

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-3
January 26, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick**

City Staff

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Economic Development Director, Javier Betancourt**

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item H-3 [10:35:28 a.m.]

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to issue Stage II of the two-stage Request for Proposals (RFP) for city owned Garages 1 and 4 on Andalusia Avenue (RFP No. 2014.10.23), in substantially the form attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

Mayor Cason: Alright, let's move to H-3...

Commissioner Keon: Okay, thank you.

Mayor Cason: Which is a resolution authorizing the City Manager to issue stage II.

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City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And -- excuse me, sir. And just as clarification, in stage II, the draft that we've submitted, it does say redevelopment of Garages 1 and 4 must occur in phases. We understand as soon as we can get parking in the first one, we will, so as to not take all public parking offline at once. So, we do have that provision in there. Given that you pass that motion, we will not remove it.

Mayor Cason: Okay.

City Attorney Leen: And I don't want to belabor it, but I -- in case what I said was ambiguous, what I mean is they don't have to, every time they meet with you, register again and again and again. They have to register once...

Commissioner Lago: For that item.

City Attorney Leen: Before they meet with any of you, and then they can meet with each of you...

City Clerk Foeman: And they don't...

City Attorney Leen: Separately, of course, because of the Sunshine law.

City Clerk Foeman: They don't have to pay for each issue.

City Attorney Leen: Yes.

City Clerk Foeman: They register, but they don't have to pay.

City Attorney Leen: They register one time. They're registered for this issue. It has to be for this issue, and then they can meet with you.

Commissioner Slesnick: I really would like to have maybe a list of names that go with each developer, too, because people do talk to me and I don't quite know who's on the team, so it would be very helpful to me to have some additional names besides the head developer.

Commissioner Keon: Would you just ask, you know, are you a resident?

Commissioner Slesnick: Well, no, no. But when people...

Commissioner Keon: All we hear is a resident or you're a part of this group.

City Attorney Leen: The Deputy City Attorney is -- she's one of the leading people on this issue in the County, so you can -- I would highly recommend if you have any question...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Attorney Leen: To call Miriam. You call me of course, too, but I often will just ask Miriam. So, call Miriam and she can give you that guidance. She'll put it in writing for you to protect you, too, if you wish.

Mayor Cason: Okay. Anything else we need to discuss on H-3 before we have a motion?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: So, in addition -- and I hate to belabor this, but in addition to the phased parking concern that's been addressed, I think it would be helpful to both staff and to the proposers to maybe get greater clarity on the issue with the -- spanning Salzedo, and then also an issue we didn't discuss but was part of one of the proposals, was building up to,

I think, 15 or 16 stories on Miracle Mile. And I mean, those are two issues that we had concerns with, and I think it would be helpful to...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Okay, so if you go back...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Get some clarity from you on the...

Vice Mayor Quesada: To one of the previous meetings -- I don't know if you read the transcripts when we -- this originally came up. I know it was before your time that you were here. We had an extensive discussion on the cantilevering over Salzedo, and we said we were not going to preclude it.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Okay.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We said that we want to leave it as open as possible to see what kind of designs come back, you know...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Well, except, Commissioner, this is an opportunity, if you all either reaffirm that position so the concept of connecting -- cantilevering over Salzedo so that the building can be a contiguous building. We would like either a reaffirmation that that remains -- the opportunity remains in play with the Commission or if it gives you pause.

Mayor Cason: I have a question, technical. I read somewhere in here that you would have to put some kind of structures into Actors' Playhouse to hold it up; is that correct?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Certainly not my area of expertise, but we believe, obviously, a lot of that would have to come into play, absolutely.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. That's -- you would have to -- it would be an engineering, you know, issue and you'd have to somehow, some way provide the necessary structure to cantilever over the Playhouse. To me, it's not only -- like the Vice Mayor said, I think it's not only an aesthetic issue, but I think it's also an efficiency issue. And I think, Javier, the reason why I would potentially entertain having someone or some group provide us with an alternate option for a design which would cantilever over Salzedo would be due to the fact that I think, in my opinion, again -- correct me if I'm wrong. I'm not a parking design expert, but I think it would provide us with an additional opportunity to be more efficient in regards to how the cars could travel from one parking garage to another. You wouldn't waste so many parking spaces.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Oh, is that what they were thinking? Like, it wouldn't be a pedestrian -- I didn't read that...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: This would be...

Vice Mayor Quesada: They didn't describe, did they?

Commissioner Slesnick: For cars.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: A number of layers of parking.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: A full building, sir, over Salzedo.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I didn't (INAUDIBLE).

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I understand.

Commissioner Lago: This would provide additional parking, and it would provide kind of like a catwalk if the catwalk is the appropriate...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I believe the concept, sir, is that they would continue to build a building...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: That spanned over Miracle Theater garage and the Publix garage up Salzedo.

Commissioner Lago: The reason why I mention it is because I've been very -- I'm not versed in regards to any of these presentations. We haven't discussed them. We haven't...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I understand.

Commissioner Lago: Reviewed them in detail. So, the design is kind of not something where I'm privy to, but my understanding, from what I heard, it was -- Javier, correct me if I'm wrong - - certain levels of parking...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: With commercial or residential on top of that. Am I correct or that is not the case?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: And again, this particular proposal wasn't very specific as to, you know, the exact development program or design. But certainly, there were going to be a number of levels of parking that would span the street.

Commissioner Lago: My concern...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: With top -- with, I believe, open space on the rooftop.

Commissioner Lago: And I'm going to tell you what my concern with that is. My concern is not the span over the street. My concern is the amount of levels over the street. So, let's say that you were going to use it as a catwalk to be able to allow cars to traverse or a feature which would be, let's say, some sort of commercial feature overlooking Miracle Mile, something, you know, tastefully done with a beautiful passive park on top where people could use it to look at the City. I would be more in favor of that. But to just make the building even bulkier...

Vice Mayor Quesada: But we can't make that determination right now because we don't know.

Commissioner Lago: I'm just giving you my -- again, I haven't looked at -- I've tried to stay away from it as much as possible because I don't want there to be any issues, even though, as the City Attorney mentioned, we could review the documents, we could review the actual plans. I just -- I don't know if I want to shoot down that opportunity, but I just don't want to have one of these five groups or all five groups work on a proposed plan which would cost them significant dollars and then make the building even bulkier and it just looked like a giant wall.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But you know something, that's a business risk that they have to take. But if we can get something, a spectacular design that we can't envision at this time and they can, why should we foreclose that idea?

Mayor Cason: What does (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Quesada: The conversation we had the first time when we decided to put it on, the conversation was Douglas Entrance. Douglas Entrance, that historical building that, you know,

cantilevers over the street that you drive underneath, at that time, that was out of this -- an out-of-this-world design. And now we look at it and I think most residents, I think most of us up here love that building. We don't know if we're going to get one of those designs from one of these groups. I just don't want to close out that idea. And you know something, the design that we get back might be horrible and we might hate it. And we say, you know something, hey, we gave them the opportunity. We're going to go with something else but...

Mayor Cason: What does it do to the equities of Actors' Playhouse? What are...

Commissioner Lago: But don't forget, it also includes...

Commissioner Slesnick: The air rights.

Commissioner Lago: You have the issue with the air rights, but it also increased the FAR of the proposed project.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Well, that's the group that asked for 5.45.

Commissioner Lago: Again, everything is in flux. You can always ask; it doesn't mean you're going to get.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I just don't want to close the idea, but...

Commissioner Lago: And I'm with you on that.

Commissioner Slesnick: Would this be like the parking garages out at the airport that you can go from the Flamingo to the Dolphin on like the third floor and drive across?

Commissioner Lago: That's exactly...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: With a car, and then maybe even have a restaurant or apartments above the street.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: That's the area that remains unclear.

Commissioner Slesnick: So, we're giving up the air rights over the street, but you could go -- like the what?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Like the Atlantis in the Bahamas.

Commissioner Slesnick: Like the Atlantis of the Bahamas. You know, five stories up, you're crossing over and you have apartments or a restaurant or a park on top. Anyway, it's interesting.

Mayor Cason: Well, if we allow that option to go forward, it should be on the record that it's got to be tasteful. It's got to be something that really is worth it because...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Out of this world.

Mayor Cason: To block and to sort of put Actors' Playhouse under a square, you know, like an arch, that they can't ever go up and they can't do some other things, I don't even know how they could fix the roof if they wanted.

Vice Mayor Quesada: It's got to be the type of project that the moment we see it, we all fall in love with it. It's got to be something like that.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. And not only that, if you're going to -- like what the Vice -- what Commissioner Slesnick stated about the air rights and the Mayor stated about Actors' Playhouse, if you're going -- if we're even going to entertain that, there has to be, in my opinion, some upgrades to the existing Actors' Playhouse facility because you're not going to cantilever over that structure and not, you know, provide some upgrades...

Commissioner Slesnick: Not fix it.

Commissioner Lago: To the HVAC system, which I know that all has to be relocated, so that has to be taken into consideration.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: In fairness to the proposer, they did mention those things as well.

Commissioner Slesnick: (INAUDIBLE). I mean, that's a historic building so...

Mayor Cason: So, presumably, you would not have it -- it was built over any more leaky roofs at Actors' Playhouse.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah. They're going to be subject to a stricter scrutiny.

Mayor Cason: Alright.

Commissioner Keon: Were they -- is their intention -- I mean, is the intention to cantilever entirely over the Playhouse, no? How much are they -- yeah, how much -- what is -- I mean, I think there is a -- we should decide how much you intrude into the Mile and the sight lines along the Mile and how it affects, you know, the...

Commissioner Lago: Height?

Commissioner Slesnick: The little garages behind...

Commissioner Keon: Well, how it's open.

Commissioner Slesnick: The alley.

Commissioner Keon: I mean, the openness and whatever of the Mile. Right now they're all two-story buildings on the Mile, you know. And so, if you, you know, project into or you build into the space, the footprints in those buildings -- I mean, if it's -- the alley is one-story -- is one issue. You know, I don't -- but you know, if you start coming over the existing buildings on the Mile, you're going to change, you know, the sight line as you look down the Mile and I think that's -- and I know there was one proposal that I think -- is it actually on the Mile?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yes, that's actually...

Commissioner Keon: Actually on the Mile?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: A good segue to the other...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Issue of concern that we raised was the height on the Mile. With the exception of that one project, that's Terranova Scheme A, all the others stop at the alley.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, at the alley, Okay.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: And some, you know, come into the alley more so than others, but Scheme A of Terranova's proposal does in fact pull in that corner property on the Mile and Ponce.

Commissioner Lago: Which (INAUDIBLE)?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: And they're proposing...

Commissioner Slesnick: The Supercuts.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Fifteen, sixteen stories.

Commissioner Keon: No, the other...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: No, the Starbuck's.

Commissioner Keon: The Starbuck prop -- where the Starbuck's is.

Commissioner Slesnick: Oh, yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Javi, just to put it on the record, I want to be clear. I mean, I'm not a big proponent of that. I mean, I think that that goes back to what Commissioner Keon says.

Commissioner Keon: You know, right.

Commissioner Lago: You're going to -- you have a lot of two-story buildings and I'm not in favor of revamping -- like a lot of the Mile has been revamped, but the moment I think you add that corner where the Starbuck's is and you go -- I think you said 16 or 15 stories?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: No, depending on how you interpret it, but yes.

Commissioner Lago: I'm not going to hold you to it, but I mean, it was around that range. That to me is a little bit of concern.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: This is the...

Commissioner Lago: I think the Mile -- I think it takes away...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: This is what we want to hear because there's a Scheme A...

Commissioner Lago: I just want to be -- but I want to be...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And there's a Scheme B.

Commissioner Lago: But I want to be sensitive because these five firms that have come before us, this is not their first go-around in reference to this project. And I think that we scared off -- not the doing of this Commission, not the doing of the City Manager, the City Attorney or City Clerk, the doing of previous Commissions and previous actions have scared off people from becoming involved because I've heard it from people that said I was going to become involved, and I'm not going to become involved because I think this is the third or fourth iteration of this project. So, that's why you notice I try to reaffirm the fact that this is moving forward like just the Mile is moving forward, and this is a serious investment by these individuals, the developer who has taken the time and has been a partner of this City for such a long time doesn't get scared or shy away from continuing to be involved, so I want to be...

Commissioner Keon: Right, I mean, I think you can, you know, incorporate -- if that's your property, you can incorporate it into your design, but you know, once you go up the two stories or what the height of the Mile is, that you have to set back the -- you know, that space and then

you can go up behind it. I mean, you know, but that it's just, you know -- I don't want a pillar on the corner of the Mile and Ponce, but there's no reason that you, you know, in (INAUDIBLE) projects, when you get to 45 feet, you know, you set back 120 feet and then you can go up. You know, those kinds of things -- I mean, you're connected. It's one property; that's fine, but you don't affect the aesthetic that we want or that exists on the Mile. So, you know, I -- is that making sense?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yes, absolutely.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Mayor Cason: Does that -- I think...

Commissioner Keon: You know, and (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Cason: Provide the transcripts...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Mayor Cason: (INAUDIBLE) going to read all of this and we don't need to...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Cason: Codify it right now, but I think...

Commissioner Keon: No.

Mayor Cason: Our thoughts are...

Commissioner Keon: But I think they (INAUDIBLE)...

Mayor Cason: (INAUDIBLE) on what we decide when the projects come forward if you see some...

Commissioner Lago: Do we have a hard date? I'm sorry, Mayor. Do we have a hard date for the next submission of the Phase II?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: I wouldn't say we have a hard date. I think we anticipate...

Commissioner Lago: You have a flexible date.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yeah, we have a flexible schedule, if you will.

Mayor Cason: There's a schedule in here somewhere.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: It's in here.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Proposed on page 4 of Exhibit A. So, we hope to issue Stage II, having incorporated some of these additional comments in the coming weeks. We'll have a pre-proposal conference where we could have, you know, open discussions with the different proposals. We're looking at a deadline for submittal of March or April. Now, that's a fairly aggressive schedule. We'll see if the proposers are able to turn this around in that time, with evaluation, and then City Commission consideration shortly thereafter. So, our hope is to have this completed by this summer.

Commissioner Lago: If you're talking about between March and April being 30 days, the difference, I mean, I don't have any issues with it, but I think the Commission would agree with

me that, you know, this is a lofty project, so I want to make sure the five firms have the necessary time to put together a great proposal.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: There's a lot of work entailed in this next stage. Now, some of them may have started that work already and may be able to turn it around quickly. I'm not sure.

Mayor Cason: So, we'll start with a motion to authorize the City Manager to start the process on Stage II.

Commissioner Lago: I'll make the motion.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago makes the motion.

Commissioner Keon: I second it.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon seconds. City Clerk.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Commissioner Keon: Can I ask for one clarification? When you're talking about cantilevering over the Miracle Theater, that -- the cantilevering over the Salzedo, it's the street that they're cantilevering over?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Or is it both?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Well, it's both because I think the back end of the theater protrudes into that area.

Commissioner Lago: Andalusia.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: It's hard to say until we see the actual design proposals what they're proposing exactly. Right now it's very conceptual, but I don't see how you span over without affecting the theater, and I think they recognize that. They've already...

Commissioner Keon: That they would (INAUDIBLE)...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Indicated that they would...

Commissioner Keon: As to how far they're going to...

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Work with the theater.

Commissioner Keon: I guess what I'm asking is how far will they cantilever over the back of the Playhouse? I mean, that's that same issue with, you know, at what point do you have to step back, you know, to not affect the aesthetic of the Mile?

Economic Development Director Betancourt: The theater, as I recall, spans all the way to Andalusia. So, clearly, you're going to have to span over that building, if you're spanning over Salzedo (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Cason: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: A degree to which remains to be seen.

Commissioner Lago: Could be 50 percent, you know.

Economic Development Director Betancourt: Who knows.

Commissioner Lago: Who knows at this point.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor, Mr. Clerk, when we get those resolutions, I want to add the sentence to each one about the Commission discretion, so just make sure they come to me and I'll add those things.

City Clerk Foeman: Will do.

City Attorney Leen: Thank you.

[End: 10:51:56 a.m.]