

City of Fort Lauderdale

*City Hall
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
www.fortlauderdale.gov*



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 20, 2019

1:30 PM

City Commission Conference Room

City Commission Conference Meeting

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

ROBERT L. McKINZIE Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District III

HEATHER MORAITIS Commissioner - District I

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District II

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District IV

CHRIS LAGERBLOOM, City Manager

JOHN HERBST, City Auditor

JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk

ALAIN E. BOILEAU, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Alain E. Boileau, City Auditor John Herbst and Sergeant at Arms Luan Malushi

[19-0725](#)

Communications to the City Commission - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

LauderTrail Working Group (*LauderTrail*)
August 9, 2019

A copy of this communication is attached to these minutes.

City Manager Lagerbloom explained that this communication recommends the *LauderTrail Working Group* and *Mockingbird Trail Working Group (Group)* work as one combined project. Commission members concurred. It was confirmed that *wayfinding signage* and the *Rails-to-Trails* goals would be included within the scope of work for the *Group*.

Mauricio Hernandez, Planner II - Transportation and Mobility Department, confirmed ongoing work with the *Group*. Results of these efforts would be presented to the Commission at the September Commission Conference Meeting. He confirmed meetings with Florida East Coast Railroad (FEC) and the *Group*, noting its large amount of synergy. Mr. Hernandez discussed items and recommendations that would be presented at an upcoming Commission meeting, confirming that Commission input would be requested at that time.

In response to Vice Mayor McKinzie's question, Mr. Hernandez confirmed *wayfinding signage* would be included in the September Commission presentation. Further comment and discussion ensued on conversations regarding utilizing a public/private partnership (P3). Mr. Hernandez discussed an example of a P3 partnership with a non-profit organization for this type of project in the City of Indianapolis. Further discussion ensued on ensuring that the Uptown area and *Rails-to-Trails* are included in these efforts.

Mr. Hernandez discussed details related to comments from FEC regarding where greenways could be added. Vice Mayor McKinzie expounded on this topic, requesting Mr. Hernandez include all topics discussed in the upcoming presentation. Mr. Hernandez confirmed, commenting on details regarding FEC and proposed greenways.

Commissioner Sorensen discussed the importance of exploring the trails having a pathway for pedestrians and bicycles to cross the New River. Discussions ensued on ways to address this need. City Manager Lagerbloom discussed the request to reopen the State's Study on a Pedestrian Crossing across the New River. Further comment and discussion ensued.

City Manager Lagerbloom suggested moving forward and requesting the State reopen its Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to narrowly explore the possibility of a pedestrian crossing adjacent to an existing bridge over the New River for pedestrian, bicycle and scooter use. Further comment and discussion ensued. City Manager Lagerbloom requested permission to approach the State to explore this suggestion. Mayor Trantalis confirmed. Further comment ensued.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS

City Manager Lagerbloom gave a summary update regarding the circumstances involved in a recent water-related event, expounding on details. The breach located near Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE) has been repaired and water service has been restored.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding the timeline of ongoing mapping, Paul Berg, Public Works Director, explained details regarding wastewater infrastructure mapping and funding, which is anticipated to be completed in September 2020. Additional mapping will take longer and will require additional funding.

Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on the need to be proactive when notifying the public, i.e., having a prepared public statement. He expounded on recommendations.

In response to Vice Mayor McKinzie's request, Mr. Berg explained details related to mapping challenges when managing infrastructure assets. Mapping the entire system is expected to be a 2 to 3-year process. Once completed, addressing these types of events can be resolved more efficiently.

In response to Mayor Trantalis, Mr. Berg confirmed that ongoing public

works efforts include bringing online new technology that would provide an alert system to identify infrastructure needs, expounding on related details.

Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on the current process, two recent water events and past practices. He discussed the need for improved public communications, citing examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Moraitis' question, City Attorney Alain Boileau confirmed that a Declaration of an Emergency does not suspend Sunshine Law regulations regarding the discussion of City business, expounding on details. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor McKinzie confirmed the responsibility of the Office of City Manager, the Police Department and Fire-Rescue Departments when responding to a Declared Emergency. City Manager Lagerbloom recommended having a presentation from Chaz Adams, Manager of Strategic Communications, at a September 2019 Conference Meeting to establish a protocol for crisis communications.

Mayor Trantalis gave a brief overview of the response to this recent water event. Further comment and discussion ensued on the protocol for Emergency Management, operational response communications and automated phone calls to residents.

City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he was out of the country during this emergency event. In response to Commissioner Sorensen's concerns, Interim Assistant City Manager Rhonda Mae Kerr confirmed that the automated phone call message would have been approved by the Assistant City Manager on duty at the Emergency Operations Center. Ms. Kerr explained the rationale behind the automated call sent to residents to proactively address the situation. Further comment and discussion ensued. Ms. Kerr noted that follow-up communications should have been sent to members of the Commission. It was confirmed that residents can sign-up for Code Red notifications on the City's website and can make a selection regarding how to be notified, i.e., via email, phone call, or text.

City Attorney Boileau offered to update the Commission on the status of his recent water event investigation. Mayor Trantalis commented on concerns regarding sharing information and unresolved legal matters. Further comment ensued.

City Manager Lagerbloom updated the Commission on the water event in the Las Olas Boulevard area. He expounded on details related to determining the cause, water testing and the methodology for flushing the system post repair. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Moraitis asked about budgeting for Staff to test aspects of underground infrastructure, i.e., valves, as done in the past. Mr. Berg confirmed that before the recession, crews performed these types of maintenance activities on the water and sewer systems, expounding on details. He established the need to reinstitute these practices. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed the ongoing work to develop a utility action plan which would be presented to the Commission on October 1, 2019, expounding on details.

CITY COMMISSION REPORTS

Members of the Commission announced recent and upcoming events and matters of interest.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on working with EDSA on the landscaping design for the City portion of the Lockhart Stadium Site (Site). She confirmed that EDSA is designing the Inter-Miami portion of the Site. Commissioner Moraitis recommended the City utilize Inter-Miami's architects and builders for designing and building the Community Center structure. She explained that using the same architects and builders would create synergy, expounding on details and citing examples. Further comment and discussion ensued on the Parks Bond funding to be used for the Site, proper procedures and having a separate agreement for building the Community Center.

City Attorney Boileau confirmed this could be done should the Commission decide it is in the best interest of the public, expounding the procedure and related details. He confirmed there would be separate agreements for the architectural design and building of the Community Center. Further comment and discussion ensued on input from the community and moving forward with the design and construction of the Community Center in an expeditious manner.

Mayor Trantalis suggested having a skateboard facility on the City's portion of the Site. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Moraitis confirmed there is room for a skateboard facility on the Site. Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on other municipal amenities that include bandshells and related opportunities. Further comment and discussion ensued on incorporating these amenities into the Site. Commissioner Moraitis confirmed that this topic would be

presented at the next Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Glassman said that he and Broward County Commissioner Lamar Fisher became ex officio Board Members of Bonnet House. Commissioner Glassman noted that Northside Elementary School improved its score to a "C". He requested that the 2020 Commission Calendar be done as quickly as possible, explaining related details.

Commissioner Sorensen requested revisiting the Commission Goal Setting Session, questioning the need for an outside facilitator. Vice Mayor McKinzie concurred with Commissioner Sorensen, expounding on details. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed the ability of Staff to provide the Goal Setting Session materials and input previously done by the contracted facilitator.

Mayor Trantalis suggested having a one-day Goal Setting Session by consolidating the format. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed the Goal Setting Session could be held in one day. He requested that the Commission hold the two currently scheduled dates and he would advise.

Commissioner Glassman asked if any pet shops in the City sell iguanas. He commented on the involvement of local wildlife organizations related to this topic. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed he would research and provide an update.

Commissioner Glassman requested a status update regarding input from The Corradino Group (Corradino) to enable the Las Olas Mobility Working Group to move forward expeditiously. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed ongoing work with Corradino. Costs related to the scope of work are being addressed. He expounded on related details. Discussion ensued on the next Las Olas Mobility Working Group meeting. Commissioner Glassman noted efforts to coordinate the next meeting with the involvement of Corradino. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed a recommendation or decision would coincide with the September 3, 2019 Budget Meeting.

Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on Board appointments and representation. Discussions ensued on the decision to have two Board member appointees per District Commissioner and the Mayor having one appointee. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on the poor condition of the City-owned building on Northwest 7th Avenue occupied by the U.S. Post

Office and the need for improved maintenance, expounding on details. He requested City Manager Lagerbloom address this situation.

Vice Mayor McKinzie requested a detailed analysis related to health care costs and funding. He asked for a full understanding of costs to administer the health plan. City Manager Lagerbloom commented on the allocations. Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on the financial burden on employees to ensure family health care coverage. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor McKinzie confirmed that all scheduling requests related to his calendar should go through his assistant. Further comment and discussion ensued. He commented on a specific request related to social media. Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on 8th-floor office operations. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Sorensen commented on the recent removal of old-growth trees in Riverside Park, details regarding strengthening the related tree Ordinance and the possible need for greater protection. He requested Staff present suggestions and recommendations to the Commission. City Manager Lagerbloom gave an overview of the current tree Ordinance, what is allowed and what is not addressed, expounding on details and possible modifications. Further comment and discussion ensued on previous similar situations.

Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on Board members, including those who are on Quasi-Judicial Boards, communicating with Staff, expounding on details and concerns. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis discussed working with developers to address workforce housing needs and recent State legislation impacting these opportunities. He discussed changing the current unlimited building height allowed in the downtown regional activity center (RAC) and allowing developers to purchase increased height to address workforce housing needs.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the previous \$50,000 donation offered from the Citgo Petroleum Corporation and its mandated use for emergency or disaster services. It was confirmed that there is no interest in pursuing this grant, and this topic would be tabled. In response to Vice Mayor McKinzie's question, Mayor Trantalis explained details. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis commented on the recent court decision regarding

allowing The Gun Show on City-owned properties. He asked members of the Commission about any desire to extend the prohibition of carrying firearms on any City property. Comment and discussion ensued. City Attorney Boileau reviewed and commented on past policy regarding carrying firearms at City Hall, expounding on details regarding rights as proprietors of City buildings.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' request, City Attorney Boileau confirmed that he would bring forward a Commission item addressing firearms at City-owned properties. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Moraitis commented on her position in opposition. Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on the need to keep parks safe and associated challenges.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

BUS-1 [19-0665](#)

Uptown Urban Village Master Plan and Form Based Code
Presentation - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Anthony Fajardo, Director of the Department of Sustainable Development, and Jim Hetzel, Principal Urban Planner - Department of Sustainable Development, spoke briefly. Discussions ensued on moving this item to the next Commission Meeting. Commissioner Moraitis commented on her perspective on this item. It was confirmed that this item would be heard at the next Commission Conference Meeting.

BUS-2 [19-0640](#)

Breakers Avenue Streetscape Update - (Commission District 2)

Catherine Prince, Planner II - Department of Transportation and Mobility, gave a presentation entitled *Breakers Avenue Streetscape Project Update*.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Ms. Prince introduced the design team, Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl & Partners and Betsy Jeffers of T.Y. Lin International.

Mr. Dover continued the presentation focusing on the *Concept Design Summary*, confirming that Phase one has been completed and expounding on details as illustrated in the presentation.

Mayor Trantalis commented on his perspective that the designs are not nautical or beach themed. Comment and suggestions ensued. It was noted that the amount of greenspace is being increased and the amount of parking spaces is being decreased.

Ms. Prince reviewed the cost details and efforts to value engineer the project. In response to City Manager Lagerbloom's question regarding funding and ways to address funding gaps, Ms. Prince explained potential options, including:

1. Phasing the project in four block segments;
2. Reach out to Broward County for Surtax funding; and
3. Increasing the area of the Beach Improvement District (BID) currently in place.

Ms. Prince confirmed the engagement of all property owners in the conversation. She reviewed the timeline moving forward and next steps as noted in the presentation.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Gregar Nilzen, 3003 Terra Mar, designated representative of Friends of North Beach. Mr. Nilzen noted his support of this project.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Christine Sposa, 842 SW 10th Street. Ms. Sposa confirmed her support of this project, explaining how it will enhance the community and encourage visitors to remain on the barrier island during the evenings.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Tom McManus, 632 Intracoastal Drive and on behalf of Friends of North Beach Village. He thanked Commissioner Glassman for his efforts, requesting the Commission address the needs in the North Beach area.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Johana Nieto, 3004 N. Birch Road. Ms. Nieto confirmed her support of this project, encouraging the Commission to move forward with the proposed project.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Dev Motwani, 2415 Del Mar Place. Mr. Motwani confirmed his support and progress regarding this item, thanking Commissioner Glassman and Staff for their efforts.

Mayor Trantalis commented on previous discussions regarding an assessment to fund improvements, similar to what was done in Dolphin Isles. He noted resident input from constituents on Bayshore Drive during his previous term as the District II Commissioner, expounding on details.

Commissioner Glassman noted preliminary, brief conversations regarding a possible assessment. He confirmed ongoing conversations

with the County and area stakeholders. Commission Glassman noted the ability to introduce a conversation regarding an assessment for adjacent areas resulting from the City's significant investment in the Breakers Avenue project. Comment and discussions ensued on the preferred concept, funding gaps, program funding opportunities and the timeline.

Commissioner Glassman commented on the concept designs, input by stakeholders and the need to move forward. He thanked Staff and consultants for their efforts.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question, Ms. Prince confirmed the next step is the Engineering Design, which would begin next month. Staff will come back to the Commission in October with the awarding of the Construction Manager At Risk (CMAR) Construction Contract. Ms. Prince confirmed this would be done concurrently with the search for funding sources.

Commissioner Glassman noted that the dynamic of this area changed when the Bonnet House opened its southern gate. Further comment ensued on activating the backsides of area businesses and large area hotels.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding MPO funding, Ms. Prince confirmed this project was included in the Surtax request to the MPO.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' inquiry regarding a standard MPO program for this project such as *Compete Streets*, Christine Fanchi, Engineering Design Manager, Transportation and Mobility Department, explained details regarding previous outreach to the MPO for grant funding. That request did not meet requirements of *Complete Streets*, due to existing sidewalks in the area. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor McKinzie's question, Ms. Prince confirmed this is not a design-build project, explaining related details. Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on the opportunity for local developers to assist in the cost management of this project, which could address the funding gap. Further comment and discussion ensued on aspects of Birch Road and the beautification of the North Beach Village area.

BUS-3 [19-0836](#)

Discussion - General Employees' Retirement System
Cost-of-Living-Adjustment - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Chris Lagerbloom gave a brief overview regarding the

consideration of a cost of living adjustment (COLA) for General Employees Retirement System (GERS) retirees. Should the Commission decide to proceed with a cost-of-living adjustment, it would continue annually. The yearly cost to implement an annual 1.5 percent (1.5%) COLA increase would range from \$6,000,000 to \$10,000,000. He reviewed the additional option of a one-time thirteenth check to GERS recipients, related costs and the funding sources

City Attorney Alain Boileau reviewed details regarding the option for a thirteenth check, stating his opinion that this is not permitted due to it being additional compensation that is not allowed under Florida Statutes (Statutes). Further discussion ensued on this topic.

City Auditor John Herbst commented on compensation to retirees from City funds. He discussed ways to achieve this by having the Commission consider the pension plan paying a thirteenth check. This would be a new benefit, triggering provisions of the bond covenants. City Attorney Boileau commented on the Statutes prohibiting the providing of compensation after service has been rendered, expounding on details. City Auditor Herbst explained additional details regarding ad hoc COLAs for the GERS.

Further comment and discussion ensued. City Manager Lagerbloom confirmed that the current proposed budget does not include this funding, expounding on related details. Further comment and discussion ensued on the legality of a thirteenth check and funding.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Eve Bazer, 3020 NE 32nd Avenue. Ms. Bazer commented on her perspective regarding retirees receiving a COLA and related history. Mayor Trantalis confirmed a COLA was not part of previous contract agreements.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Peter Partington, 1521 NE 53rd Street. Mr. Partington commented on the performance of the GERS fund and his support of a COLA increase.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Hattie Brinson, 23328 SW 58th Avenue, Boca Raton. Ms. Brinson commented on her support of a thirteenth tiered check as deferred compensation, requesting Commission support of this item and expounding on related details.

City Auditor Herbst addressed the topic of deferred compensation, expounding on details. Plan assets can no longer be used to grant additional benefits.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Jeanne Raymond, 4634 SW 38th Way, and Ronnie Lakatos 8521 NW 51st Court. Both Ms. Raymond and Ms. Lakatos spoke regarding their support of a COLA for GERS recipients.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Nick Schiess, GERS Pension Plan Administrator. Mr. Schiess explained the difference between a COLA and a thirteenth check. He recommended that GERS legal counsel contact City Attorney Boileau to address legal aspects. Further comment and discussion ensued on funding sources and previous COLAs for retirees.

Commissioner Glassman noted his support of a COLA, urging the Commission to move forward with a continued review. Commission Sorensen noted his position that a COLA should apply to all retirees, noting the need for a full legal and financial analysis. Further comment and discussion ensued on each retiree group meeting criteria for a COLA.

Mayor Trantalis requested City Manager Lagerbloom return with financial details and related criteria regarding all eligible retirees receiving a COLA. Further comment and discussion ensued on the financial impact of a COLA on retirees and the City.

BUS-4 [19-0794](#)

Special Events Policy Discussion - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Mayor Trantalis confirmed this item would be rescheduled to another Commission Conference Meeting.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

CF-1 [19-0792](#)

Emergency Purchase for 42-Inch Diameter Raw Water Main Repairs at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport - David Mancini & Sons, Inc. and Core & Main LP - \$364,612.93 - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

City Manager Lagerbloom explained that this item serves to meet the requirements of the Code to inform the Commission of this purchase officially.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the Commission Conference Meeting at 4:23 p.m.