

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting  
Agenda Item F-2  
December 16, 2014  
City Commission Chambers  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Jim Cason**

**Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.**

**Commissioner Pat Keon**

**Commissioner Vince Lago**

**Commissioner Frank Quesada**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark**

**City Attorney, Craig E. Leen**

**City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman**

**Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Interim Police Chief, Edward Hudak**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Andrea Hanley, Vice President of Development Camillus House**

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Agenda Item F-2 [Start:11:19:40 a.m.]

Discussion regarding homeless support service with Camillus House.

Mayor Cason: All right, we're going to do now F-2 and then F-1.

Commissioner Quesada: OK, F-2 is my item. Come on, Andrea Hanley, if you can come on, come on down. So we had, there was about, about a month and a half ago I had a resident that approached me and said that she anticipated she was going to be homeless in the next few weeks. Her father was dying. She had lost her job. She wasn't able to make payments. She was going to be evicted. So I actually reached out to Andrea. Andrea did a great job serving as the executive director for the Coral Gables Community Foundation and now is with Camillus House. Because of our relationship and I was a former board member there, I reached out to her to see

what we could do. This is not an issue that, this the first time I had seen it in Coral Gables, but we all know it happens. And I really wanted to know what we could do, if we were doing anything at all. So that resulted in a conversation, us sitting down, Andrea and myself, Bob Dickinson, which is I believe is the chairman of the board of the Camillus House; Wayne Eldridge from Tarpon Bend, representing the Business Improvement District, as well as Chamber of Commerce, and Police Chief Hudak. And we had a long conversation on really what we're doing, you know, when we have a homeless problem; can we help these people, can we rehabilitate, which is one of the great things about Camillus House. Their goal isn't really just to only get them off the street for a night or two nights; it's to rehabilitate those individuals, and I didn't realize this. I don't think many people have. They have a 70 percent success rate, which is amazing, which is I mean, they really should be applauded for their efforts in all the great work that they do. A lot of times people get down on their luck and they just are not given an opportunity and they don't have the means and place to get back on their feet, but they can get back on their feet, and Camillus House really does provide that service. So with that, I asked Andrea to come speak today. They provide a service to municipalities, and municipalities can buy beds at Camillus House. And really, what happens is if we see a homeless individual wondering the streets, the Police Department can offer them a ride to Camillus House and there, once at Camillus House, they have access to a bed and they are given opportunities, their given clothes, they can attend interviews. They're sort of life coaches that can help them out. There are job recruiters to really give them the opportunities to really get back on their feet. So, actually, Andrea before I pass it over to you, Chief Hudak, if you could talk to us. You know, what kind of numbers do we see of homeless individuals? Do we see any at all in Coral Gables? What do we do currently? And what do you think about the current proposal?

Commissioner Keon: Will you also address what the constraints are on the Police Department in moving homeless people and what is the protection afforded to the homeless under County ordinances and under laws.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Yes, I can.

Commissioner Keon: I mean, we can't just pick them up and drop them off. People need to understand that.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Right, we wouldn't just and again, I think, from a historical perspective, what law enforcement has done in the 30 years I've been here is we relocated issues throughout to city line to city line. I mean, that's not something we're proud of, but that's the way it was done when I first started. Our resources now are kind of what we can do as far as the initial assessment. We have centralized who's dealing with that: the Bike Patrol Unit downtown, which is primarily where it is; has been our homeless assistance officers. Their assessment begins first with a mental and physical capabilities of the individual homeless. We've had a lot of success stories in dealing with Larkin Hospital. If somebody has psychological issues, medical issues because of their own self-neglect, we've been able to get them into a hospital. The one component that I think this one program gives us is a guarantee of an assessment. What we have seen is we have about 16 to 18 transient homeless that would come into the City at night and leave by the morning, and a lot of them, in talking with the officers and what the individual see or what the homeless individual say is, they also come here for the safety, because they believe they can stay on the street safely because of the Police Department, which I think is a good thing. In the mornings you will see them; by 7 o'clock sunrise, they start to go wherever it is that they hang out, where they live. They stay off the area. We do have about five or six individuals that the officers have identified that we know are here on a regular basis, and there's a lot of other funding that they receive, whether it be VA (Veteran's Association) benefits, things like that, and this kind of gives us the ability from the officer's assessment that this is somebody that would be able to benefit and get into that help to get back on their feet that I think Camillus House does. So in the beginning and I'm big on baby steps, so I think the proposal that the Commissioner and Camillus House has, gives us the opportunity from the Police Department to continue assess those who are living in our City in the evening areas, but not necessarily the transient guys, so there's really kind of two. They're referred to as "Snow Birds." They migrate down, the homeless migrant down from the north and so we see an increase in that. The panhandlers on the street, things like that, that is illegal. We've kind of enforced that by moving them along. This gives the officers a tool that we know that there's a bed. There's a bed after our assessment that we can move somebody. It wouldn't for everybody. It would be for those that

would be willing. Obviously, we will have a policy in place about checking who that person is, because most of those people, right now the only two ways that we can relocate somebody, short of having a connection somewhere, is if we Baker Act them, which is put them in a hospital, or we arrest them, and then that's it.

Commissioner Keon: To Baker Act them, you need to understand how difficult it is to Baker Act somebody.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: It's extremely.

Commissioner Keon: That is not a viable solution.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: That's not a viable solution for the homeless situation, but this is not somebody, I mean, this is the evaluation process, Commissioner, that we would be doing. If somebody's Baker Act because of physical abilities and this is some of the success stories we've had where Larkin Hospital has stepped up and they've had somebody for I want to say it's almost three months that they continued through with state funding to get somebody rehabilitated and save the individual's life who was a regular with them.

Mayor Cason: Have our five regulars been evaluated at all, or would this be a first-time evaluation?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: No, this would be a first time. I didn't want to get the cart before the horse and evaluate somebody until we had Commission decision on which way we want to go and then we would actually work with Camillus House to see the evaluation.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yeah, I have one that lives behind one of my building actually.

Commissioner Keon: Your building, yeah.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Behind my building, and the police come there; I call them. Every time they come out at 6:30 at night, 7 o'clock at night, there he is, and they shoo him away. They ask him to leave, but he would not end up at Camillus House, because they tell me he does not want to have a bed or anything like that. You know, he prefers to, you know, live in my alcove.

Commissioner Lago: But, Vice Mayor, just to touch on that point, because that was a question that I had proposed to Ms. Hanley when I spoke to her the other day about this issue, but she gave me some interesting facts in regards to, we were talking about relocation and also rehab. I mean, this is a true opportunity to rehab you know, individuals. And like you said, sometimes people just don't want to get help. But the people that do want to get help, I think the percentage you told me was...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago:...around 70 percent rehabilitation rate. Am I correct? I mean, that's...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: You know, it's good.

Commissioner Lago: That's amazing. So if we can get 70 percent out of the five people, you know, that are...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: What people have to understand...

Commissioner Lago: They've got to want it.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yeah, they've got to want it.

Commissioner Lago: They got to want it.

Mayor Cason: You're recommending three beds as your baby steps to start?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: I am comfortable, I think, that as we go forward and we also talked about, you know, in working with the Manager, to look at some public-private partnerships as well downtown. I do believe what I'm excited about in talking with Camillus House, specifically on the individual that resides in the evening.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Is that the Mat Program, which we have seen kind of taken those people that are on the bubble, so to speak, that don't want to live inside, and the Mat Program gives them the three square meals a day.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That's great.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: And that may be something that may be interested in him. So that's something I think that we can. So I believe, in an abundance of caution, we start with the three as recommended and then we may look at some other partnerships to go forward.

Mayor Cason: Assuming you evaluate them and they're...

Commissioner Lago: They meet the criteria.

Mayor Cason:...meet the criteria, want to do it or rehabilitative, could we change the number each year? I mean, first start with we'll start with three, but it may be that...?

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, one and a half.

Andrea Hanley: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: So it's flexible?

Ms. Hanley: Yes, we talked about evaluating this on an annual basis.

Mayor Cason: OK, sounds good.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm sorry; you didn't really get a chance to speak at all; if you want to, chime in.

Ms. Hanley: Thank you. Frank stole 100 percent of my thunder, but no, that's fine. I think all the points have been made, and I guess my only comment would be don't give up on Paco. I've seen people who have been on the streets for years, and then when the time is right, we're there, and that's the whole point of Camillus House.

Commissioner Quesada: OK. Do you guys track, I'm assuming you track statistics. Because if we really want to analyze to see the success rate that we have, obviously we'd want to know. So I would assume it's between the Police Department and Camillus House to track the statistics for us and report back to us.

Ms. Hanley: Yes, and if this is something that the Commission moves forward, we would set up the parameters of what information you would want from us and vice versa and go from there.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mayor Cason: Sounds good.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: There is an annual audit from the Miami-Dade County Homeless Assistance Trust that we actually go out, the evening officers, about annually we do them, and we kind of take a polling or a census, if you will, so I would I'm going to recommend, as go forward, that we continue to have that component reported back to you, all through the Manager as well, to see where we're at as our relocations.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Commissioner Quesada: Well, I think it's a great partnership.

Mayor Cason: Going to make a motion?

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah. With that, I'll make a motion.

Commissioner Keon: The cost is?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Nine thousand.

Mayor Cason: A bed.

Commissioner Quesada: It was in the sheet.

Mayor Cason: Nine thousand a bed?

Commissioner Keon: Right. OK.

Mayor Cason: If I recall.

Commissioner Keon: Fine.

Commissioner Quesada: What's the exact number?

Ms. Hanley: The exact number is \$27,177.90; that's \$24.82 times three beds.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: For three beds.

Mayor Cason: For three beds, yeah.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Nine thousand per bed.



Commissioner Keon: It's fine.

Mayor Cason: OK, so you made the motion.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm making the motion for the first year.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'll second it.

Mayor Cason: And the Vice Mayor seconds it for the first year. City Clerk.

Commissioner Quesada: That we re-evaluate.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

Ms. Hanley: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Quesada: Thank you, guys.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: But I think it's particularly important for the community to understand is that the police are very limited in what you can do with regard to the homeless population. You

can't just pick people up, put them in your car, and take them for a ride. You cannot do that. It's against the law.

Commissioner Lago: And just to expand on what Commissioner Keon's saying what the police is doing right now, to no fault of them, is not working. They're coming back. They're coming back and they're back at our city.

Commissioner Keon: But I know --

Commissioner Lago: There has to be another answer for it.

Commissioner Keon: But I hear people asking and, you know, complaining about the fact that they are putting the homeless in the downtown and why don't we just move them is that you can't, you can't do that.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: And there's a number of those.

Commissioner Keon: And this gives us a viable option to actually, you know, helping our City, helping these individuals.

Commissioner Quesada: Yeah, the rehabilitation aspect of Camillus House.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. Thank you very much.

City Attorney Leen: We've looked at this. We've looked at this with the Police Department a couple years ago. We can for example, City parks, we can have time limits people can be there, hours of operation. We enforce those. If we have someone in the right-of-way and they're blocking, we can ask them to move along. But we can do that. But what we can't do is criminalize homelessness, because the law says that it's not illegal to be homeless.

Commissioner Lago: To be homeless.

City Attorney Leen: And I think what you've done today is the best possible action you could actually, from a legal perspective.

Commissioner Quesada: And I want to make a special note. Wayne Eldridge, from Tarpon Bend, has really been you know, as a business owner on Miracle Mile that sees a lot has really been at the forefront, and so thank you so much.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, guys.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Thank you.

[End: 11:32:40 a.m.]