

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-5
April 16, 2024
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Amos Rojas, Jr.

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-5 [4:02 p.m.]

Presentation regarding alcohol sales restrictions on Sunday
(Sponsored by Vice Mayor Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Moving onto item F-5, Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: We had an e-mail from a resident bringing up the fact that we do not prevent alcohol sales until after, I think it was 9 a.m. on Sundays. I didn't know how long ago that ordinance was passed, so I thought it might be appropriate for us to be able to discuss this in the Sunshine for staff to give us a short presentation and see if there's an appetite to adjust timing or if its necessary at all.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Sure. Thank you, Vice Mayor. As you indicated, you asked us to look into the history of our start sales times for package liquor stores. We treat in our code as does the DDPR on premises versus off premises consumption differently. So, the code addresses obviously, restaurants, hotel, bars, etc., differently than liquor stores or package sales and grocery

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stores. So, our current code provision was last updated in 2006, and it provides for the sale of package beverage stores from 7 a.m. to midnight each day, except on Saturday nights and Sunday to 1 a.m.; and then on Sundays from 9 a.m. on. That was changed from 1 p.m. in 2006. Unlike many other areas of the law, we are free to do what we would like to here. There's no state preemption on this. So, to the extent that you all would like things to be consistent or different or keep them as they are, we are able to do so. We looked at some surrounding municipalities. Many of them treat Sundays the same. Many of them also have differing hours on Sundays still. So, whatever you all would like to do, we're happy to assist with anything, but the last time this was updated was in 2006 and it was changed from 1 p.m. on Sunday to 9 a.m. on Sunday.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. It was moving forward. I hate having to go back to the store twice for the same thing, you know. I remember having that experience one time before going to a service on a Sunday and trying to get everything for the afternoon, and I had to go back. So, what's the sentiment of the rest of the Commission here.

Commissioner Castro: I wouldn't be opposed to having everyday 7 a.m. The only thing I would like to know is that, was there a specific reason why it was moved to 9?

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: I don't have the meeting minutes from that 2006 meeting, so I'm not aware. I know that in 2015, the closing time was changed as well by this body, and they looked at consistency between grocery stores and liquor stores and sort of not interfering with business decisions. I know traditionally there's been a tradition in a lot of counties and states to have less, fewer hours of alcohol sales, if any on Sundays. Again, I don't know if things have changed in the hours of operation of grocery stores may now be earlier than they used to be, but I don't know the reasoning behind 9 a.m. versus 1 p.m.

Commissioner Menendez: Having been around longer, I think it was just the mindset of the era. The 1 p.m. probably goes back many decades and I think at some point our downtown became more vibrant, there started to be more activity at night, and I think folks saw that it was time to revisit some of those older laws and I'm sure it was a compromise – 9 probably wasn't necessarily a particular time based on something. It was just a compromise to bring it from 1 p.m. to something to you know, like a lot of things.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I think the grocery stores weren't even open.

Commissioner Menendez: No, nothing was open till late afternoon at most. Ponce de Leon in the downtown area was a ghost town on Sundays.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Right. I recall.

Commissioner Menendez: Tumbleweed going down, not even cars, because everything was closed.

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Commissioner Fernandez: Chief, would you have any objection to a change or any concerns with changing from 9 to 7?

Chief Hudak: No, not at all. I mean earlier, not at all.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: On Sunday mornings. So, this would allow traditional hours of alcohol sales at package liquor stores which means grocery stores or liquor stores to the extent that they are open before 9 a.m. on Sundays.

Chief Hudak: We wouldn't have an issue. We wouldn't have anything like that as far as the purchasing and stuff like that. The only issues that we ever have are about the liquor laws as far as businesses and things like that after hours, but beforehand we're fine with that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: If everybody is in agreement, may we bring it back next time, so if you have any additional public comment on the item, you'll be able to hear it between now and then.

Commissioner Menendez: And by the way, back in the day the 1 p.m., the other thing you had at 1 p.m. was air-raid sirens from the coliseum in case the Russians, the Soviets were going to attack, you hear air-raid sirens Saturday at 1 p.m. So, a lot of things happened at 1 p.m. back then.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: So, we will certainly, if that's the will of the Commission, bring back legislation at the next meeting changing it to 7 a.m. every day of the week.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Thank you.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much.