission Meeting
November 12, 2024

stakeholders. This is a community that works together, a community that is better because of each and every one of us, and I want to thank all of you for being a part of my life, and for all you do for our community, and look forward to being back here on December 10th.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. First off, I'd like to thank the Clerk's office for their hard work, the IT Department, everyone that – Cable TV, thank you for reminding me, everybody who played a role in making today a possibility. I know you worked very, very hard, Public Works, everybody in the building here, Public Safety, thank you so much. I'd like to invite everybody – I had staff sent from the Community Foundation, send an invitation to the directors and also to the Commission, a few moments ago, Fourth Annual Venus at the Venetian is this Friday. We've raised \$400,000. I am the Chair of that event; we raised \$400,000 for student scholarships out of high school. This year we are going to have an amazing opportunity for people to buy some great wine, enjoy company here in the holiday season. The tickets are not that expensive, they're a great time. We always sell out and you can enjoy the auction. So hopefully, this year we take it over \$600,000 that we raise for scholarships for children. I hope the Commission comes. It's a great opportunity to engage with the community and give back. Another thing I'd like to say is, I had written down here is, I want to wish everybody a happy Thanksgiving. Everybody who makes what we do here in the City of Coral Gables look easy. Its all as a result of the employees, we have exceptional employees and partners who make everything possible. So, I hope that everybody has a wonderful Thanksgiving and looking forward to seeing all of you on December 10th. Thank you and God Bless. Meeting adjourned.