

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-1
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

Economic and Cultural Development Assistant Director, Leonard Roberts

Parking Director, Kevin Kinney

Public Speaker(s)

Anthony Di Donato, Director of Operations, Coral Gables Country Club

George Volsky, Resident, 1008 Alhambra Circle

Agenda Item F-1 [Start: 11:32:41 a.m.]

Status report regarding parking enforcement along Granada Golf Course, under
Section 74-100 of the City Code.

Mayor Cason: All right, Chief, why don't you stay because we're going to move to F-1 now.
Commissioner Quesada, that's your issue.

Commissioner Quesada: Oh, yes. I want to get an update on the Granada Golf Course. We've had some complaints of parking coming from the Coral Gables Country Club for special events at the golf course. Recently, this week, I know there have been a few events. The Dade County

Bar Association for attorneys had its annual event at the Coral Gables Country Club. They sold 700 tickets. There were cars parked all over the place. What are we doing? What could we do so that we're not bothering all those residents that live near the Country Club?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Again, my office, as well as the other departments in the City, have been kind of brainstorming as far as what we can do. I know Economic Sustainability, who kind of works the contract of what it is, as well Parks and Recreation and Parking; we've been working it together, so I have one component of it. But, yes, we are enforcing, to answer your question in a nutshell, we are enforcing when we get calls, but we have some collective thoughts about it.

Commissioner Quesada: When you say enforcing, we're giving tickets for those parking...

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Yes, we are issuing tickets. The issue between the valet parking, you know, we have some recommendations collectively, all of us together, about how we would move forward to try and address the issues with parking, as well as some alarm ordinance issues, nuisance alarm type thing that came up, which comes back to us as the building owner. So those are some of the issues that have come across our desk at the Police Department.

Mayor Cason: So you're going to come up with some suggestion. Then I'll ask Mr. Di Donato if he'd like to comment or come on up if you'd like and participate in this.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: I mean, because really, what it sounds like to me is we need an issue for overflow parking for you guys. I mean, we want you to be successful. We want you to have great events there, but obviously, we don't want you infringing on the neighborhood.

Anthony Di Donato: No, of course not. Well, definitely, one issue we've had in the past in case.

Commissioner Quesada: You can speak into the microphone.

Mr. Di Donato: The issue with the Bar, for instance, a lot of times that they have their last minute guest count increase, so...

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Mr. Di Donato:...we try to enforce some of these things as best we can, and that's why I always have a written contract. In cases like that, we can't say, "sorry," you know -- We try to do our best, truly.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Excuse me. Could you just tell us your name and your title and who you're representing.

Mr. Di Donato: Sure. It's Anthony Di Donato, and I'm the director of Operations for the Coral Gables Country Club.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mr. Di Donato: -- at 997 North Greenway Drive.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Could you require any persons that are conducting an event there that are over a certain amount to be required to hire an off-duty police officer to come there and shepherd them into the proper locations?

Mr. Di Donato: Yes. That's a definite consideration that we're having.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes, because you just pass on the expense to them. You say, "OK, over 200 people, similar to having a party in any residential location, you are required to have an off-duty police officer there to make sure they mitigate the parking in front of these residential areas

and, you know, direct them to the right location.” Instead of calling them after-the-fact, try to be proactive.

Mayor Cason: Well, I think staff has got some suggestions. Why don't you tell us about those suggestions now and then we'll bounce them off Mr. Di Donato and see if we can get any closer to where we're trying to get?

Leonard Roberts: Sure. Leonard Roberts, the Economic and Development, Economic and Cultural Development, we actually changed our name, Assistant Director. We've actually worked with Anthony in regards to coming up with a revised parking plan. When we implemented the parking plan, we made it in conjunction with the use agreement in talking to the Parking Director and we've offered additional parking. Now, in order to ensure that individuals don't park on the residential swale and the golf course swale is that they've implemented cones. So for every event that they have, they put cones up, up to the 700 block, and then the only -- and on the residential side, no parking whatsoever is allowed. Unfortunately, there are individuals who self-park, and that becomes where the issue is. And on the golf course side, once they've gotten approval from parking, then they're allowed to park there, but they are still required to keep cones. Now, the issue is the self-parking, and Anthony and I have discussed a couple of opportunities, and I think what he has decided that can be done is, number one, they have a disclaimer now as part of their actual contract, so anyone who self-parks, they're noted that they will be cited and potentially even towed in some cases. And Anthony, you want to go into some opportunities that we discussed?

Mr. Di Donato: Yes, sure. So the one that Leonard mentioned with the safety cones, that's something that we're implementing every time we have more than 200 guests on property, so that's along the residential swale.

Mayor Cason: Let me just say one thing about that, since I drive by there every day. I noticed the last time, the people, what they do is they just park between the cones. They don't work, and the cones are only for a small portion of the residents, so even the ones that see the cones and say “I don't know if I'm supposed to park here,” I think they just go down that way or they go down

North Greenway. So I think, ideally, there would be something more restraining than cones or you'd have to put them the whole length , I just don't think the cones are working.

Mr. Di Donato: Well, sometimes, no, the neighbors, they park on the swale, as well as some other vehicles go there, so I notice that's what happens sometimes too.

Mayor Cason: Right.

Mr. Di Donato: So we kind of use that as a deterrent, so it's not perfect, but at least it helps out and it has helped out tremendously, actually.

Mayor Cason: Yes. I mean, hopefully, people would understand that means you're not supposed to go there.

Mr. Di Donato: Yes, exactly.

Mayor Cason: But they don't.

Mr. Di Donato: So we've also revised our contract too for making all our guests aware too that all people on premise, they have to obviously obey by the local laws in terms of parking, so that's put on the contract. Larger events too, valet will be enforced. That will be also...

Commissioner Quesada: But you have an issue, though, because you don't want to turn away the big events.

Mr. Di Donato: No.

Commissioner Quesada: I understand that. You have the space to accommodate in the building, but you don't have the space for the parking. Have you looked into other locations for overflow parking? I mean, having the valet service that parks somewhere downtown. I mean is that even a possibility?

Mayor Cason: Chief, you had an idea.

Mr. Di Donato: We actually.

Mayor Cason: -- for employees, right, for the --?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: And, again, I think moving ahead, part of our issue, as far as the enforcement and going along with it, is knowing ahead of time what's going on in regards to those dynamics may change. I believe, you know, we support hiring an off-duty officer, but we have to have clear instructions to the officer of what's going to be needed. Is it traffic direction? And where we're going to put those parking; where it's going to be allowed. We talked about shuttling from different locations. Not really sure if some of the locations are identified. I mean, our biggest concern from the police side is knowing what's on the table ahead of time. I believe the constituents call us when it becomes an issue. And to get proactive with it to deal with it and work with the leaseholder would be to know ahead of time what's going on, similar to something like a special events meeting like we do with the Museum. When things are coming forward, we're reviewing them, and I'm not necessarily recommending that we make them go through a permit, but then we know what kind of staffing we'd need. So if it's a 800-person event where we know that parking, it may be two officers. One, the concern is parking on North Greenway; two would be any kind of overflow parking on Alhambra, what's going to go in the area, so we got to have an idea of what's happening. So I think there's some more work that we can do before we put it. But I think our notice ahead of time, Mayor, to answer your question, kind of helps us say, "OK, we have a special event. We're going to have to make some modifications," and the police officers can enforce that along with (UNINTELLIGIBLE), because we are writing tickets.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you about the tickets, because the only no-parking signs are on the center parkway on Alhambra Circle.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Correct.

Mayor Cason: The other streets, there's nothing that says you can't park. And in fact, when residents have big parties, they park on the golf course and on the swale.

Interim Police Chief Hudak: Correct.

Mayor Cason: So can you issue tickets if people happen to be coming to an event and park there versus residents having a party and people park there? How do you handle that?

Interim Police Chief Hudak: If there's a sign that says "no parking", no matter who it is, citations can be issued. If there are no signs and it's legally parked within the swale and not blocking the sidewalk at all, then parking citations can be issued for that, but that only. So the balance that we're having, you know, that we've heard from the people in the community is we don't want to get overrun by some of the pictures that were sent. That's our challenge is to figure out how we can throw it ahead of time, and I don't want to speak for Kevin.

Kevin Kinney: I would just mention, on the north side of North Greenway Drive along the residences, there is limited signage, and we do temporary signings to basically let everybody know you're not supposed to be there and the Country Club has helped by putting out cones.

Mayor Cason: OK. So you can put a temporary sign that says "no parking" really tonight?

Mr. Kinney: Absolutely.

Mayor Cason: What about on the golf course?

Mr. Kinney: We could do the same if we wanted to put the signs up, but...

Mayor Cason: Because if you don't, my concern is the residents, people are coming from Boca Raton to an event; they don't know anything. It doesn't say "no parking" so they park and they get a ticket.

Mr. Leen: Mr. Mayor, if I could add something here. The code says that, ultimately, the City can determine who parks on the right-of-way, and it gives the authority to the City Manager. And the tradition in the City is we generally allow people to park in the swale without a sign. That's why if the rule here was that you couldn't park in the swale generally and everyone knew that, you probably wouldn't need a sign. But because the general rule is to allow it, it's better to have the sign; doesn't mean that you can't ticket, because technically, they're not allowed to park there without the City Manager's permission, and people are assumed to know the law. But the ticket is subject to challenge. And so it would be better to have temporary signs. It would be legally better.

Mayor Cason: You know, because many people all over the City...I mean, we don't have enough parking when people have events, so they park on the swale, all over the place, in front of 15, 20 homes down either side.

Mr. Kinney: As the Chief mentioned, if we know ahead of time...I mean it is not exactly really efficient, because we can have people out there before the problem starts and we can be telling people, "you know, you need to park over here."

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I hate to spend our hard-earned dollars doing that when I think we can mitigate this issue with a police officer being there at the expense of the people that are conducting this event. We need to be proactive, not reactive. I'm really glad to hear that the Country Club is doing well, because Cathy will remember, we were dying looking for a good person in the Country Club, so I commend you for that, and I appreciate you working with us, but we need to solve this issue because it's not fair to the residents that also wanted you to be the people running that, and they are unfairly burdened in this particular case on a consistent basis. So somehow, we have to come up with something. And I, again, think that we should be more

proactive than reactive and have somebody out there and pass it on to them. Pass it on to the people holding the event.

Mayor Cason: How many of the cars that park in the parking lot before the event are actually employees? If you have 800 people attending, how many employees would you have?

Mr. Di Donato: All depends. Some of the employees, they carpool as well, so there could be anywhere maybe from, say, 20 cars or so. But they know when there's large events, that they have to park outside.

Mayor Cason: So do you think they're actually not parking there and they're leaving that for the guests or is there something more you can do in terms of employees?

Mr. Di Donato: We tell employees they're not supposed to park there. There may be a few who sneak their cars in, but generally, they know they shouldn't be parking on property.

Mayor Cason: Is there a way that you could reconfigure that parking to stack cars? Instead of having it the way it is now, but just jam more of them in with the valet as to get them out there; we get more cars in? Because if you have a big event, even if you block them on the streets we're talking about, they'll just go three or four blocks down. I mean, they're going to park somewhere.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Commissioner Quesada had a good point, and we talked about this years ago, about parking people downtown Coral Gables at nighttime events.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes, of course.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: And shuttling people up and down to the events and...

Commissioner Quesada: I think what makes more sense for them, what you really need to look at is an overflow parking situation; and whatever valet service you have, you know, when people

are arriving, you have a lot more of the attendants receiving them, taking the cars to whatever location. At the end of the night, the valet attendants are at the other location with the cars, and as people come up with their cars, they bring them back.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Right. That's exactly right.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes. I think that's...even if you do some of the overflow parking here at City Hall at night where the parking lot is empty, it's not that far away, you're not going to have that long of a wait. But the point is we don't want to discourage events from occurring at the Country Club.

Mr. Di Donato: That could get expensive too.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm sorry?

Mr. Di Donato: That could get a little expensive, too, start shuttling, becomes an issue of liability as well.

Commissioner Quesada: No, no. I don't think you heard what I said. There's still valet parking in front at the event. The valet parkers are the ones that are now, instead of parking it on-site or maybe nearby, they're parking it somewhere in downtown.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: The only issue you have then is the traffic going back and forth on North Greenway and sometimes valet parkers have the tendency, they get a little aggressive with their movement of cars, so that would be another issue we'd have to go, but you're right. I mean, we have to come up with something that is off-site parking.

Mayor Cason: Do you have any other thoughts from your perspective, that could be done to...and how often do we have these situations?

Mr. Di Donato: Like now, usually during November, December, it gets pretty busy; and then, trust me, in June, it usually busier for weddings. So those are the times.

Commissioner Quesada: Do you have a preferred valet vendor that you use?

Mr. Di Donato: Yes, we have two just in case.

Commissioner Quesada: You have two just in case?

Mr. Di Donato: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: How many parking spots do you have on site?

Mr. Di Donato: On site, the parking lot is 114 spaces.

Mayor Cason: If you reconfigure, could you get 150 in there? I mean, if you stacked them generally, or is that about it?

Mr. Di Donato: You may get an extra maybe like 15, 20 at most.

Mayor Cason: So no matter what, you're going to need overflow parking.

Commissioner Quesada: How about we do this. How about if you can set up a meeting and through the City Manager, if Kevin Kenny and Leonard can meet with yourself and your two valet companies; see if you guys can come up with an idea of maybe something that can be done; maybe another idea comes out of that meeting, because right now we're all just sort of shooting from the hip. So if you guys can sit down, put your heads together, and see what we can do and have either...

Commissioner Keon: Chief.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes, and have the Chief join as well, and see what you guys can come up with, an idea. So you hear our concerns; we're hearing it from residents all up and down that neighborhood, and they hate all the cars all over the place. And sometimes they get blocked in and we get the calls and I'm sure you guys get the calls, as well. The idea is to come up with a plan that works for everyone.

Mayor Cason: Mr. Volsky, you have a question?

George Volsky: Good morning. My name is George Volsky. I live at 1008 Alhambra Circle, across the street from the Coral Gables Country Club. This is not a new problem. I have lived there for 50 years, always have the problem, and I've been attending because, you know, for last almost 20 years Commission meetings and nobody's complained. I have not complained. Why? Because we want that institution to be successful. And that doesn't happen very often. So, yes, there has got to be some solution to it, but doesn't happen very often. And very often, people park in front of my house in the swale or in front in the median, which is I think what they do every you have, what, on Thursday meetings of Rotary Club or something?

Mr. Di Donato: No. We used to have (UNINTELLIGIBLE).

Mr. Volsky: Huge events and they park during the day. I mentioned people complained about parking at night. So I believe that you cannot make an omelet without breaking an egg. We have too, we live with it. Why traffic...I think someone, I think Vice Mayor mentioned the traffic on North Greenway Drive. Why? Because number of cars in Miami-Dade County, someone told me, is bigger than people. So when we have traffic, when I move to my location, there was absolutely no traffic. Now 24 hours is the traffic. So people use cars. So I think the people have right to complain. I quite agree with it. They have not complained before. At least I haven't. So parking people, them, they will find the solution. But it's got to be some inconvenience to people, which I think people have to bear because that's life. Not everything is perfect. And we have to live with it, and we go things and only for a couple of hours. That's all. And one thing I want to say. Before these people came, there was another tenant, and it was a smell coming from the kitchen. Because I complained to this Commission before; not you in

here. I think Mr. Kerdyk was. Now it's perfect. It's no smell, even though the kitchen is next to my house, and there is no sound. They've eliminate it. So I think they're a very good neighbor. And I want to say that traffic is traffic, and we have to live with it, not only in front of Coral Gables Country Club; throughout the City, and this is something which is a sign of growth and so we have to accept it. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. All right, well, if you get together and see if you can come up with something to ameliorate the problem. I agree, it's not every night, it's every once in a while.

Mr. Di Donato: Every so often.

Mayor Cason: Every once in a while you see it and if it were every night, there'll be something else, but maybe the idea of temporary no parking signs would allow people to know that they're going to get a ticket if they park there, because without, that they won't know and it'll be unfair to give them a ticket because how did they know; it doesn't say "no parking." So whatever you can come up with would...

Mr. Di Donato: Absolutely.

Commissioner Keon: Yes. I think the bigger issue is on the residential properties. I mean, I think the golf course is a City-owned property, you know. I don't know that we've heard the complaints about the parking relative to the golf course; it's really more along the residential property, so that's really what your objective is to reduce that parking, that overflow onto the residential in front of homes on the Greenways.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm sorry. I just want to be clear. I don't want to discourage people from coming to events there. If we start ticketing everyone that comes through, then all of a sudden you guys look bad and then maybe another event doesn't want to...they don't want to hold their event there anymore.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Quesada: We don't want that either. That's why I think, if everyone sort of sits down, sort of our experts in parking...

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada:...to really come up with an idea so that everyone can win.

Commissioner Keon: But I think the objective is to prohibit the parking in front of residential properties.

Mayor Cason: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: That's the objective. Not the golf course side. It's the residential side.

Commissioner Lago: Commissioner, I agree with you with what you're saying, but by putting signs and let's say the next step after signage would be obviously ticketing, enforcement. You are eventually going to hinder the ability to do business because there are only a hundred or so parking spaces. It's going to get to a point where no one's going to find parking in that location.

Commissioner Keon: Because everybody wants to park close. I mean, nobody wants to park halfway down the golf course.

Commissioner Lago: But what other options?

Commissioner Keon: Or two-third of the way down the golf course. I mean, if they continue to park...

Mayor Cason: What's going to happen is they will.

Commissioner Lago: I mean, in front of Liberty Café, there's only how many parking spaces?

Commissioner Keon: No. But I think the issue is the people that we are hearing the concerns from are the residents that, you know, with the parking, on the swale in front of their homes. Now, I hate to put up no parking signs because you know that someone's stops to visit, they're going to park in your swale, so I mean, you want to be able to accommodate your own visitors, where I don't know how many cars you can park along the golf course. I mean, I don't know that, but you can look at that...

Mr. Roberts: About 85.

Mayor Cason: A lot.

Commissioner Keon: Pardon me?

Mr. Roberts: It's about 85.

Commissioner Keon: About 85. What about on the other side of the golf course?

Mr. Roberts: Well, let me just try and get a little...I have a little set of numbers here in regards to the parking. A hundred and fourteen parking spaces are located on-site. There's an 11 additional staff parking spaces. City Parking Department and myself and Anthony, we've identified roughly an additional 86 parking spaces, public access parking spaces; and you add those up together, there's roughly about 276 parking spaces combined. So we have spaces available.

Commissioner Keon: And you have a need for 500.

Mr. Di Donato: Well...Yes, so we've identified; it's just, you know, coming up with a solution to prevent people from self-parking. A lot of the places that we've identified is for the valet, so the real concern, I believe, is the self-parkers.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Mr. Di Donato: And so we need to control that, and we need to sit down and come up with a better solution besides the cones. Obviously, we can't put permanent signage there because that's aesthetically not appealing.

Commissioner Keon: Yes, OK. So the issue of maybe hiring off-duty police officers, you know, to enforce the no self-parking or whatever on the residential side.

Mayor Cason: If you could do them all by valet you would avoid the problem. Because otherwise, what's going to happen is they'll just move a half mile down and we'll have a new set of residents calling us, saying "Hey, all these cars parking," but they're not parking. So, I mean, you got to it looks like valet would...because even with the police there, they're just going to say, "you can't park here." And they'll say, "OK, well, I'll go down three blocks and park in front of my house."

Commissioner Keon: Well, they can tell them, you know, where along the golf course they can park. I mean, if they want to park along the golf course, people can park along the golf course and they can walk up.

Mr. Roberts: Yes, we'll figure out a win-win situation

Mayor Cason: And I think a golf course is part of the solution.

Commissioner Keon: Our objective to be clear.

Commissioner Lago: I think it's the only solution.

Mayor Cason: Yes. OK. Anything else, Frank?

Commissioner Quesada: Thank you, guys.

Mr. Di Donato: Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: OK, thank you.

[End: 11:55:13 a.m.]