

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-4
September 8, 2020
Virtual Meeting
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 F-4 [10:28 a.m.]

A Resolution directing the Public Works Department to implement a pilot program, in the amount not to exceed \$5,000, for the installation of grates at the openings of curb inlets in Downtown Coral Gables. (Sponsored by Vice Mayor Lago)

Vice Mayor Lago: Moving on to F-4. I think this is something interesting that the entire Commission, I think will really appreciate and I'd love for everyone to get behind this and co-sponsor this, if you're interested. As you can tell, we've been having some pretty serious issues with the Bay, and one of the interesting things that I've been researching is, what can we do to minimize the amount of waste, organic material and garbage and all kinds of things that basically get into our systems here and they end up in the outfalls and becoming part of our waterways. So, what I've been researching with the help of Public Works, Hermes, our ACM, our CM, and a lot of the individuals like Senate for the Sea and Miami Waterkeepers is, what opportunities do we have that are low cost that can make a quick impact. So, I don't know if staff is ready to kind of give a little bit of a presentation, but this is a simple pilot program that doesn't cost too much money, it cost about \$5,000 and its going to install these grates that are being used by other cities, one of them being the City of Miami, to really curb the inlets in the downtown, and if it works in the inlets, and it's something that we have to continue to maintain, since the garbage does not go into the catch basins into the inlets, whatever ends up happening is that it will sit outside and we

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need to make sure that we are constantly maintaining that to ensure that that garbage, again, doesn't become an eyesore. So, I don't know if staff wants to give a little bit of their input in regard to this.

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, Vice Mayor. The ACM will handle this item.

Vice Mayor Lago: Okay. Perfect. How are you sir.

ACM Santamaria: Good morning Mr. Mayor, good morning Vice Mayor. Good morning Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission, Ed Santamaria, again, Assistant City Manager Operations and Infrastructure. This is definitely a pilot project that we have been looking at in conjunction with the Vice Mayor, its something that I'm familiar with from the City of Miami. And I would like to turn it over to Public Works Director Hermes Diaz to add any information that you might find pertinent. Hermes.

Public Works Director Diaz: Good morning, Hermes Diaz, Public Works Director. So, as the Vice Mayor and ACM Santamaria mentioned, its something that we've been working on together. What this PowerPoint will do, we don't have a presentation per say, but the Vice Mayor did bring a picture of the last meeting, and in essence what this will do is that you put a grate on the drains that will prevent trash and debris from collecting into them. With the \$5,000 that has been proposed, depending on the type of grate that we install, we could put anywhere from between 12 to 20 grates, and what we'll do is that we will monitor the amount of trash and debris that is collected from the gutters and ultimately those are things that will go to the Bay. More specifically we target the area that eventually discharges into the Riviera Waterway, behind the school which is our biggest alpha in the city. And I think its something that's going to allow us also to take a look at the potential cost of implementing this, our personnel and just operational-wise if we were to implement this for the entirety of the system, but I think its definitely a worthwhile enterprise.

ACM Santamaria: So, I would just like to add the aim of this pilot would be to be able to judge, evaluate performance, also durability of these grates, and as Hermes just mentioned, what additional maintenance might be required. Some of these grates might have to be cleaned manually, that's my experience from the past. So, we have to evaluate this in terms of cost and benefits.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you Hermes and thank you Assistant City Manager Santamaria. I think that's a key component that we need to really discuss, and we need to be aware of this as a Commission. We all, this entire Commission, entire team, everybody, understands the importance of having clean water by ensuring that we have a viable bay and viable estuaries and waterways, I mean that's critical. This may result in our team having to spend more time, you may have to spend more money cleaning these up, and what I really want to understand is, I'd love to see maybe in six months to be able for the city to come back and say, listen, and be candid, say listen, we are having issues. We are having issues with maintenance because we are having to send somebody every three days to clean these grates, if not, its an eyesore in the downtown. Because the end goal here is to expand this to the residential neighborhoods. For example, in front of my house, we have a lot of garbage and the City Manager and I have talked about this, you know there is a lot of

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garbage that gets thrown out of cars, there are a lot of issues, especially people who don't live in our community, who are driving through our community. So, I want to understand maybe in three months, six months, after these have been installed, what are the actual headaches, what are the actual additional costs, time – time is money, correct, so that we can give you the necessary resources to make sure this becomes a way of life for us, as long as my colleagues, obviously approve it and they think its appropriate. I just don't want to see in a situation where we are overburdened and we are taking away from other services, because this is just as important. So, I want to make sure that staff can provide a report in the next six months telling us the progress in regard to after these have been installed, what are the headaches, what are the successes, what are the failures. Maybe we have to move in a different direction, maybe this doesn't work. I've seen it work in other areas, even at more high traffic. I just want to make sure that staff understands that we support them on this issue and I know its going to take more time and its going to cost more money, but we want to see something that's really viable and that's working for the entire community as a whole.

ACM Santamaria: Mr. Vice Mayor, to that end, what we will do is, we are going to be installing these grates in a representative number of locations, we'll be evaluating different conditions. We'll install them where there is a lot of foliage in place. We'll install them in areas where we have more of an urban setting, where we are going to be intercepting more like plastic cups and bottles and whatnot, and we'll be able to evaluate that performance based on the different situations.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Anything else – Vice Mayor you want to make a motion?

Vice Mayor Lago: So moved.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Is there a second?

Commissioner Mena: I'll second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll Mr. City Clerk.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)