

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting

Agenda Item G-6

October 8, 2019

City Commission Chambers

405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli

Vice Mayor Vince Lago

Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Attorney, Miriam Ramos

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-6 [2:05:08 p.m.]

A discussion about parking issues at Carlos S. Kakouris Park

(Sponsored by Commissioner Fors, Jr.)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: G-6

Vice Mayor Lago: I think its George's item. I live a block away. So, I wrote you guys a memo like six months ago on this issue. I spoke to Ed, he's not here. Ed showed me some very – part of the memo was detailing that we are going to kind of start revamping the park. It's a very small enclave with a beautiful tree in the middle with a little feeding area. So, you have the fact that we are planning, hopefully this year in 2020 to revamp that park and make it a nice passive park; and Ed can give a little more background on Kakouris Park. He's already showing me kind of some conceptual drawings. The other issue is the fact that we have some illegal parking. What's happening usually in the month of September, but community partners and staff are already addressing it, so its not really an issue, but we are pushing forward and staff is kind of making sure that we don't continue to have that issue.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I have an issue with passive.

Vice Mayor Lago: I didn't say we were passive.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You did say.

Vice Mayor Lago: I did?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes. I can see its passive. No, it doesn't say it here, but you did say passive and I have a big issue with passive park. Passive parks are...selfish, the enjoyment of three or four houses around it, and I don't think we should spend our funds for the enjoyment of three or four houses around a passive park.

Vice Mayor Lago: I don't remember saying passive. I don't remember saying the word passive, but if I did, Mr. City Clerk, please strike it from the record, if you'd be so kind, and let's put a water park there.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: [Inaudible]

Vice Mayor Lago: Let's put something that the kids in the community can enjoy. I'm all for it. Whatever the Mayor wants to do in this tiny little piece of property that's maybe 15,000 square feet we'll do it. I'm all for it.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Good afternoon Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission, Ed Santamaria, Assistant City Manager Operations and Infrastructure. Kakouris Park – yes there is a bit of a parking issue there right now. We are looking at improvements to address partially the parking issue, also the desire of some folks to improve this already existing park. Mr. Mayor this is a very small triangle of right-of-way, essentially, and its in the right-of-way, we do own the land outright, it would be simple interest. But its appropriate in its current use and we are basically enhancing it. We are adding sidewalks to it, we are providing connectivity and so, we think its going to be an improvement for the area; and also, we'll address the parking pressure. I do want to bring something to your attention, all of you on the dais. We are looking at installing some parking-no parking signs temporarily, with the permission of the Commission, because we are under a directive to reduce extraneous signage citywide, but because of this parking concern, we will be installing temporary no parking signage with your permission. At this time, I'd also like to bring up Sara Nesbitt Artecona, she is going to...angle of UM and they are going to assist us with this issue.

Vice Mayor Lago: Again, I don't like to see that much signage, because I think it's a blight, but again, we have no other choice, if we need some sort of mechanism to be able to provide either tow cars or ticket cars. And in reference to what the Mayor was saying, now that I give it even more thought, when you take a close look, there isn't a park outside of Betsy Adams that has a play structure. Betsy Adams has a very, very small play structure there. It can't be more than 10 feet by 10 feet or 15 feet by 15 feet. Maybe we can put something in the middle that's small. I'm not talking about – you have a tree there that provides a lot of shade which is beautiful, maybe we can put something small that we can have for younger kids in the neighborhood.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: We are happy to explore that, and we'll get with the Parks Department to see the possibilities.

Ms. Artecona: Sara Artecona, University of Miami, 6200 San Amaro Boulevard. Just wanted to make you aware that as a good neighbor, if we do have folks that are associated with the university parking there, I did speak with Mr. Kakouris last week, the park is named for his father, who was a long time University of Miami professor, and we do have a mechanism in place for the neighbors to contact us if they feel the students are parking there. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you Sara, appreciate that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: You know in those areas where we planted ferns in the right-of-way, like around the edges of them doesn't stop people from parking there if you would plant the perimeter of that park with some of the ground cover, it's like what's along Sunset, people don't park there then, they don't roll over it. Can we do that and not do signage? Can you consider doing that as opposed to signage? In some places where we have planted ground cover, people have not – they have stopped parking in those areas. They don't park at the Library, they don't park on Sunset, so if you were to plant that would it discourage the parking?

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Absolutely. In fact, ground cover is part of the proposed improvement.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

City Manager Iglesias: The parking signs, Commissioner, are just temporary until we get that work done.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, I see. So once its planted you take the signs out?

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Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Yes – absolutely.

Vice Mayor Lago: But this issue is more August/September and then it kind of dissipates after the few people who are not following the rules kind of are ticketed. But let's look into that play structure, maybe we can put something there, for 2020, for next year, something interesting, because now when you think about it, there isn't anything for 10 blocks, 15 blocks anywhere near there.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: We'll definitely look at that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

[End: 2:11:06 p.m.]