

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-2
August 29, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Deputy City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-2 [4:32:34 p.m.]

A discussion regarding adoption of Commissioner Ordinance
(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: G-2 – discussion regarding adoption of Commissioner Lago’s ordinance.

Commissioner Lago: This is simple, I’ll make it brief. This is very similar in the same vain as the Mayor’s ordinance, the only thing I want to be very clear, I think Miriam wants to step up here and just give a quick – I know we are running short on time, is there an item I think its point number 8, which deals with budgets. I would like in the future for consideration and maybe you can talk to the Manager, I don’t have a problem tabling this ordinance, like a discussion item, maybe you can have a meeting with the City Manager and talk about the issue of potential budget per Commission. Let me explain to you why. Just myself alone between constant contact, in between the food that I buy, some of the printing that I do for our Town Hall meetings, the newsletter, outreach, I spend probably \$4-\$5,000 a year, just constant contact alone is \$1,500. So I think those are duties that we as a Commission are entitled to do to speak to the residents in the

community, but we have zero budget, so it literally comes out of pocket. I want you to consider it, you don't have to make a decision today. I want Miriam just to go over it really briefly, but its something that I want to bring to your attention.

Commissioner Mena: How does that tie into this as far as our approving this today?

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: There is nothing to approve, this is a memo for consideration, these are different things that could or could not be included in an ordinance if one were to be done.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I have two comments – one-eight, and I don't have any problem with this Commission, but I would if prior Commissions or maybe future Commissioners appeared before Miami-Dade County Boards and other municipal boards as necessary, with the approval of the Commission.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: And also ten sir.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And also initiate Chapter 164 proceedings, subject to approval of the City Commission.

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor one point with eight. From our discussion, my understanding was you were fine with Commissioners in their own capacity going and standing before any board and speaking, but if they are going to say they are speaking for the City then you need the approval on the Commission.

Commissioner Lago: I agree. I agree. In most cases when I've gone and spoken before the TPO, I've spoken at the League of Cities, I mean its pretty understood that I'm representing the best interest of the City of Coral Gables. The main point here is just over budget outside of everything else. I would like if you could take some time maybe before we bring this back at the next Commission meeting that you have a thorough conversation with the City Manager and see if you are interested in having a budget.

Vice Mayor Keon: Can I ask one question with regard to eight? I mean I have no problem, as you said, I have no problem with anybody going to talk to anybody, but I do have a problem if there is direction given by this Commission as-a-whole for somebody who dissents from that going to speak to a board on their dissension, because I think direction is direction given as a body, that I don't want to see.

Commissioner Lago: But in what sense, give me an example. If we voted on an item and I have a difference of opinion than you do, I can't speak at say, a homeowners association meeting and say I differ in opinion and my vote is...

Vice Mayor Keon: What you say in a homeowners meeting or what anybody says at a homeowners association meeting is in their capacity as a Commissioner, I don't really care, but I think its when, I mean that's not the issue, its when we as a Commission vote on its own, a 4-1 vote or a 3-2 vote.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The Commission votes for a project called....on U.S.-1 and the Commission votes for it and then Commissioner_____ goes before the County Commission and says, I approve this, the City of Coral Gables did wrong in passing this and I request you impose a moratorium.

Vice Mayor Keon: That I don't want to see. I don't want to see that happen. I want to see if you appear before a decision-making or recommending board that you don't go or its very clear that you are not representing the will of the Commission that is the issue for me.

Commissioner Lago: I disagree. We are elected by the people, each one of us has a difference of opinion, so again, when we vote as a body, I understand and we have issues and we vote, but again, we are entitled to have our own opinion when we speak before any body or before any individual, the County at the local level or the federal level, you just got to a little... or respect that's what I expect from the elected officials here. Why are we not entitled to have our own opinion?

City Attorney Leen: I think just from a legal perspective, I think really what you are saying is that if you do go and speak to one of those boards that you would say the Commission voted against this 4 to 1, but I'm speaking on my own as a Commission.

Commissioner Lago: Always – that's what I expect from anybody. You are entitled to have your own opinion, so.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Unless I hear the rest I won't begin to draft unless I get a motion.

Vice Mayor Keon: OK. But this other one too, appear before government and to deem as appropriate, what does that mean?

City Attorney Leen: Commissioner Lago asked that this be prepared, we wanted to bring it to the Commission, because if...

Commissioner Quesada: I like it, its clear. We did it with the City Clerk a few years ago, so I agree with it.

Commissioner Lago: I thought it was elementary.

Commissioner Quesada: Its very plain Jane. Its pretty simple.

Commissioner Lago: I didn't think we would have this big discussion. I thought the discussion items, if you noticed I mentioned was budget, can anybody give me like \$2,500 bucks?- a thousand bucks?- five hundred bucks?- is anybody willing to spare me five hundred bucks for pastolitos maybe. How about this?- how about somebody hosting the meeting with me and we'll go ask, anybody want to do that? I'll give you an example, sorry Mena, I'm throwing you under the bus. Mena comes up to me about two months ago and says hey, how do you get your constant contact? When I told him that I pay for it myself and he had to go and pay for it himself, he looked at me, really? Tell me I'm wrong.

Commissioner Mena: Yes, that's true.

Commissioner Lago: Yes, we've got to pay for it ourselves. So we had to shell out a thousand-something dollars just to be able to send out his, the people he represents, and we are talking about his newsletter is things that deal with the City – first class, classy newsletter that deal with great City issues. Even when there is a disagreement, pictures of his lovely wife and child, I mean that's what we do. Talk about bike issues, we talk about things that are Coral Gables related. Why should we not have that ability to reach those individuals? It gets expensive so that's the whole purpose of bringing something. We can talk about it if it's a little bit too much of a heated issue today to discuss.

Commissioner Quesada: No, I like it. Is this a two reading...

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: I can bring an ordinance at the next meeting.

Commissioner Quesada: We'll make a motion for an ordinance at a future day.

Deputy City Attorney Ramos: Would you like to co-sponsor sir?

Commissioner Quesada: Its OK, its his idea.

Commissioner Lago: Quesada bring it in, let's go or everybody. I'm looking for partners.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's a good idea.

City Attorney Leen: Its unanimous consent or do you want to do a motion?

Commissioner Lago: I second the motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: All those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

[End: 4:39:52 p.m.]