

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-10
September 13, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Michael Mena

Commissioner Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Jorge Fors

Commissioner Kirk Menendez (On Zoom)

City Staff

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Labor Relations and Risk Manager, Raquel Elejabarrieta

Parking Director, Kevin Kinney

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-10 [12:00 p.m.]

Discussion regarding systems to request: (a) installation of no parking signs on residential swales, and (b) installation of disabled parking signs in the North Gables Residential Infill District within a reasonable distance of the residence of an individual with disabilities. (Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto G-10, also Commissioner Anderson.

Commissioner Anderson: It was a good day to do all these. G-10, what do we have, discussion regarding a process for requesting no parking signs on residential swales, so that we have good recording-keeping on how that's done, and for installation of disabled parking signs in the North Gables residential infill district with a reasonable distance of the residence of an individual with disabilities. And I see you're ready to present.

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Ms. Elejabarrieta: Commissioner, I'm going to be presenting on the (B) side or the (B) which is the installation of accessible on-street parking in the North Gables area. I have a quick PowerPoint that is just a couple of slides I'd like to show. I'm working with Kevin and Public Works and we are in the process of providing a process by which residents who live in multi-family homes in the North Gables district, so it would be in the Central Business District, north to 8th Street, if they have a request or a need for accessible on-street parking that we have a process in place where they can go ahead and request it. So, this is conceptually what we are working on, thank you. The city is going to consider a request for on-street parking when off-street parking is not available for an applicant or when the parking demands in the neighborhood impede the ability of the applicant to have general use of any parking that's convenient to the resident. When we receive the request, we are going to try to provide that accessible parking to the shortest most reasonable accessible path of travel, provided it is ADA compliant. We have to make sure that it is ADA compliant when it comes in terms of measurement. They are going to be available for use for anyone who has a valid handicap placard or license, so its not only going to be reserved only for the applicant, once there is an accessible parking it can be used by anyone who has the handicap placard. Like I said, its not going to be reserved parking space for the applicant and its not intended as a means to reserve a parking space in front of someone's multi-family unit. Its not going to be used for temporary. This is someone that has either a long term disability, a mobility issue.

Commissioner Anderson: Correct. Someone who has the placard or a license plate. We were talking about a disabled veteran as an example that's having difficulties.

Ms. Elejabarrieta: Exactly. There is going to be an application process, its going to be a no-cost application process. Its going to be a very simple application. The applicant must submit it. We are going to ask for proof of a valid DMV disabled person placard or license plate, the proof of residency and written justification for the request of the installation of an on-street accessible parking space in lieu of using their own driveway; and we are going to have to annually request the proof of residency and also the proof of disability on an annual basis to ensure that there is still a need for that parking space in that neighborhood. Once we receive the application, we are going to look at the availability and the condition of the off-street parking and see if we can somehow work with them for them to have off-street parking. If not, we are going to look at the location and accessibility of the on-street parking space that they are requesting to see if we can provide it, and that it complies with the ADA measurements and requirements; and we are also going to look at the specific needs of the applicant. And so, we expect this application and this process to be up and running within the next couple of weeks.

Commissioner Anderson: Okay. Excellent work. I appreciate your efforts in doing that. City Manager, we spoke about doing a similar application process for the signs that people are indicating are an eyesore, where we have residential areas and we have "no parking" signs all over the place like every ten feet, it seems.

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Parking Director Kinney: We actually historically and we still have at archived have a form that was used for requesting signage in the swale. I'm trying to remember the specific year; I believe it was 2016. Essentially that whole program, we were directed to discontinue and actually try and remove the signs from the swales. If the Commission wishes us to go back and put that sign request form back online, we are able to do that. It would be fairly simple, but at the time we were directed to not make it a standard practice to allow additional signage in the swale, and I don't know if that if there is a different desire now.

Mayor Lago: I'm about limiting as much signage as possible.

Commissioner Anderson: I think there's got to be a needs analysis included in there.

Mayor Lago: I understand, and I agree with you. There has to be, obviously, when you are talking about ADA issues and disabled, but the amount of signs that we have. For example, on the way here to Segovia, you have a crosswalk in 500 feet, you have three signs leading up to that crosswalk. You can barely even see the trees, you can't even see the grass, how many signs were covered. I know we are trying to limit liability, especially the county, but it gets to the point, if you don't know how to go around a circle and you need 15 signs to guide you around the circle. It doesn't work. I don't care.

Commissioner Anderson: We've got to talk to FDOT about that.

Mayor Lago: Yes, I'm with you, but I'm saying, we need to try to limit as many signs as possible. Again, with me, there has to be a valid reason why to put up a sign.

Commissioner Anderson: That's what I'm saying, we have to have a criterion, is there a need, is there a parking problem there. There are certain areas where there is a parking problem, but if we just have no way to track them, no process, which is what I'm the feeling I'm getting that we don't have that right now. I know all of us get to see now about keeping my city, make my city pretty, okay. So, perhaps a process to do it by, we are not going to have signs 10-20 feet around a complete piece of property and we can look for better solutions and have a thoughtful process in analyzing what is the need and what's a better way to do it, because people might need to be informed of the swale packages or things of that nature to reduce the amount of parking around their home. Okay.

Mayor Lago: So, do you want to work on maybe a piece of legislation or amendment to our existing swale legislation that addresses this issue.

City Manager Iglesias: We do take care of the most egregious areas, because they come to light and we do address it, but we have been trying to maintain signage at a minimum and still address those areas that require it. I know we've added a few but it's been in those areas that were truly necessary.

Commissioner Anderson: I think the perception from some residents is that they just get stuck in willy-nilly, that staff just goes around sticking in signs all over the place.

Parking Director Kinney: I can honestly say never chooses to install signs. It's a request, but the reason the actual sign request form was removed is when we had that form online, there would be every day a few requests for signs and after time and I think what happened five or six years ago, when this came to the Commission was there were a lot of "no parking" signs and we began and Hermes can report on this, because it actually that's about the time that the sign shop, Hermes and I traded two divisions, but the sign shop went to Public Works and they spent years tracking signs they removed with the signs that were going in, it was almost a wash.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right – and we also start getting strong pushback in some instances about some of the signs that were being removed. It became a little bit of a tug-o-war, so to speak.

Commissioner Anderson: So, let me flip this in a different direction. What if we put a sign removal request form up?

Public Works Director Diaz: What sign?

Parking Director Kinney: Sign removal request.

Commissioner Anderson: Since we are trying to control signage, right.

Mayor Lago: Listen, I used to have a "no parking" sign on my swale. I removed it, after we had put together the legislation on the swale package and the swale package has worked wonderfully. It beautifies the city and I live in front of the University of Miami, so if anybody has traffic, if any has parking, we used to have a much larger issue before and we addressed a lot of these issues. It just depends if you want a sign on your swale and does it really deter people from parking.

Public Works Director Diaz: Very often what we get is that the people who live there, the people who ask for the signs, they want the sign and folks were driving around who don't want to see the sign. So, it's that conflict between the people who live there with whatever issue they have and the passerby's who don't like it.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Director, I think also the issue that we've discussed, and we saw it, for example, near the Venetian Pool, we have a block that has 8 "no parking" signs.

Public Works Director Diaz: Right.

Mayor Lago: So why not have two with arrows that says, no parking from left to right, can't park in this area. Why do you need 8 signs? Is it because every single patch of grass has to have a sign so nobody even thinks about parking there. It doesn't work.

Public Works Director Diaz: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: It doesn't work.

Public Works Director Diaz: And in many instances rather than getting rid of signs, we've don't that, we realize that its way too many. We could do one or two signs where maybe there used to be four or whatever. So, yes, absolutely.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, why don't we work out. I'll help you with this. I'd like to co-sponsor, work on this legislation.

Commissioner Anderson: Sure.

Mayor Lago: This has been a pet peeve of mine for a long time. We have a gentleman named Leo Bueno, who sends us tons of information about signs. He's right a lot of the times. A lot of the signs are, again, how many pictures have I sent of signs that are deteriorating, signs that you can't even read anymore that are faded. A lot of those signs supposedly are being refabricated, like for example, for our lots where our trolley stops. My understanding is that a year ago was that those were going to be replaced, I don't know where they are, since we are talking about signs, does anybody know where those are?

Parking Director Kinney: The trolley signs are being procured and they will be installed.

Mayor Lago: Do you know when? Okay, Mr. Clerk next meeting, signage.

Commissioner Anderson: See what happens when you don't have an answer.

Mayor Lago: Signage. I would like an update on signage in regard to trolleys, parking lots, all the signs that have city emblems on them. I'd like to know when those are being refreshed, please, at the next Commission meeting.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes sir.

Vice Mayor Mena: And as I said before, the speed limit signs are horrible.

Mayor Lago: Horrible. Horrible. I know we are out of warranty. I know we are out of warranty.

Commissioner Anderson: They are really bad.

Mayor Lago: You can't even read them, they are faded.

Vice Mayor Mena: Some of them are just...

Commissioner Anderson: They are white. They are white.

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Vice Mayor Mena: They are five years old, not even, right.

Public Works Director Diaz: I think FDOT inspects, if I recall, they are required to be okay, I want to say three years or something like that, its really bizarre. I agree.

Mayor Lago: Yes, but this is more than – something happened there. Something happened there because you see signs that are completely faded, like the Vice Mayor said, completed faded and its just very weird. There was a defect when those were manufactured.

Mayor Lago: So, Commissioner, you want to go back to G-8, I skipped that one by mistake. Thank you very much.