

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-1
November 14, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz
Senior Transportation Engineer, Melissa DeZayas

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz
Jessica Keller

Agenda Item 2-1

A Resolution of the Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission direct staff to amend the traffic impact study methodology and scope of services for traffic consultants to require a presentation to the Transportation Advisory Board and consideration of micro-mobility in mitigation measures.

Vice Mayor Anderson: 2-1 – Transportation Advisory Board.

Mayor Lago: So, where are we, a Resolution of the Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission direct staff to amend the traffic impact study methodology and scope of services for traffic consultants to require a presentation to the Transportation Advisory Board and consideration of micro-mobility in mitigation measures.

Commissioner Castro: I would like to move it.

City Commission Meeting

November 14, 2023

Agenda Item 2-1 – Resolution of the Transportation Advisory Board requesting that the City Commission Direct staff to amend the traffic impact study methodology

[Date]

1

Commissioner Menendez: I'll second.

Mayor Lago: Hold on one second. I'd like to hear from...

Public Works Director Diaz: There's no one from the board here. There was someone, she said she couldn't be here all day. We do have some concerns about this. Some of the things on the proposal, for example, Section 3, when it talks about applying about the methodology that's actually ready... So really, the only thing new that is being added is the part about directing staff to include a consultant to do a presentation to the board. One of the concerns that we have with that is that our current resolution that has this process has a very limited time that we have. It's 45 days, for us to go through the entire process for TIS. The resolution says that if we don't meet that timeline the developer basically said, I'm going to use my consultant and I can forget about whatever the city says. Inserting this into this process, most likely we're going to be late to that process. And then there's a question of – yes, go ahead.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm going to make a suggestion. I did speak to more than one of the board members and another one called me this morning. They'll be happy if they get the traffic reports from the 20,000 square foot north projects. They have some questions. They can always come to see us and tell us their concerns. I made presentations when I was a Planning and Zoning board member addressing their concerns, highlighting things. They don't necessarily need a presentation, you can look at the studies – oh, this is where its at, by the way we have a traffic speeding problem here or we have a drainage problem here, we have a pickup and drop-off issue here, but to have a formal presentation really isn't necessary because most of us have a pretty good idea what the traffic is around an area if we live in an area and we can take the feedback. I had a conversation with them, they said they'd be happy to receive a copy of the reports. Currently they have to do JustFoia requests on every single one of them. Why don't we just give it to them on these really big projects. Give them the report, if they have some concerns they can reach out to staff, get the concerns addressed, and perhaps incorporate it in the report.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor, may I go a step further?

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Mayor Lago: You have the reports, you have all the information. Put together a memo. The board can put together a memo and give the guidance to the Commission, a recommendation to the Commission, put it on our agenda as an item that we can review – look, these are the items of concern, this is what we like, this is what we validate, this is what we recommend. These are the opportunities that we see for improvement to the project, those are beneficial. I would love to see more of that. I actually have a memo page where I put all my memos, anybody who for some reason is bored can read them. I don't think anybody reads them, but I just put them up there just to put them up there. One resident asked me one time that they wanted to see memos. An e-mail is great, but you can put it in an e-mail, you can put it in a memo, something that memorializes it.

Commissioner Fernandez: I guess what I would like to see is maybe something similar to what the SCRC does. Anytime there is a development project which is within 1,000 feet of a school, it is presented to by staff, there is no formal process, this is just presented by staff for their input. If the SCRC has input, then it comes to the Commission. I think it's along the lines of what you're saying.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Correct, but they need to report first.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct.

Vice Mayor Anderson: There may be no concerns.

Commissioner Fernandez: Correct. And most of the time, I think at the SCRC, we had one project that we had a concern with, and it was a concern the Commission shared. So, it really did not add to the process, as far as delaying the process, is what I'm saying.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I don't think it will delay the process. I just think it's an extra set of eyes out there, because we have a lot of different issues that we're handling, and they can focus on that and then provide us with their comments and input.

City Manager Iglesias: If we can ask the director to indicate what process is being done right now, because I believe it's quite extensive and we can provide those reports also.

Public Works Director Diaz: We did put together a presentation, we'll kind of run you through the process of what it is right now. I know that it is late.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We did a lot of work on this presentation, and you want to present it.

Commissioner Menendez: So, since there seems to be a consensus in terms of certain tweaks that makes sense, including what the Mayor said, which would be helpful for the Commission and I think between Vice Mayor Anderson and Commissioner Fernandez, it's a way to how to get them, how to present it to them. Is that something we need to modify what the motion was, amend it to include those comments or suggestions.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It's a resolution. Can we modify the resolution, or can we just do this?

City Attorney Suarez: You can just take the action now. If you have the direction, if you want to do it now.

Commissioner Menendez: We already have a motion and a second, so do we need to amend it to include the comments.

Mayor Lago: We have to amend it and we also...

Vice Mayor Anderson: We need to amend it.

City Attorney Suarez: Was there a second?

Mayo Lago: We also wanted to take into consideration what the director said in regard to another study, right.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right. The current process has a clock on it, based on the resolution that the Commission passed a few years ago, it's an ordinance actually, and once you start the traffic study process everything needs to be done within 45 days.

City Manager Iglesias: But our Transportation Division has a very extensive reporting to the Transportation Advisory Board, and I think that if the board wants all the reports for the larger projects, the projects over 20,000 square feet, its not a problem, but if we can just quickly delineate what the process is quickly, so that the Commission can see its quite extensive.

Commissioner Menendez: I think the focus was on the larger projects.

Vice Mayor Anderson: It was over 20,000 square feet, so we can make a motion to have staff provide the traffic...

Traffic Engineer DeZayas: The traffic impact studies for any development that's over 20,000 square feet.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right. I move that.

Commissioner Fernandez: Second.

Commissioner Menendez: Wait a second, we had a first and a second. You're totally disregarding us. What is going on.

City Attorney Suarez: Had there been a second to the first motion?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes ma'am.

Commissioner Menendez: She first, I second.

City Attorney Suarez: Okay.

Commissioner Menendez: And then...

City Attorney Suarez: So then maybe it sounds like a motion to amend.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Motion to amend.

City Commission Meeting

City Attorney Suarez: There's a second to the motion to amend?

Commissioner Menendez: We're getting close.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We're getting close. It's a quarter of six.

Mayor Lago: If I may, just to clarify for the Clerk. What are we exactly moving?

Public Works Director Diaz: My understanding is that...

Commissioner Castro: I was moving the resolution. Now she's requesting to amend the resolution.

Mayor Lago: But I want to know exactly what are the guts of what we're moving.

City Attorney Suarez: I think the Vice Mayor should just maybe say it again, so we are all clear and on the same page.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You want a friendly amendment to change the resolution to require staff to provide a copy of the traffic studies for projects 20,000 square feet and up.

Mayor Lago: Just that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: That's it.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

Commissioner Castro: And I was the one who moved it, so yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, we have members of the public requesting to speak on this item.

Mayor Lago: Okay.

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker is Maria Cruz. If Ms. Cruz could unmute.

Ms. Cruz: Yes. I'm here.

Vice Mayor Anderson: You're still here.

Ms. Cruz: Oh, yes. I'm here.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Extra points.

Ms. Cruz: Well, I have to run home because my husband's sugar was very low, but I've been on the computer since then. I think that the Transportation Board has really thought it out and they have a reason for what they are asking. I think the friendly amendment may be a good idea with the understanding that they need to be considered. Okay. I think these are, like we say all the time, volunteers that give their time and their thoughts and I think it's very good that you are all talking about it, and you know what, maybe this business of the 45 days needs to be addressed. Do we really need 45 days, because Mr. Diaz said the Commission set up the 45 days. The Commission can also change the 45 days, if they were the ones that set it up. Alright. So, they do have a valid comment. They are the volunteers, residents that overlook, not overlook, that follow the traffic issues and we need to consider what they have to say, and I'm sorry, it's not for the convenience of the city. It's for the convenience of the residents once again. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next speaker is Jessica Keller.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Keller.

Ms. Keller: Good evening. I support the friendly amendment. One of the items that you didn't talk about that is part of the resolution is that the Transportation Advisory Board is concerned that developers are not providing adequate infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other people using micro-mobility devices to safely move about the city. I want to clarify. These are the city's consultants and it's the responsibility of city staff to ensure that these recommendations are included in the traffic impact studies, aligned with the city's Comprehensive Plan and the Bicycle Master Plan. One other item that I wanted to mention is that over the years bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure has been included in various agreements for conditions of approval. Despite that CO's have been issued without fulfilling all conditions of approval. So, I do think that this item should be revisited, and the Transportation Advisory Board should look through the history and recognize how we got here today. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: So, we have a first and second.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

City Commission Meeting

Vice Mayor Anderson: On micro-mobility, circle back and see if we can enhance the...making sure it gets addressed, because I noticed in the Publix Plan when it first came through, the bike lane was missing. I did bring it up and resolved that problem.