

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item K – Discussion Items
January 10, 2017
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

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item K – Discussion Items [12:40:23 p.m.]

Mayor Cason: Alright. We are going to move to Discussion Items, anything you want to bring up, because after that we are going to have a recess and come back at 5 (p.m.).

Commissioner Lago: I have a few items I want to bring up. The first item I want – well Commissioner Keon first.

Commissioner Keon: No, no, no, go ahead.

Commissioner Lago: The first item I want to bring up is, I want to get a recap, not today, not now, in reference to the following items that I requested from staff several months ago, and I know that my colleagues have been requesting it also. An update in regards to the North Ponce study, when will that be coming before the Commission? An update in regards to the open space ordinance, which I mentioned before.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And sir, just so you know, January 27th from 2 to 5 is when we have our workshop with you all and that includes the open space.

Commissioner Lago: And in reference to the North Ponce study, I want to have a few discussions in regards to that. I also want to bring up the ordinance that I was working on, I know Kevin is here in reference to the truck ordinance and the fines and rewriting the Code, in reference to the existing fines that are provided, because it's becoming, it's not becoming an incident it's becoming a habit now, and I brought it up to the Manager's attention and to Mr. Iglesias yesterday. Everywhere I go and you are not paying attention, you are on your way, you are dealing with issues, but you start paying attention a little bit as you drive, you'll see that the trucks, the 18-wheelers are parked everywhere through the City in the middle of the street. I have pictures of it; and they put out their cones, they are not following the law, they could care less in reference to if they are producing congestion, its then becoming a hazard, people you can potentially run over because cars can't see as they are crossing the street. It's becoming a major issue and we need to address this issue because as we redo downtown we need to make sure that they are not paying attention with the \$25 tickets now, we need to add a zero to that if it's an issue.

Parking Director Kinney: I would just mention that Miriam and I met and I think it was right after Christmas, and the City Attorney's office has done some work on this.

Commissioner Lago: I just want to push, push; and let me bring one more thing to your attention as a staff as-a-whole, and this is an issue that I brought and I want my colleagues to start looking into this, maybe they get the same opinion as I do or maybe they disagree with me. Have you driven by the City and seen the amount of garbage that's throughout the City?- it's everywhere, OK. So when I mean it's everywhere, when you park your car and you are at a light just look to your left, look to your right, and you will see bottles, you will see garbage everywhere. I don't know how to address this, and I know that you guys are getting a lot of e-mails from residents in regards to the pits. We need to figure out what's going on in reference to people opening their windows and tossing out trash. When you drive down Alhambra near your house, where you are at the light in front of the Coral Gables Country Club, I mean there is garbage everywhere. I mentioned it to staff, they go out, and they send somebody to pick it up. People also pick up the garbage in front of their homes when the landscapers come and pick it up, but there are certain instances throughout the month where there is garbage throughout the City everywhere – litter, litter. So I don't know what to do.

Mayor Cason: You've got to encourage some of the groups looking for projects, school kids, you know you have "adopt a highway," maybe we could suggest that they help us in some of those

areas. These are not Gables residents; these are people coming driving through and dumping their junk out.

Commissioner Lago: And the other issue too that I mentioned and I've mentioned it to the Manager, I think a month ago, is the issue of if you look at the alleys and you look at the streets and you look at the sidewalks, the alleys are becoming infested with – first of all, the alleys are over-parked immensely, behind Houston's is a major problem, that's why the 18-wheelers are not using the alleys, everybody parks there, couldn't care less. Number two, the garbage bins at the Museum Garage, it's a disaster, it's a disaster, it looks horrible, in the alleys.

Commissioner Slesnick: And that's a well-used alley for Books and Books and people going to the Museum.

Commissioner Lago: The businesses that use that garbage, they don't care. Look at the wall of that beautiful building, its destroyed because bringing in and out of Waste Management of the garbage bins; and there is garbage thrown all over the place. They fill it to the top, garbage spews over and it dumps everywhere; and the third issue that I want you to pay attention to, look at the amount of weeds and the amount of little non-native species that are growing all over the alleys against the walls. Again, if that's what the City is trying to do then perfectly fine, leave it there, but I've been saying it for a while that I think we need to hire somebody to put some pesticide, because eventually those weeds grow, they will crack the sidewalks that we spent so many millions of dollars replacing, and that's going to become an issue on Miracle Mile, because as you know, when you install pavers the weeds grow in between the pavers, it's a sand bed, it's not a concrete bed. So bringing you a few things that kind of pet peeves of mine that I've been seeing, and we are spending so much money and I want to make sure that we continue to beautify the City and maintain the City.

Commissioner Keon: I only have a comment with regard to the North Ponce Overlay District. I was exceedingly disappointed that the January P and Z meeting was cancelled and not scheduled. I think that this item has been to the Planning and Zoning Board twice and continues to be continued. I really would like you to make your best effort to finish this item at the February first Planning and Zoning Board meeting and have it on our agenda in February. I strongly encourage your Board.

Commissioner Lago: I would hope – I would like to see it before at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Keon: Well you can't go to the Planning and Zoning Board instead of being held in January, is now scheduled for February 1st.

Commissioner Lago: But the problem is the last few meetings there hasn't even been a quorum.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I don't even think that was a quorum issue. I don't know what the issue was, but whatever. The earliest we can see it is the first meeting in February and I'd like to see it on our agenda.

Mayor Cason: Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Quesada: To stay on the garbage topic. I want to get an update on – we were discussing doing a pilot program in some of the neighborhoods in the south Gables. I had spoken to Jessica Keller about it. At one point she spoke to us man probably 5, 6, 7 months ago related to trying to schedule bulk pickups rather than putting them on the curb, and actually not even using the curb at all and scheduling it, we had discussed it quite a few times. I just want an update on that. I would like if she can present at the next meeting or whoever to discuss it.

Commissioner Lago: Vice Mayor if I could just interject for one second. There was actually a neighborhood that wrote me an e-mail and I know that you were copied on, I think its three neighborhoods that have written saying that they want to be the test pilot to get rid of the pits and to use...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I got one recently over the break and I remember that we've been discussing this for, I want to say about a year, and I know that there was a pilot program and I never heard what happened.

Commissioner Lago: The interesting thing about it is that they are above Pinecrest so they use Pinecrest as an example and say, why do our neighbors who are across the street not have pits?- and in the e-mail, as you all got it, I was copied on it says clearly, I see their yardmen dump their waste into our pits, so they cut the yard in Pinecrest and they come over and they dump it in our pit. We've got to get our hands around this guys.

Commissioner Keon: I know that I've been talking about cardboard for four years.

Commissioner Lago: It's rampant.

Mayor Cason: But what we really need to do in the interim is we need to have Code Enforcement go after these people that put all this junk out, we all got the photo this morning, I think it was Gables By The Sea, where they put it out on a Monday, it's a violation, give them a ticket, no more leniency, give them tickets. People learn when they get a ticket they don't do it again or

they tell their gardener people or their maids or whatever, but we are just not enforcing it and so they are getting away with it. Commissioner Slesnick.

Commissioner Slesnick: Well, I agree. I think we do need somebody, one or two more people in Code Enforcement, which would really help some of these problems; and the trash around the City in various places is starting to really be very apparent, and perhaps we can encourage our citizens when they are out with their cell phones to take a picture and send them the address of where this is and let our citizens be more proactive in helping us clean up the garbage and trash and we don't have a lot of graffiti, but all those different things, if they could send it into the Public Works Department, set up something and advertise it.

Mayor Cason: I think we've talked about this for so long and nothing happens, just give them a ticket, give them a stiff ticket and they'll stop doing it.

Commissioner Lago: Just so you know Commissioner, to dovetail off your comment. I had a meeting with our Assistant City Manager and our City Manager Peter Iglesias, our Assistant City Manager, excuse me, and one of the issues that I brought up since we have this moment to talk, because we can't talk because of the Sunshine, which I mentioned many, many times before is probably one of the worst ideas, because it doesn't allow us to sit down and have a conversation.

Commissioner Slesnick: I agree.

Commissioner Lago: At the State House with a \$70 billion budget they can have lunch and discuss things, but we can't, so we've got to wait a month to have a meeting to discuss these things. You can tell I'm frustrated about the garbage. One of the biggest issues that I'm cracking down on and I told Mr. Iglesias that I want to see it done is, if you go before a job site, correct, you see the amount of garbage cans and paper, I pick that up in my neighborhood, I showed pictures to the City Manager, I go with my two daughters, and in front of one property we picked up a box, I showed them the picture, I showed the Manager, why should a person in a neighborhood have to live with all that garbage on a swale of a project under construction. Ticket them like the Mayor said. We need Code Enforcement to go to every single project and if you see one can on the street, one can on the street you have to ticket that person. They have to take pride in the fact that they may not be living in our City, but they are doing business in our City, they should take pride in it.

Commissioner Slesnick: In our alleys you can't really find out who needs to be ticketed except if its garbage right behind the restaurants and so forth. I agree with you over there behind Books and Books where people park in that parking lot and come through and go to the theater and Books and Books and the Museum, it's really disgusting, and even the walkway paseo back

there, needs to be pressure cleaned, whoever is responsible for it. We really need to clean up the City. So maybe if different people could take pictures with their cell phones and send them the addresses and help us.

Commissioner Lago: Please. Please.

Mayor Cason: Anything else?

Commissioner Slesnick: No.

Mayor Cason: Alright. So we'll go into recess and we'll be back at 5:01 (p.m.) and I'm hoping we'll finish by 7, because this is an ordinance on Second Reading.

[End: 12:51:00 p.m.]