

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-3
February 13, 2018
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
Assistant City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant Public Works Director, John Osgood**

Public Speaker(s)

Rhonda Anderson

Agenda Item H-3 [4:27:27 p.m.]

A discussion regarding the possibility of prohibiting the collection of cardboard in trash pits and requiring residents to break down and recycle cardboard material instead as part of their backyard recycling collection.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Lago)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, the next is H-3, discussion by Commissioner Lago.

Commissioner Lago: Okay, this is just -- just wanted to kind of get your feel on this. As you're aware, I just got my permit to get rid of my trash pit on my swale. I'm going to be doing that probably in the next two or three weeks. It's going to be -- look -- it's going to look beautiful.

Commissioner Mena: Are you going to have a party (INAUDIBLE)?

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, a party. I'm going to invite everyone over to see my swale. It's going to look beautiful. We're going to use some...

Vice Mayor Keon: We're going to throw our cups on it.

Commissioner Lago: Then I'm going to have to pick them up. So, some low-lying ferns. You know, it's going to be something very nice, aesthetically pleasing. We're not going to have all these random vultures who drive around, you know, the neighborhood on pickup days.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Vultures?

Commissioner Lago: Yeah. These random guys in trucks that pickup...

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Whatever you leave out there. You don't know who they are. They come into the City -- they're vultures. So -- and also, it's not going to be a dumping area, where random people who don't even live in the City can just take advantage of you and dump a refrigerator in your side yard for the next four days, and then you get a violation for it. So...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Lago: One thing I was thinking about and I wanted to get your opinion on it -- you don't have to -- I just want you to think about this. I have some photos that I took over the weekend, except for one of them, and I'm waiting to see if they put them up. These are some pictures over the weekend, and this is what people have to live with the entire weekend until pickup day, and these are residents in the City. There's only one picture that's not a weekend here, and I wanted to include it to show the magnitude of what we're facing here. If you notice, there's one constant theme here, and that is cardboard, over and over and over again. Just some ideas -- just some facts, so you can kind of get a little bit more understanding about what's going on. eCommerce has grown by 25 percent from 2016 to 2017. It's a \$350 billion business category right now. So, with eCommerce, obviously, there has to be a delivery method. Environmental costs are basically the costs of the cardboard, the shipping and all the types of transit that are involved. Thirty-five point four million tons of container board were produced in 2014 in the US, with eCommerce companies among the fastest growing users of those almost 36 million tons. I'm bringing this up to you, because I would like for you to just simply entertain that what you see here is the residents, who some may say they're not aware that this can be recycled. Some may say they just don't care and they become used to the fact that they'll throw anything into the trash pit and it'll get picked up. What I think we need to do is continue -- if you want to keep your trash pit, it's perfectly fine. Keep your trash pit. Even though I'm going to have -- I'm going to be able to accomplish the same purpose of a trash pit by putting whatever I need organized in some area of my house that we haven't designated yet. But, what I think we should consider is maybe educating the community that they should stop using their trash pit for cardboard and stop potentially picking up cardboard. And, that could be something...

Commissioner Mena: They can't.

Commissioner Lago: Picking up cardboard.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I hear you.

Commissioner Lago: Go ahead. No, go ahead.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no. I hear you, but I'm not ready to promote this or vote for this.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, but we're just talking about it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no, no. We're talking about it. But I also, like you, when I walked all over North Gables and senior citizens, small homes, I don't want to make them divide the thing and put -- divide the house and everything. I'm very much concerned for the senior residents, who may not have the energy or the resources or will cut their hand off or whatever if we force them to cut cardboard boxes. So, it's something that we should consider, discuss, but I'm not ready to advocate this.

Commissioner Lago: Mayor, I agree with your points, every single one of them. And, I'm also concerned about -- the last thing I'd want is for someone to cut their arm off. I mean, you only have two arms. If you cut one of your arms off, you're left with only one. And then, imagine there's a potential risk that you could cut your other arm off, and then you wouldn't have any arms.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Then you wouldn't have any cardboard boxes.

Commissioner Lago: And the least of your concerns would be cardboard boxes. Your concern would be that you don't have any arms. So, my point is that we could -- like we do in the City of Coral Gables, because we're a very educated community -- we could make exceptions for people, who see it that they would prefer to dump in an area -- in a designated area. And, that designated area should be next to your recycling bin. It should be -- you should put it next to your recycling bin uncut. You should stack your boxes, and we could train our staff, for a handful of individuals, who, for some reason or another, cannot break down their cardboard and place it right next to the recycling bin. We can make that exception. But, I just wanted to bring

that up as an opportunity because, by the way, if you drive down the City of Coral Gables any day, our Code Enforcement cannot keep up with what's going on.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But there's...

Commissioner Lago: And also, this is a 25 percent in eCommerce use in one year. And by the way, Amazon is the largest company in the world for a reason, and it's only growing. So, next year, it's going to be another 25 percent. And, the next year is going to be -- it's going to keep compounding, so I'm just telling you we got to face this...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But the pictures...

Commissioner Lago: At one point.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The pictures you showed there have showed a different problem. That is a Code Enforcement problem, because some of those had construction materials and (INAUDIBLE) and whatever it is. That's an even bigger problem, I think.

Commissioner Lago: I understand.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: But think about it, if you're in a situation where you use a trash pit for clippings and you use the trash pit for, let's say, something you want to put out there, whatever that may be, it's used sporadically. But if you drive through the City, you'll notice that there's just cardboard everywhere. There's cardboard everywhere, and Code Enforcement cannot keep up. They cannot keep up. And it's only going to get worse, you know, so...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah. Well, I live across -- on Edgewater, and I live across the street from a lot of rental apartments. There's a lot of...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: A lot of young people that get just -- they get Amazon boxes every day. And so, there's always cardboard out there.

Commissioner Lago: I think it'd be worth to do maybe some sort of like a trial run. Maybe we can get like a few blocks.

Vice Mayor Keon: Well, you know what, I think...

Commissioner Lago: We could do it.

Vice Mayor Keon: When I -- in Europe, I have seen them, you know, it's a recycling truck. It's a truck that goes around. It throws the boxes in the back and then it compacts them, you know, the thing compacts them and goes to the next place and compacts them. I know we don't have any of that kind of vehicle. I don't know if -- I don't have any idea what the cost of that sort of a vehicle is or whether it's worth our while to, you know, look at potentially having that kind of vehicle. I think the issue of having people break down their boxes -- and you know, like you said, you know, they're not doing it.

Commissioner Lago: Well, I mean, but...

Vice Mayor Keon: I mean, I'd like to see them do it. I wish that we had, you know, a real socially responsible community that would do those things, but we haven't. So, I'm wondering

if, you know, people are allowed to put out, you know, their boxes the morning of the pickup and you have -- you know, if it's possible, to have that kind of a vehicle or whatever that could...

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

Vice Mayor Keon: You know, it's actually a recycling -- now, it's not going to work when it's raining because we can't do it when it's raining, but...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Well, Mr. Mayor, as you can tell, John Osgood is so excited...

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: He has come up to the microphone.

Vice Mayor Keon: Do we have that?

Commissioner Lago: If I could just -- one issue. I didn't want to bring up -- but since you brought up the issue of, you know, losing one hand and then potentially losing the other, you also have to deal with the issue of cost, you know, cost. Our tipping fees are going up, you know. We are paying for all this to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars, and it's only going to get worse. So, you know, if we can't find a way to, you know, figure this out...

Vice Mayor Keon: But if we can recycle, that doesn't go into the landfill, so it actually reduces our...

Commissioner Lago: I'm saying, you're diverting the tipping fees.

Vice Mayor Keon: It reduces our tipping fees...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: By taking that material that can be recycled, you know, and put it, you know, in the land -- I mean, put it in through a recycling -- Waste Management's recycling plant...

Commissioner Lago: But those...

Vice Mayor Keon: As opposed to...

Commissioner Lago: Vice Mayor, those are issues that you and I have talked about before in the sense...

Vice Mayor Keon: I know.

Commissioner Lago: That those are like issues that we already know about.

Vice Mayor Keon: I know.

Commissioner Lago: Those are issues that we're -- that's not even what we're trying to do. We're trying to see how we can figure out a way so that people...

Vice Mayor Keon: Get them out of the swale.

Commissioner Lago: We can make it so easy -- out of the swale, and just say, put your unbroken-down boxes next to your recycling and somebody will pick them up, and we'll pick them up. But don't throw them in the trash pit. And I'm telling you, when somebody receives a warning that says next time you put your cardboard into the pit, we're going to have to fine you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: But think about it. How much money will we save as a city? Take that money and do it to something else. But, why are we so -- why are -- and I hate to say it, but...

Vice Mayor Keon: Well...

Commissioner Lago: This is laziness.

Vice Mayor Keon: It is.

Commissioner Lago: It's laziness. I mean, you -- it's just laziness. It takes -- I understand if you're disabled and you're elderly. I got it, and I will do everything in my power to help you. And we -- and I know that Rhonda, who's here, she goes down in the neighborhood. She's an attorney. She's extremely busy. She helps some of the elderly people in her neighborhood break down their cardboard and do certain things like that.

Vice Mayor Keon: But if...

Commissioner Lago: I want to help those people.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, if we had a vehicle that actually just recycles, you know what, if people put out their cardboard boxes, I'd like you to give some thought to -- on days when they're not supposed to be out there is I would send that recycling truck to go pick them up, and I'd send them a bill.

Commissioner Lago: But, this is just last weekend.

Commissioner Mena: You can't.

Vice Mayor Keon: What?

Commissioner Lago: And this -- by the way...

Vice Mayor Keon: You can't? Why?

Commissioner Mena: Because you don't know who put it there.

Commissioner Lago: Hold on.

Commissioner Mena: I get home almost every day and I find...

Commissioner Lago: Mike, but...

Commissioner Mena: There's a Monster energy drink in my trash pit. Nobody in my house drinks it, but it's there.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, that's somebody throwing (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Mena: No, I'm just saying -- but you don't know who put what there.

Commissioner Lago: But, that's why...

Commissioner Mena: It's impossible to enforce.

Commissioner Lago: That's why I'm telling you that I'm getting rid of my trash pit, because right now...

Commissioner Mena: (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Lago: I have white roof tile in my swale that doesn't belong to me, and no one in my street has white roof tile.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is it metal?

Commissioner Lago: No, not yet. Not yet. Then I'll take it for recycling. Then the vultures would have taken it. So, what were you saying? How are you doing?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Just one thing related to the equipment that we use. We used to have dedicated recycling trucks that did not compact.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: But, we have -- we're replacing those. So, two of them have been replaced with rear-loading compacting...

Vice Mayor Keon: Oh.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Ability. So, it sounds like the difference is where you pick that up from. And I think if people would just not put it on the swale, but put it next to their recycling bin for right now, our guys -- we'll commit that we'll take that from the backyard to the compacting...

Commissioner Mena: For everybody?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Recycling truck.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: For everybody.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Just part of the normal recycling.

Commissioner Lago: So, what do you do -- so, what you have to do is you've got to take that step as a Commission and say, hey, we're not going to pick up any more cardboard in your trash pit. So, think about it. Going back...

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: To the Mayor's comment, instead of having to walk down your street with your box, an elderly person could just put it next to the recycling bin, saving the time, saving...

Commissioner Mena: You're not talking about elderly. You're talking about everybody.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, I know, but I mean, the Mayor...

Commissioner Mena: Just want to be clear.

Vice Mayor Keon: Everybody.

Commissioner Lago: Was concerned about disabled, elderly...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: No, no.

Commissioner Lago: People were in that situation, and I'm concerned about that also. But, there's no excuse anymore not to do this.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right. You don't even...

Commissioner Lago: He just gave you the answer.

Vice Mayor Keon: Have to break it down.

Commissioner Lago: But we, as a Commission, have to make that step and say, listen, you've got -- here, you're being noticed. You should not have this in your trash pit. Leave it next to your recycling bin. People are going to say, oh, wow, so I don't have to break it down? No. You just open your door -- instead of tossing it in your recycling bin, you just toss it right next to it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Right.

Vice Mayor Keon: Just stack your boxes.

Commissioner Mena: And we don't -- I think this is a good...

Commissioner Lago: I don't want an answer today. I'm just saying...

Commissioner Mena: I understand.

Commissioner Lago: Does it interest you? Does it interest you?

Commissioner Mena: No, no, sure.

Commissioner Lago: Does the conversation interest you?

Commissioner Mena: Of course.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no. It -- very much interest.

Commissioner Mena: Of course. But, you know, I want to make sure that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And it gives a solution to take care of my, you know, problem, yeah.

Commissioner Mena: I just want to make sure that, you know, we feel confident that we can not only provide that kind of service on that front -- it's not going to delay the pickups, you know, the logistics of it. I mean, because, obviously, you're taking more time than just...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: You know...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's hear it from Rhonda Anderson, who wants to speak.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: No. Ever since we've introduced cardboard into the recycling thing, our commitment has been to recycle it. So, that -- so, we will commit to keep doing that.

Commissioner Lago: John, how much money...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Operationally, we can handle it. It's been...

Commissioner Mena: Uncut.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Well, we'd much rather prefer that it be folded up.

Commissioner Mena: I understand.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: But...

Commissioner Mena: But, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about the people...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: But...

Commissioner Mena: Who are not going to do that?

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: But, we can handle it because right now, one of the keys was -- to the Vice Mayor's point, the equipment that we had before had compartments on the side of a truck that did not compact, so the guys would take those boxes by hand and kind of try to...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Force them into these little compartments, and then it went up into a truck that didn't compact. Right now, they can -- they'll still have to struggle with the boxes if they're not broken down, but they can get them out to the rear loader, put them in and compact, and it's easier. So, there's not going to be that much of an operational change. It would just be...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Excuse me, John. When it's wet...

Commissioner Lago: It's a different story.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: When it's wet, it's not as marketable.

Commissioner Lago: Recyclable.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Now, ideally...

Commissioner Lago: No, but what happens...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: It would be kept dry.

Commissioner Lago: So, just keep it in your garage. Keep it in your garage, like I keep my recycling, and the night before or the morning of, early, before I leave, I just take my recycling out and my cardboard. I break down my cardboard. It's my OCD.

Commissioner Mena: I'm shocked to hear that.

Commissioner Lago: I break down my cardboard, and by the way -- and my two girls help me break it down, you know, and we don't cut our arms off, thank God. But, I mean, they break the tape down, they do the whole thing, and they enjoy it. They enjoy it.

Commissioner Mena: Oh, sure.

Commissioner Lago: It's a little thing. But John, I'm not going to hold you to this. Just, if you can -- if you don't have an answer, it's okay.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, why don't we have (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Lago: What number of -- what's the cost, you think, to -- if we were to potentially divert all the cardboard that goes into the landfill now that's thrown into the -- what do you think? I'm not going to hold you to it.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: I would just -- it would just be a wild guess, if I did it. I can tell you...

Commissioner Lago: It's okay.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Though, the cardboard is one of the more valuable commodities in the recycling world. So, the more that we can recycle the cardboard, the better.

Commissioner Lago: So, we would save money on tipping. We would save money on tipping...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Save money on tipping...

Commissioner Lago: And, then we would make money on recycling.

Vice Mayor Keon: Well, you'd get some -- yeah.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Ultimately, yes. I mean, that's...

Commissioner Lago: We're always looking for money. We're talking about money.

Vice Mayor Keon: So, you know, maybe they could come up with a plan to notify the -- how we would notify the community that we are going through a period where we are not going to pick up any cardboard out of the street trash.

Commissioner Mena: I think...

Vice Mayor Keon: It has to go with recycling.

Commissioner Lago: Come on, Mike. Jump on board.

Vice Mayor Keon: And it will be picked up.

Commissioner Lago: You're dying to jump on board.

Commissioner Mena: No, no, no.

Vice Mayor Keon: It will be picked up.

Commissioner Lago: Jump on board.

Commissioner Mena: I think you got to kind of take some baby steps, though. I think...

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Commissioner Mena: You know, if we're going to start offering this service -- because that's what it is, right. It's a...

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Commissioner Mena: No, I think offer it, encourage it, put out information. Hey, we're now picking this stuff up on the side. Please don't put it on your swale. Please leave it by the bin. Before you start penalizing and giving warnings and all that type of stuff.

Vice Mayor Keon: They're warnings.

Commissioner Mena: Because that's what people are going to react adversely to.

Vice Mayor Keon: Let me tell you...

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE)

Vice Mayor Keon: That we're only going to pick it up at your side. When you go to pick up the trash, they take the boxes out, leave them there...

Commissioner Lago: And don't pick it up.

Vice Mayor Keon: And don't pick them up.

Commissioner Lago: And trust me, people will learn. And not only that, it's much easier because I leave -- for me to walk to my trash pit is probably 50 feet to the curb of Urbino. I just open my garage door and I take my recycling bin -- I just put it out. That's it. Ten feet maybe in comparison.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: John, do you have size constraints? Like if I got a mattress that is in a cardboard, and I'm putting it out there. I'm just interested about how the -- our team would pick it up.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: For that, there would be constraints. They'd have to get some help.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: So, we're into the enthusiasm. We need to work out some logistics.

Vice Mayor Keon: If you would work that out and then come back to us in...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: But let us...

Vice Mayor Keon: A month.

Commissioner Lago: Can I name a point person to this? And, I want to hear from her.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Of course.

Commissioner Lago: I want to name -- I want Rhonda to speak for one second.

Rhonda Anderson: I think I've spent a little time on cardboard.

Commissioner Lago: A little.

Ms. Anderson: As a member of the Sustainability Board, we've gone around in each one of our respective areas, handed out the flyers to the residents. And, you can see that there's the folks that are ready, willing and able to go ahead and do the recycling, those that are able that are unwilling to do the recycling, and there's a small percentage of folks that can't do it. And, I think the notification under the ADA about individuals with some limitations, that we can make accommodations to those folks. The problem is going to be getting them to stop putting it into the waste pits, because those that are ready, willing and able to do it but refuse to do it then put other waste on top of the cardboard. So, there's got to be some sort of enforcement. So, what are some options? You could utilize the PSAs, people that are up and down the streets all the time, to give a more official City voice to we're not going to be picking this up. And there's got

to be some penalty. I don't have the answer to that, but there's got to be some consequence at some point in time. Or the renters, the particular people I'm thinking of, they don't care. So, there's got to be an endgame somewhere along that way. About some of the oversized cardboard. John had a -- Osgood had an idea about putting a recycling dumpster at no cost at one of the facilities we're willing to put down at the Youth Center, so that if you have this giant box and you just can't stand to have it in your house any longer, which is why a lot of people dump stuff out on the swale to begin with, give them an alternative or a choice.

Vice Mayor Keon: They can't fit it in their car.

Ms. Anderson: Just a thought.

Commissioner Mena: Nobody's going to do that.

Vice Mayor Keon: They can't fit it in their car.

Ms. Anderson: I mean...

Vice Mayor Keon: (INAUDIBLE)

Ms. Anderson: It's a choice. You've given them an option. So, those are some of my thoughts on it. The other thoughts on the trash pits themselves -- and I know this is a controversial topic for the City to embrace -- is to put it back into the decision-making capacity of the individual blocks. People can start consolidating their locations, like Cocoplum has, so we don't have so many defaced swales. We've recently done that in my block with regard to the trash receptacles for dog waste, and we put a couple of those in. We agreed upon where were they going to be, so it can happen. But, we would need some outline from the City as to the benefits. Property values go up. Traffic is reduced because you don't have the trucks in the lanes as much, the exhaust fumes, and the tipping fees. I'd ask for that in order to try for some residents to have this

conversation with their neighbors to reduce. I have four trash pits within the narrow end of the block that I live on that I get to look at. It would be nice if we could all agree on one. Why do neighbors don't -- why don't we do it right now on our own? Because no one wants to offend anybody. This is my trash pit. I don't want to put it in your trash pit.

Vice Mayor Keon: Nobody wants anybody's trash in front of their house, I think.

Ms. Anderson: Pardon?

Vice Mayor Keon: I don't think every -- anyone wants the whole neighborhood's trash in front of their house.

Ms. Anderson: True, but sometimes you can get agreement. We put the dog waste station literally within view of my kitchen window, because I have an AT&T box out there. I have a Comcast box out there. What's the big deal about another box, okay? That's my view. My neighbor also has it on the side of her yard. I have an unusual house that faces the short end of the lot, so I get to see the AT&T box. Most people don't, so they're not going to be looking at these things.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Ms. Anderson: So, the short end of the blocks may be the places where people choose to have them. So, those are my two cents.

Vice Mayor Keon: Well, I think even -- yeah, but I think even to, you know; work with someone that can deliver a message that may resonate with the public. And it may be that, you know, our tipping fees continue to go up. In an effort to reduce them...

Ms. Anderson: True.

Vice Mayor Keon: You know, and the cost to you, as a homeowner, you know, we're doing this.

Ms. Anderson: Dollars and cents.

Vice Mayor Keon: You know, it's just, you know, I mean, we can include the...

Commissioner Lago: There's a legitimate story here.

Vice Mayor Keon: Thing about the landfill. I mean, I -- you know, I wish everybody would respond to this, but everyone doesn't. But it...

Ms. Anderson: They don't...

Vice Mayor Keon: They don't.

Ms. Anderson: But today...

Vice Mayor Keon: But, maybe they'll respond to...

Commissioner Mena: And whoever...

Vice Mayor Keon: You know, the cost of your -- you know, of your tipping fees, you know. Your garbage fees are going to continue to increase if we don't take some measure to reduce what we...

Commissioner Lago: And we already sub...

Vice Mayor Keon: Tip.

Commissioner Lago: By the way -- and I'm sorry, Vice Mayor, but we subsidize garbage already.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: We subsidize garbage. So, like John said, our tipping fees are going up every single year.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: And I just proved to you, showing you that, you know, eCommerce is growing 25 percent a year.

Ms. Anderson: Right.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Commissioner Lago: So, you know there's going to be more and more cardboard. There's no other delivery method to get it to your front door. So, we're saving -- because that's one of the most valuable forms of recyclable material, because they can sell it. The City can sell it or have somebody haul it away, and our tipping fees would be reduced. What I'd like the Manager to do -- because she mentioned she would be willing to do it -- do you think we can just put some sort of, I don't know, maybe we can do like a pilot, you know, for a certain area. I know I had spoken to some of the residents of Cocoplum, that they were interested in getting rid of their garbage pits. Not get rid of the garbage pits, but like streamline -- like, for example, not use cardboard and have a different delivery method, taking into consideration the Mayor's comments

about, you know, the elderly, people who are disabled, you know, reducing the potential of, you know, injury of some sort.

Ms. Anderson: The hedges around the ones at Cocoplum may seem attractive, more attractive for the residents, and they might want to embrace a reduction of the number of locations if the City puts something in like that, where we could show-and-tell to the neighbors. Hey, would you like to have this, instead of having all four of these pits here? And, then be able to get their yard individuals to put it in one location. Because I've tried talking to those yardmen, and saying, why are you making two piles? Just because, frankly, they're too lazy to walk a little further with the palm branches than to go to the designated area. But, we'd have to provide guidance.

Commissioner Lago: When could we have -- Madam City Manager, when could we...

Vice Mayor Keon: What -- I'm sorry, but those...

Commissioner Lago: No, no, no. Go ahead, Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Keon: But those are two different issues. I mean, the pits and the cardboard are two different issues, so which one...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Keon: Do you want to deal with?

Commissioner Lago: I don't want to fight the pits issues, because that's...

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay, so we're going to talk about the cardboard.

Commissioner Lago: It's the...

Vice Mayor Keon: We're getting...

Commissioner Lago: The pits issue...

Vice Mayor Keon: Cardboard out of the swale.

Commissioner Lago: The pits issue -- the way that I'm resolving the pits issue is very simple. I'm going to show...

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: How people like us are getting rid of the pits and it's making sense and it works, because you don't need it anymore.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: Now, the issue of the cardboard is an opportunity to really save the City some money...

Ms. Anderson: Right.

Commissioner Lago: And, do what's right in regards to the environment. I know you're smirking for a reason.

Commissioner Mena: No, no, no. Listen, I wish I had 50,000 residents like you two, but...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no, no. No.

Commissioner Mena: But...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah. (INAUDIBLE)

Commissioner Mena: Sorry.

Vice Mayor Keon: But I think that...

Commissioner Lago: And I'm making it as easy as possible, so...

Commissioner Mena: No, no, no.

Commissioner Lago: You're telling me a resident wouldn't rather have it next to their recycling instead of dumping it in their pit and seeing that all day like that?

Ms. Anderson: I would like to...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Keon: Well, I think we should try, though.

Commissioner Lago: But you're keeping your pit, though. You're keeping your pit.

Vice Mayor Keon: I mean, I don't...

Commissioner Mena: But no, I'm open to the discussion about the cardboard, believe me.

Vice Mayor Keon: I think the cardboard, we should try. And, I think you can have someone develop a message that's very concise. Do it in English and Spanish so if it's, you know, the housekeeper or the -- you know, someone...

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Keon: That doesn't speak English, whatever. But you know, to just -- to deal with the issue of, you know, we know -- you know, we're no longer going to pick up...

Commissioner Lago: Cardboard.

Vice Mayor Keon: Cardboard, you know, at the street.

Commissioner Lago: Put it next to your recycling. Put it next to your recycling.

Vice Mayor Keon: Put it next to your...

Commissioner Lago: That's it.

Vice Mayor Keon: Recycling. You have to put it -- you know, you're required to put it next to your recycling. And you could start with a small area. You know what, but you would sit down and devise a program with an appropriate sort of message that needs to go out first. And then, you know -- and then we could try it.

Commissioner Lago: And I'm telling you...

Vice Mayor Keon: I mean, even if it's...

Commissioner Lago: I'm telling you, the moment that you don't pick up that cardboard from someone's pit, they'll learn. And then, when you give them the information, the document, they'll say, wow, this is even much easier than what I'm doing right now.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Commissioner Lago: And it looks much nicer.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And, let's leave it for another time to discuss the trash pits.

Vice Mayor Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's a totally different issue.

Vice Mayor Keon: But for right now, just to get the cardboard out, because the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: Cardboard is recyclable...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Keon: It shouldn't be in the landfill...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It shouldn't be there.

Vice Mayor Keon: It is a revenue stream for us and it does help us with our tipping fees. And I'm sure you can, you know, develop a message. And even if, you know, we decide to implement it, you know, if you don't pick up somebody's cardboard, you could leave them that

message we're no longer picking up cardboard, you know. And see -- you know, this is your business. You know. And you know, I trust that between you and the Sustainability people, you know, you can tell us, now that you know what we want, what's the best way to do it.

Commissioner Lago: Can we have this -- can we work with the Sustainability Advisory Board and maybe bring somebody before the Commission...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: Next month?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Absolutely.

Ms. Anderson: Right.

Commissioner Lago: Just something, you know...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: I think the next...

Commissioner Lago: Preliminary.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Meeting's the 28th.

Commissioner Lago: Oh, how about March?

Ms. Anderson: Well...

Commissioner Lago: We'll do it in March.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's do it in March.

Commissioner Lago: March...

Vice Mayor Keon: March is...

Commissioner Lago: End of March. That's fine.

Vice Mayor Keon: Yeah, do it in March.

Commissioner Lago: Take some time. Let's work at this.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Just from my standpoint, operationally, and in terms of your...

Commissioner Lago: Expectations.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah, your expectations and your idea about piloting, just trying something. I know what your view is on it. Could we try a -- we could call it a neighborhood cardboard recycling drop-off center, where it would just be one eight-yard container. This is for the person that's got the IKEA -- they already went to IKEA. They have the...

Commissioner Lago: But that would be fine like, let's say, behind the library, at the Coral Gables...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: At the Coral Gables Youth Center.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yes, yes.

Commissioner Lago: But not in residential.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: We'll put it in the -- at the Youth Center, for instance.

Commissioner Lago: Not by like homes.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: For instance, at the Youth Center. So, if they've got a bunch of cardboard and they say, you know, I want to do the right thing, but I don't want to spend all this time cutting it up, throw it in the backseat of the car, and they could drop it off. It will be sealed. It will be dry, and we can try it. If it doesn't work and no one uses it...

Commissioner Mena: Isn't the person that wants to do the right thing going to cut it up? You know what I mean? The person -- it's the same person. The person that's going to get in their car and drive it to the Youth Center is the same person who's going to cut it up.

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Ms. Anderson: Well, not...

Commissioner Lago: So, that's what I'm saying...

Commissioner Mena: They're going to cut it up.

Commissioner Lago: I mean, I...

Commissioner Mena: Am I right about that? I mean, I'm asking.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's not -- I'm not going to vote for that.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Here's what I do know. We had -- we've had two household product collection centers, HHW event, 250, 260 cars. So, people are willing to put stuff in their car. They're willing to save it for a little while. Maybe we try it. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work.

Commissioner Mena: Oh, sure. I'm open to...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: But it's okay to try it. If you say don't try it, I won't.

Commissioner Lago: John, I'll try it. I'll try it. It's perfectly fine. And I'm going to tell you, if we implement the process that we're talking about where people can put -- obviously, we would appreciate if they break it down for us, but if they can't break it down -- if they put their...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Completely optional.

Commissioner Lago: Cardboard right next to the recycling, I'm telling you, you're going to get an incredible response, because...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: People don't want to see that cardboard out there in front of their house.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: And, the moment you put -- like you said, like Vice Mayor Keon said, the moment that you notify them that we are no longer picking up cardboard and it's going to be left in your swale, you're going to see how people comply.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: That's...

Vice Mayor Keon: Please take your cardboard to the recycling (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Lago: Please take your cardboard to the recycling...

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, it's going to be a lot of work for the pickup. You know, I don't -- like the average pickup, I mean, I don't even think it's one trip to the side of the house back to the truck. I think it's going to be multiple, because you have people that get...

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: It could be.

Commissioner Mena: Twenty boxes in a week.

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Mena: Uncut.

Assistant Public Works Director Osgood: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: I mean, people -- they're getting -- listen, I'll show you my email right now. There's probably been five Amazon orders since I've been sitting here today. So, trust me, it's a lot of boxes.

Commissioner Lago: But with that being said, the answer -- I understand, but we got to find an answer.

Commissioner Mena: No, no. I'm with you, I'm with you.

Commissioner Lago: So, let's -- if it's -- for example, let's say John comes back and says, hey, Vince, I did some research -- just like I did some research about how it's growing 25 percent. It's a \$350 billion-dollar industry. We've got to find an answer to it. I mean, they're not sending it to you -- your Nespresso machine is not coming to your house without a box, so it's got to be delivered in something, so...

Ms. Anderson: Right.

Commissioner Lago: We have to find an answer. So, the answer could be -- hey, Vince, we -- you know, John comes back and says, listen, we're spending \$200,000 when you add the recycling costs and the tipping fee -- or \$300,000 a year additional.

Vice Mayor Keon: (INAUDIBLE).

Commissioner Lago: We can save it. We'll go back to the Manager and say, maybe we need to hire somebody. Maybe we need to spend that \$300,000 on our new truck or budget for it in two years...

Commissioner Mena: Or more personnel.

Commissioner Lago: Whenever we go after it. But, I think it's worth -- the money's there. The money's there and I think we just have to just change our habits. And, it's not really that difficult for the residents, because we're making it easier for them. We're putting it right next to their recycling bin.

Vice Mayor Keon: Okay.

Ms. Anderson: I'm going to ask you one more thing for the next agenda, whenever we do it. Discuss doing a voluntary -- and I'm going to emphasize voluntary -- trash pit beautification program. Putting together something that residents can have a conversation with their neighbors to try to consolidate these trash pits, okay.

Vice Mayor Keon: We can do that.

Ms. Anderson: That's it.

Commissioner Lago: Perfect.

Ms. Anderson: I've got to go.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Rhonda. I appreciate it.

Vice Mayor Keon: Thank you.

[End: 4:56:30 p.m.]