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Meeting Minutes

Lockhart Park Townhall

Fort Lauderdale Landings, First Floor, 1515 W. Cypress Creek Rd.,
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Wednesday, April 22, 2026
6:00 PM

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

BEN SORENSEN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District 4

JOHN C. HERBST Commissioner - District 1

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District 2

PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District 3

RICHELLE WILLIAMS, City Manager

DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk

SHARI L. McCartney, City Attorney

PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor

CALL TO ORDER:

Commissioner Herbst called the Townhall Meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

COMMISSION MEMBERS' PRESENT:

Mayor Dean J. Trantalis and Commissioner John C. Herbst

ALSO PRESENT:

Also Present: City Manager Rickelle Williams, City Clerk David R. Soloman (participated virtually) , City Attorney Shari L. McCartney, City Auditor Patrick Reilly, Assistant City Manager Ben Rogers, and Assistant City Manager Quentin Pough

Commissioner Herbst provided an overview of redevelopment efforts at Lockhart Park undertaken by Inter Miami CF (Inter Miami) for Chase Stadium and AECOM for the proposed Community Park (Park). The Park is the culmination of a multi-year planning process initiated during the term of former Commissioner Heather Moraitis and has evolved into the site plan being presented for community review.

Commissioner Herbst discussed the original Park concept, which included multipurpose athletic fields, dog parks, playgrounds, exercise facilities, a community center, and other recreational amenities. The Park advanced through multiple design phases prepared by AECOM and underwent extensive review by the City Commission. The City's public-private partnership (P3) with Inter Miami CF resulted in a Comprehensive Agreement in which Inter Miami was responsible for funding many of the Park's core amenities and acknowledged that the City had proposed additional enhancements, including pickleball, that have been eliminated. In 2024, the Park project progressed to a fully designed site plan and was prepared to move forward when financial disputes between the City and Inter Miami led to mediation.

Commissioner Herbst said that Mayor Trantalis subsequently facilitated a settlement that resulted in the revised Park site plan that is being shared with the community tonight. The mediated settlement substantially altered the previously approved Park design, including the conversion of three (3) multipurpose athletic fields into a seven (7) acre surface parking lot intended for use by Chase Stadium.

A copy of the site plan is attached to these Meeting Minutes.

Commissioner Herbst emphasized the importance of advancing the long-delayed Park project, discussed related funding, and reiterated his support for completing the Park as soon as possible.

Commissioner Herbst noted that the community had not previously been afforded an opportunity to review the revised Park design because the modifications were the result of the mediation rather than a traditional public planning and design process. The purpose of this Townhall is to present the updated Park concept, explain the changes made through

mediation, and solicit community feedback before the City Commission moves forward. Commissioner Herbst emphasized the importance of community input.

Mayor Trantalis provided an overview of the mediation process between the City and Inter Miami, discussed disputed project elements, negotiated Park costs, and the resulting modifications to the site plan. Mayor Trantalis reviewed examples of changes incorporated into the revised design and discussed key provisions of the settlement agreement. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis stated that the revised site plan remains under Commission review, said that community input received during this Townhall would assist with future Commission decisions and remarked on the revised site plan. Mayor Trantalis explained that the Park's development costs include anticipated funding from Inter Miami and the Parks Bond. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst commented on provisions of the original P3 Comprehensive Agreement, discussed aspects of the mediated settlement, and reviewed the respective funding commitments of Inter Miami and the City. He shared his perspective regarding the revised design and the City's prior commitment to delivering the project through the Parks Bond Program.

Commissioner Herbst raised concerns regarding drainage in the revised site plan and the impact of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) flight path restrictions on the planned multipurpose field (field) lighting. He requested that AECOM further evaluate the field's location, lighting limitations, and drainage feasibility. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions, James Webb, AECOM Park Planning Director, acknowledged the concern regarding the proposed field location within the flight path of the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport (FXE). Mr. Webb discussed applicable field-lighting height restrictions, potential drainage solutions, and related design considerations. Mr. Webb confirmed that he would coordinate with AECOM's engineering team to further evaluate these issues and would provide additional information. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst discussed AECOM's original site design recommendations regarding field lighting and suggested that Mr. Webb participate in future discussions with Inter Miami concerning the field location, lighting, and drainage considerations.

Mayor Trantalis acknowledged concerns regarding the Park design configurations and emphasized the importance of addressing field lighting and drainage issues. He stated that these concerns would be brought to Inter Miami's attention for further discussion. Further comment and discussion ensued.

City Manager Williams introduced staff members in attendance and reaffirmed the City's commitment to advancing the Park project. She explained that the settlement agreement approved in July 2025 required the City and Inter Miami to negotiate a Second Amendment to the Comprehensive Agreement within ninety (90) days. City Manager Williams noted that feedback received during this Townhall and prior discussions would help develop the Second Amendment, including decisions regarding the location and scope and ensuring delivery of the

project within the established budget.

Quentin Pough, Assistant City Manager, reviewed elements of the revised site plan. Commissioner Herbst said that greenspace should be preserved for recreational use rather than designated for overflow parking. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding project funding responsibilities, Mayor Trantalis explained that Inter Miami would fund the construction of the parking area and deliver the Park improvements within budget. Commissioner Herbst commented on Inter Miami's funding obligations and shared concerns regarding the revised financial commitments. City Manager Williams noted that certain obligations assigned to Inter Miami under the original Comprehensive Agreement were not carried forward into the mediated settlement agreement.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's inquiry regarding auditing and cost oversight measures to ensure the City does not overpay for Park construction, City Auditor Patrick Reilly recommended that Inter Miami deliver the project under a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) structure. Commissioner Herbst remarked that the mediated settlement represented a compromise intended to avoid the risks and costs associated with litigation and discussed his perspective regarding the agreement.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding the future use of Chase Stadium after Inter Miami relocates its primary soccer operations to Miami-Dade County, Mayor Trantalis said that Chase Stadium is expected to remain active through team training activities, friendly matches, concerts, and other events. Mayor Trantalis noted that the City retains ownership of Chase Stadium and the underlying property upon expiration of the fifty (50) year lease (lease term).

In response to a resident's question regarding the use of Chase Stadium for local high school football games, Mayor Trantalis stated that he would raise the issue with Inter Miami for consideration.

Commissioner Herbst noted that the overall Park site encompasses approximately twenty (20) acres, including seven (7) acres dedicated to parking.

Mary Fertig, City resident, expressed concern that prior commitments providing affordable access to Chase Stadium for local high school football games had not been fulfilled. She urged the City to work with Inter Miami to restore traditional high school football games at Chase Stadium and discussed the School Board of Broward County's contribution of approximately \$56,000 toward local high school football events. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's question regarding the purpose of the \$56,000 contribution, Ms. Fertig stated that the funds covered costs associated with school use of the prior Lockhart stadium and said that she would provide additional information. Ms. Fertig reiterated her request that the City pursue opportunities to accommodate major local high school football games at Chase Stadium.

Peter Partington questioned the need to dedicate a substantial portion of the Park site to Chase Stadium parking and referenced his experience attending Inter Miami matches using

nearby private parking lots and other available parking areas. Mayor Trantalis explained unpaved areas of the site were previously used for Chase Stadium event parking, and revenue generation would no longer be available once the Park is developed. Mr. Partington suggested a parking structure as an alternative to the parking area. Mayor Trantalis noted that a parking structure would significantly increase costs. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mr. Partington's questions regarding the proposed field, Mayor Trantalis explained that it is intended to function as unprogrammed open space for informal recreational use by residents and children, and it would not be utilized by Inter Miami. Commissioner Herbst said that the field area was originally envisioned as open greenspace and was later incorporated into the revised design to provide recreational opportunities following the loss of previously planned athletic fields due to the addition of surface parking.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding the intended use of the proposed field, Carl Williams, Parks and Recreation Department Director, explained that the field is currently envisioned as an open, unpermitted recreational space intended for casual public use. Mr. Williams explained that Park Rangers would enforce applicable rules to prevent organized teams or leagues from monopolizing the field and displacing individual users. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis left the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

Frank Polanco, Twin Lakes North Homeowners Association President, discussed the Park's relationship with the surrounding neighborhood and requested clarification regarding adjacent areas depicted on the site plan. Commissioner Herbst explained that he had explored opportunities to extend the walking trail into the FXE stormwater retention area, but initial discussions with the FAA had not been favorable. Commissioner Herbst said that he intends to continue pursuing that concept with the FAA, noting that passive public access could potentially add approximately eight (8) to nine (9) acres of open greenspace, although the area would be limited to passive recreational uses and would not accommodate structures or active recreational facilities. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Polanco also expressed concerns regarding the proposed parking associated with Chase Stadium events and the potential impact on nearby neighborhoods. Commissioner Herbst responded that a variety of Chase Stadium programming, including concerts, had always been contemplated as part of long-term operations.

In response to Mr. Polanco's questions regarding Park operating hours and whether parking areas would be gated after hours to prevent overnight vehicle storage, Mr. Williams explained that City parks generally operate between 6:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., or from dawn to dusk depending on the facility. Mr. Williams noted that the Park would likely operate from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and that the City does not have gated park facilities, instead relying on posted operating hours and enforcement measures.

In response to Mr. Polanco's questions regarding Park amenities such as benches and public art, Mr. Webb of AECOM explained that the conceptual plan presented is intended to illustrate the overall Park layout and programming elements and did not depict detailed site features,

furnishings, or aesthetic enhancements that would be developed during subsequent design phases. Commissioner Herbst commented that both indoor and outdoor public art installations had been contemplated as part of the original Park concept. City Manager Williams confirmed.

In response to questions regarding the duration of Inter Miami's lease, City Manager Williams explained that the City Charter authorizes leases of up to fifty (50) years and noted that the lease structure includes a construction period of up to five (5) years, after which the fifty-year lease term would commence.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's question regarding security at the Park, Mr. Williams described standard security practices, including Park Ranger roving patrols and periodic Police Department patrols as part of their regular operations. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding anticipated staffing for the proposed maintenance facility and the Community Center, Mr. Williams explained that staffing levels would be comparable to those at similar recreational facilities throughout the City and provided examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to an online question regarding parking capacity, Commissioner Herbst said that the proposed Park includes approximately three hundred (300) parking spaces. He reiterated his longstanding position that park users should not be charged for parking and referenced his similar views regarding the planned Holiday Park Parking Garage.

In response to a question from a member of the public regarding a splash pad being part of the current design, Mr. Pough clarified that a splash pad is not included in the current design.

City Manager Williams noted that Inter Miami is expected to contribute \$1,500,000 to the construction of the parking area. Under the proposed agreement, Inter Miami would have exclusive use of the parking area for three (3) hours before, during, and three (3) hours after Inter Miami events for the duration of the lease term. Commissioner Herbst discussed his concerns regarding that arrangement, shared his perspective on the settlement, and cited related examples. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to resident questions regarding the Park's future operating and maintenance costs, funding sources, event parking revenues, and whether the mediation process violated Florida's Sunshine Law, Commissioner Herbst explained that the settlement resulted from a court-authorized mediation process undertaken to avoid litigation and did not constitute a Sunshine Law violation. City Manager Williams confirmed that Inter Miami would control the parking area during designated event periods and would retain all associated parking revenues.

Commissioner Herbst expressed concerns related to Chase Stadium parking, noting that the undeveloped Park property had previously been utilized as a revenue-generating parking area for Inter Miami and the City, which delayed Park development, and cited related revenue details.

Commissioner Herbst provided historical context regarding original stadium approvals and

explained that Inter Miami had received a parking variance that reduced required parking spaces from approximately four thousand nine hundred (4,900) spaces to approximately nine hundred (900) spaces that necessitated the use of the undeveloped Park area. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst noted that the agreement with Inter Miami grants the City the right to utilize Chase Stadium on four (4) dates annually and concurred with prior suggestions that those opportunities be used to host local high school football games.

In response to Ms. Fertig's question regarding limitations on future event activity, City Manager Williams confirmed that the settlement agreement does not establish a cap on the number of events that may utilize the parking area.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding the City's options related to parking, City Attorney McCartney explained that construction of the parking lot is a required component of the mediation settlement. She noted that the proposed Second Amendment would include Inter Miami's \$1,500,000 contribution toward construction of the two hundred sixty-eight (268) space parking lot. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Assistant City Manager Ben Rogers clarified that the City's receipt of the \$1,500,000 contribution is contingent upon construction of the parking area as contemplated by the settlement agreement. Further comment and discussion ensued.

A resident discussed potential parking revenue opportunities if the City declined Inter Miami's proposed \$1,500,000 contribution. Commissioner Herbst expressed his agreement.

Commissioner Herbst cited examples of sustained community engagement that had previously influenced important Commission decisions. He encouraged residents to continue participating in the public process and communicating their views to City Commissioners regarding the Park and other matters affecting the community. Commissioner Herbst discussed his efforts to ensure community input is received and emphasized the importance of resident advocacy. Further comment and discussion ensued.

A member of the public commented on the large attendance associated with local high school football games. In response to a question regarding the City's use of the parking area during the four (4) annual City events at Chase Stadium, Commissioner Herbst confirmed that parking access would be included. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst explained that the original Park concept included a paved recreational trail system rather than a natural-surface cross-country course. Commissioner Herbst suggested that existing facilities such as Snyder Park may be better suited for organized cross-country events due to the terrain. Commissioner Herbst discussed his support for partnering with local schools and youth sports organizations to maximize use of recreational facilities. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mr. Partington's question regarding future Commission consideration of the Park project, Commissioner Herbst explained the Commission's involvement with the proposed Second Amendment to the Comprehensive Agreement at key design milestones. City

Manager Williams confirmed that future Commission approvals would occur as the project progresses.

Patricia McEwen, Twin Lakes North resident, expressed concern regarding the years of public input and planning associated with the original Park design and the subsequent reduced amenity package under the mediated site plan. Commissioner Herbst acknowledged those concerns and noted that the original Park concept was substantially more robust and had been nearing construction readiness before mediation. Further comment and discussion ensued.

A resident emphasized the importance of maintaining City control over the proposed parking area, arguing that related parking revenues could be reinvested into Park improvements and that retaining local control would preserve the City's flexibility to repurpose the parking area for future recreational uses. Further comment and discussion ensued. Commissioner Herbst concurred, discussed prior proposals from Inter Miami concerning the parking area, and reiterated his opposition to transferring ownership of the parking area to Inter Miami for the lease term in exchange for \$1,500,000 million.

In response to a resident's question regarding Park employee parking, Commissioner Herbst explained that the current concept does not include dedicated employee parking areas. City staff would utilize available public parking spaces, consistent with operations at other park facilities.

In response to questions regarding the design and surface materials proposed for the dog park areas, Mr. Webb said synthetic turf would be used.

In response to a resident's question regarding whether the public would lose access to the Park during Inter Miami events due to the exclusive use of the large parking area, Commissioner Herbst expressed concern that public access could be adversely affected. City Manager Williams clarified that, based on her understanding, the Park would remain open to the public during Chase Stadium events. However, the parking area located on the north side of the Park would be reserved for Chase Stadium events, and the smaller parking lot would remain available for the public.

In response to Commissioner Herbst's questions regarding the potential loss of public parking during future Chase Stadium events that have been held on Friday nights and the impact those events could have on Park access during peak recreational periods, City Attorney McCartney said that those specific operational scenarios had not yet been addressed. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst reiterated that sustained, coordinated public participation can influence Commission decisions and encouraged residents to continue providing input on the proposed Park site plan and other issues affecting the community.

Commissioner Herbst adjourned the Townhall at 7:26 p.m.