

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-9
March 12, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

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

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Assistant City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-9 [9:57:42 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, amending the City of Coral Gables Code by creating Section 14-2 “Human Trafficking Public Awareness Signs,” in Chapter 14, Businesses, Article 1- In General; providing for a repealer provision; severability clause; codification; and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Commissioner Keon).

City Attorney Ramos: F-9 is Ordinance of the City of Coral Gables, Florida, amending the City of Coral Gables Code by creating Section 14-2 “Human Trafficking Public Awareness Signs,” in Chapter 14, Businesses, Article 1- In General; providing for a repealer provision; severability clause; codification; and providing for an effective date, Ms. Throckmorton. This is also a public hearing item.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Good morning Mayor, Commissioners, this is an ordinance on First Reading adding a requirement for certain businesses to place human trafficking public awareness signs on their building. Just to give you a little bit of the lay of the land. There is

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a state statute that requires these signs to be posted in English and Spanish and rest areas, body work, massage parlors and strip clubs. Beyond the state statute there is also a county code provision that requires those signs in English, Spanish and Creole to be placed in those same facilities. This ordinance adds that same requirement to our Code and adds that restaurants, urgent care centers and public lodging establishments also those signs posted. To clarify what's on the agenda, stated that they should be in a conspicuous location where other labor and employment signs are displayed to be consistent with state statute and the county code. I'd like to revise that here to say that its clearly visible to the public and employees of the establishment which is the requirement already in place at the county. This allows the signs to be in English, Spanish – it requires the signs to be in English, Spanish and Creole, again to be consistent with the county code.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you. I think that where I would like to see them placed is in the bathrooms, in the ladies' room and the men's room. It doesn't need to be by their front door or at their restaurant or whatever else, but in a place that is being trafficked can see it and take note of it and has the opportunity, if they so desire to reach out for help.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: And Commissioner we've been in touch with the Women's Fund who, as you all know is one of the designated agencies for the 2020 Super Bowl to help combat any potential trafficking associated with that and they are going to give us some suggestions on locations and maybe additional language or decals, things like that, that might be useful, and I will bring back before Second Reading an example of what the signs will look like. They are small 8 and-a-half by 11 signs and I think the bathrooms would be an appropriate location that's accessible to the public and employee.

Commissioner Mena: Can I just ask a quick question, because I wasn't familiar with this until I saw it on my pre-agenda. Is there any sort of data or evidence that shows that this kind of sign is even remotely effective? I'm asking a question. I don't know the answer.

Commissioner Keon: I think there is anecdotal data that yes, it is, give us somebody, if they are in that frame to be able to decide, I can't do this anymore, I don't want to do this anymore. I want out. It is that tipping point where they do get out. Now what the statistics are related to it, I don't really know. There is anecdotal data that says yes. I think part of Miami-Dade is ground zero for human trafficking. We have more than any place else in the country. I'd ask Miriam. Maybe you could talk about it.

City Attorney Ramos: The state adopted a statute...

Commissioner Mena: The state did adopt a statute?

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City Attorney Ramos: Similar to this – yes and the County Code, and then we are just being more restrictive like the City of Miami Beach was.

Commissioner Keon: The City of Miami Beach does this also.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: Can you do me a favor? Can you between First and Second Reading, can you get me this anecdotal data and any other information you may have.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Sure sir. If you'll just look already, there are a couple of facts that Florida ranks third nationwide in human trafficking cases already in the whole nation, that the human trafficking unit of the Miami-Dade County Police almost 600 victims of trafficking in the last approximately five years already, and that's just the victims that they know about. And speaking with the Women's Fund, I'll get some additional data.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'd love to hear from the Women's Fund or anybody from Kathy Fernandez Rundle's office, that maybe they have cases where individuals who are being trafficked happen to go to the bathroom or were in an establishment, they saw that sign and the sign paid dividends in the sense that they were able to get the help that they needed.

Commissioner Mena: I don't think anybody....

Commissioner Keon: Or even...

Commissioner Mena: I don't think anybody is questioning, you just want to make sure. We are just asking if either any of these groups has any information on sort of how this approach is effective or not.

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Of course. And speaking with the Women's Fund they also indicated that's it's a number that people who want to report traffic individuals also see. So it's not just people who may be trafficked themselves, but suspicions can also report that way as well.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'm glad you brought that up because I was thinking in my head and I didn't want to seem insensitive to this point, but I was thinking to myself, a person who is being trafficked or is under control of another individual, do they have a cell phone?- how do they get to the pay

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phone? There are not many pay phones around anywhere. It's very difficult for that person to be able to take that phone or make a phone call to get that help.

Commissioner Keon: Write it on your hand.

Vice Mayor Lago: OK, but then you have to find a phone to make that call, so I'm just saying. Again, a person – I'm in favor of this. I just want to make sure that what we are doing not in the sake of just doing it. I want to make sure that...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's not just feel good.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes, its feel good. This Commission has never done that. I just want to make sure that we can put some numbers behind this ordinance.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do you make a motion?

City Attorney Ramos: This is a public hearing item.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you make a motion?

Commissioner Keon: I'll move it.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second?

Vice Mayor Lago: I'll second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 4-0)

Commissioner Quesada: Absent

Assistant City Attorney Throckmorton: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Can you just get me some information. Thank you. I appreciate that.

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[End: 10:03:30 a.m.]

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Section 14-2 “Human Trafficking Public Awareness Signs”*

[Date]

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