

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item 2-1
May 7, 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

Public Speaker(s)

Michael Maxwell, HPB Chair

Maria Cruz

Alejandro Silva

Agenda Item 2-1 [11:22a.m.]

A Joint Resolution of the City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board and the Landmarks Advisory Board making recommendations to the City Commission regarding the replacements of certain streetlights by Florida Power and Light.

Mayor Lago: Let's move onto item 2-1, which is time certain 10:30 a.m. Good morning, Anna Pernas with the Historic Resources and Cultural Arts Department. I just want to introduce to you our Vice Chair of the Historic Preservation Board, Mr. Michael Maxwell, who'll be presenting on this item.

Mayor Lago: Good morning, sir. Thank you for your patience and I apologize, we didn't tackle the item, the time certain at 10:30.

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Agenda Item 2-1 – Joint resolution of the Historic Preservation Board and Landmarks Advisory Board

[Date]

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Mr. Maxwell: Good morning, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, how lovely to see you today. I'm Michael Maxwell, 2845 Granada Boulevard, Coral Gables. I'm here on behalf of the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board and the Landmarks Board. Mr. Slesnick unfortunately could not be with us today, he was planning to, but he had to be at a Chamber event with the military. Previously we had a public meeting at the request of the Commission, following our previous resolutions at the beginning of the year. A public meeting was held. The City Manager was kind enough to come. We had public input. The Landmarks Board, the Historic Preservation Board and city staff, the City Attorneys and the Preservation Officer were there. We had a wonderful discussion about this. The result of the discussion is really the resolution that we have put before you, and to begin the process, to begin to negotiate with FPL regarding this. We understand that this is a lengthy process. This has to go to the Public Service Commission. This is something that's not going to happen tomorrow, but it's in the long-term best interest. We, the people that met, believe that this will save us money over a long period of time, because it standardizes everything, and we don't have to go through so much riga-ma-roll. Secondly, and maybe even more importantly, this is one of the key elements that defines the urban design of our streets in our city. It is unique. No other city in our county or South Florida or that I know of, maybe outside of Disneyland, has the same kind of wonderful historic style lighting that we have. So, one last thing, in terms of the resolution. The resolution was requested, gives the geographical area. We had discussions regarding that geographical area, came to a conclusion, presenting it herein, but one thing is missing from this. We do recommend, but it would be in concert with the people that own property, historic property south of U.S.-1, which would leave us with the Villages, the Dutch-Africans, the two French Villages, and the Chinese Village would be there, and we would recommend to the Commission that these types of lighting be available for those historic areas as well, and that would be the limit of that. So, we had a wonderful discussion. Mr. Rojas was there, really supported us, in a very, very positive way and we were very grateful to have him there and to meet; and the public came out very much for this as well. So, if I may, I'd like to read the resolution please. *"City of Coral Gables, Florida, a joint Resolution of the City of Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board and the Landmarks Advisory Board, making recommendations to the City Commission regarding the replacement of certain streetlights by Florida Power and Light. Whereas, in January of 2024, the City of Coral Gables Commission adopted Resolution 2024-03 directing the scheduling of a joint meeting between the city's Historic Preservation Board and Landmarks Advisory Board to discuss the recent replacement of certain streetlights by Florida Power and Light; and Whereas, in 2023, the City Commission adopted Resolution 2023-360, directing city staff to direct Florida Power and Light to cease the replacement of certain silver streetlights within the city, and those lights were the subject of the joint meeting between the two city boards; and Whereas, following a presentation by the city's Public Works staff in a robust and lengthy discussion, the Landmarks Advisory Board adopted a set of recommendations to the city regarding the type and locations of certain lighting in the city; and Whereas, after a full investigation, discussion, the Historic Preservation Board and Landmarks Board will refer to silver lights as those ten-foot tall silver fluted streetlights currently installed throughout the city; and Whereas, at the joint meeting, the city's Historic Preservation Board adopted the same recommendation and today, the two boards jointly submit the following recommendation to the City Commission as directed in Resolution 2024-03. Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Commission of the City of Coral Gables, Section 1: that the foregoing Whereas clause is hereby*

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ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby made in the specific part of this Resolution upon adoption thereof. Section 2: that the Historic Preservation Board and Landmarks Advisory Board jointly recommend one, that the city approach Florida Power and Light and request that they cease removal of all silver streetlights within the city, located in residential areas north of U.S.-1; that the city approach Florida Power and Light to reinstall silver streetlights where recently removed; that the city and Florida Power and Light adopt a policy to consistently and exclusively install the silver streetlights in those residential areas north of U.S.-1 within the city. Number 4, that any further streetlight installation by Florida Power and Light or the city, other than installation of the silver streetlights described above and those residential areas north of U.S.-1 shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Board. Section 3 and final: that this Resolution shall become effective upon the date of its passage and adopted herein.” That is our Resolution ladies and gentlemen. Thank you. And we hope you’ll seriously consider it, so that we can move this process forward and continue making our City Beautiful even more beautiful. Thank you for your support. Any questions, I’m happy to entertain them.

Commissioner Castro: Are you guys going to have meetings with FPL.

Mr. Maxwell: Ms. Castro, I hate to tell you this, but I don’t hear very well when there’s noise like that. I’m sorry. [Siren noise]

Commissioner Castro: And I’ll speak a little louder then. Do you already have a scheduled meeting with FPL?

Mr. Maxwell: No ma’am, we don’t yet. We need to adopt this resolution in order to move forward to do that.

Commissioner Castro: Okay. And let’s say, let’s just think about Plan B and Plan C, right. I hope this works out, because this is what I really want to happen. However, I know that we have spoken to FPL and it’s a little hard right now to try to even negotiate a little with them, but what would be Plan B, in the case that.

Mr. Maxwell: Plan B is the same Plan B that we had during the 80’s and early 90’s. We’re patient, because as I’ve mentioned to you before, they told us the same thing. No, we can’t do that. It’s not in our...so we waited. I said, put it in your raypez, they ultimately did and came back and we ended up with lights on Segovia and then later on we ended up lights on about twelve miles of streets now. So, it’s a matter of being patient and working with them. They are under tremendous constraints with the Public Service Commission and just like McDonalds, if we wanted McDonalds to go into a historic building, the very first thing they would do would give us their normal McDonalds, the Golden Arches, everything else. We’d say no. Not compatible with what our community’s image is. They’d come back with number two, where they’d modify a bunch of it. We’d say that’s a great step. Here’s what we’d really like; and the third time, they are going to give you what you really like, because they want to be here too. FPL is a big, big part of our community.

Commissioner Castro: I'm a person that really never gives up. So, I am in full support that you commence conversations with FPL, and you keep on trying and trying, as Plan B having patients, okay. We could think about that. That being said, I'll move this resolution.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, before we do that.

Mayor Lago: Before we do that.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Before we do that, I think we need to have more discussion from all the members of this Commission.

Mayor Lago: So, we already had a discussion with FPL. They came here, they met with the previous City Manager, we had discussions with our Public Works team who were present in the meeting. Again, I support the resolution, but it's a little bit more complex than just passing a resolution. They've been adamantly opposed to moving forward. I don't have the exact numbers in front of me, but we looked at the cost, I think that was provided by FPL to replace the existing poles. These poles are not historic, by the way, they are fiberglass poles that were in pretty bad shape, but we've got to be very careful when you say they are historic, because they were not historic. It was millions and millions and millions of dollars that FPL was not willing to pay for themselves. So, my only concern is, I don't have a problem being patient and hoping to bring them to the table or luring FPL to the table, but during that time of patients, we have neighborhoods that I've gotten phone calls from that are dark, certain areas of the golf course that are dark right now. Also, the people who are calling me are saying, you know Vince, we also want, some of them want the new poles, some of them want the old poles. I haven't done a poll, a scientific poll to find out who is more and who is not. Obviously, I have the new poles in front of my house. I think they are perfectly fine, but my house is in a different context than in the areas that we're talking about. So, I have a little bit of concern about being so patient, because you have areas of the city that had lighting and now don't have lighting; and certain areas of the city where these lights were installed where the light has to be corrected, because it could be encroaching on somebody's yard, keeping them up at night. I agree with the resolution. I don't have any issue with it, but we need to find that answer; and the answer is, either FPL steps up to the plate or we're going to have to pay, I don't remember what the number was, it was pretty significant. It was millions and millions and millions of dollars, and assume the responsibility during a hurricane, by the way, which is something that again, we are not in the business. We don't have the bucket trucks. If there is a hurricane here, that's FPL's responsibility of bringing us back online. So that was another major concern of mine.

Mr. Maxwell: Mr. Mayor, you bring up really wonderful points and there's no one that can disagree with you on those points. However, I will say this, the patients is really about what I alluded to. They'll do whatever we want, and high costs are well, I think it could be this much. We don't know what anything cost until we begin to look at it in an engineering basis. You and I are both in construction and development, we know that. So, in this particular case, we need to make the ask, we need to have very serious conversations with them that are backed up by your Board and our local government to say, this is what we want to have, and to actually put them in a position where they have to respond on a businesslike manner to us. We have over 50,000 customers here. This

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is becoming one of *the* leading commercial centers in South Florida. They put a lot of electricity here. Okay. They bought our system from George Merrick and promised to keep it.

Mayor Lago: If I may, I'd like to bring up our Public Works Director here, just to refresh, at least my memory in regard to the conversations that we had with FPL. I know that they came before the Commission and they reiterated that they were not willing to budge, especially that this had been already addressed at the Public Safety Commission; and again, when you're dealing with the Public Safety Commission, it's kind of, you run up against a wall, and they are a monopoly at the end of the day. They do control the electricity here in our community. Mr. Public Works Director, can you give me a refresh of the cost of FPL's position in regard to the request by the two boards.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct. So, the option that FPL gave us was basically we take over the lights and we have to do them basically from scratch, based on the standards that are applicable to us. So, according to our estimates and those estimates are based on prior jobs with some price escalation based on the recent increase and there are certain features recently. The 137 lights that were recently replaced, we're looking at approximately \$3.2 million dollars, including some fees that will have to be paid to FPL. There's an additional 516 lights of the same silver fiberglass around the city, if we're going to do eventually those as well, because they are obsolete, they are not only...etc. The overall cost spread out over five years will be a little bit over \$13 million dollars; and then if we want to harmonize, because we have a plethora of all the lights around the city, now you're looking at significantly a higher number than that. I don't have those numbers exactly, but...

Mayor Lago: But from what I remember what was shown here at the Commission before, which I would like for those documents to please be shared with the board, if it hasn't been shared already, through the Manager's office, was examples of harmonizing existing poles and making everything uniform, and I remember there was a cost breakdown there were examples, there was a PowerPoint presentation showing the different poles that exist throughout the city. We didn't really have an answer how those poles got here, just like how Coral Gables White Way Lights ended up in Broward, if somebody could tell me that story, but now they are here.

Public Works Director Diaz: So, the breakdown that we put together was specifically for the pedestrian level silver lights, but we know we have others around the city. So yes, we could look at a projection and just do an interpolation and see about the additional poles around the city, especially the pedestrian ones. But yes, you'll be looking in excess of \$13 million dollars, and we could come up with an order of magnitude.

Mayor Lago: And also, maintenance, if something were to happen during a hurricane. So, I'm in favor of moving forward with this resolution after the whole Commission has spoken, but at the end of the day, FPL has the final say, and I welcome, we can have another negotiation with them, we can have a sit down with them, we can really try to find some common ground, but it's a pretty significant cost at the end of the day.

Mr. Maxwell: It's a significant cost right now, because whenever I'm in opposition of something, I'm going to give you the very highest cost. If we took – Okay. Hermes said it was \$13 million dollars to replace a hundred and some-odd, if I heard this correctly.

Mayor Lago: I think it was 140.

Public Works Director Diaz: About \$3.2 million dollars for almost 140.

Mayor Lago: That's just that.

Mr. Maxwell: Do the math and figure out how much that is per pole, and you'll go, what?

Public Works Director Diaz: That's the pole, the infrastructure, the wiring, the connection and everything that goes along with it.

Mr. Maxwell: I understand that. But you know...

Mayor Lago: There's one of the things and I'm sorry to interrupt you, but it's coming to memory now. One of the things they mentioned, and correct me if I'm wrong, was that if they abandon the service, they remove all the infrastructure, underground also, that we have to run.

Mr. Maxwell: They are running on a different code than we are as the city, and that's really the big issue.

Mayor Lago: I'm just reiterating what they said, not me.

Mr. Maxwell: I mean, look, we need time to resolve this thing. We need to get in front of everybody and the Commission needs to support this and move forward or we're just going to continue to be where we are.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'm going to follow up, through the Mayor. Okay. What I'm reading versus what was said were two different things. Your suggestion was that the board negotiate with FPL. Typically, what we do is...

Mr. Maxwell: No, I didn't suggest the board...

Vice Mayor Anderson: Okay. I just wanted to make sure I'm clear.

Mr. Maxwell: Whatever process it is that...

City Attorney Suarez: The resolution says the city.

Vice Mayor Anderson: The city, yes.

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City Attorney Suarez: Through the City Manager.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes, the City Manager's office, I think, and there's another conversation we have to have with FPL too, with regard to the location of these transformers in front of historic homes and the impact that it would have. So, we have that coming up as well, and it would be an opportune time to have a deeper conversation with FPL. So, as far as having a conversation, absolutely, I'm open to having a conversation. It is budget season now. We always have the tension on the rope, pickleball versus poles versus other facilities and different parks that need improvements, streets, drainage. It's a lot. It's a lot. Then we have some streets that are very dark and have been very dark for a long time. I remember walking and knocking on Aragon, just a couple of blocks away from here, and it's dark, it's dark. You put your hand out in front of you and you can't see it. So, safety is one of the issues as well that we have to think about. Let's have the conversation, but let's keep in mind that there's a lot that needs to be taken care of in the city.

Mr. Maxwell: Madam Vice Mayor, there's a lot that needs to be done in the city. As a matter of fact, one of the major lights that we have are wooden poles with little hanging lights off of them. We haven't had a lot of new lights installed. As a matter of fact, the kind of recent surge where these black lights have all of a sudden come in has really been the first kind of movement on more new lighting that we've had in many years.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Oh yes.

Mr. Maxwell: So, as I've said from the beginning, the fact that the previous agreement did not include the silver lights was just an oversight. People just didn't think about how that was, and we need to move back to that. So that's my position.

Mayor Lago: You mentioned an oversight. Just want to be clear on that. When we had conversations with FPL, I don't think it was an oversight. I think they told us this is what has been approved by the Public Safety Commission and that's all we can give you. Am I correct, or no? They were very clear. They are not giving us.

Public Works Director Diaz: This conversation with FPL goes back to 2017, and just a little back and forth we were asking about, and they said, maybe let me look into this, and then finally they said, no. So, it wasn't an oversight. It was a very lengthy conversation over several years and you know, they pretty much made it clear at the last meeting, always be subject to further discussion, but they made a business decision.

Mayor Lago: From what I remember, again, we discussed it here with FPL representatives were here. They were adamant. They wanted to have a uniform handful of options for municipalities and that supposedly we were getting the most high-end model that was available, am I correct?

Public Works Director Diaz: I would tell you, the poles that looks aside, they are definitely a better quality that we have out there right now. I think that's just very clear. Looks are in the eye of the beholder and obviously, but these are concrete, with an integral color on the materials. So, it's

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definitely a better-quality product than what is out there right now. Now whether people like the look or don't like the look, that's a whole different conversation.

Mr. Maxwell: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes sir.

Mr. Maxwell: You know, we've been here before. We had this same conversation back in the 80's and 90's, and look, we ended up with these silver lights, and it didn't cost us much more, okay, so we got it. It's a matter of being patient and persevering. Okay.

Mayor Lago: I'm supporting, but I just don't want to see a community without lights for another two years, and then it's a catch-22. Then the resident calls us and says, hey, I haven't had lights in my backyard for three years. Commissioner Castro, you wanted to say something.

Mr. Maxwell: Nobody is stopping any new lights putting in, you know.

Commissioner Castro: I think the best answer here is to convince FPL even though they've shown a very strong opinion – it was an executive decision that's what Alex told me from FPL. But let's think outside the box a little bit, right. What about if we talk to other municipalities, we convince them that they want these lights too, and maybe we'll have a little more leverage with FPL.

Mr. Maxwell: You know, I think we can do that, but in answer to your question, I don't believe that there's any problem with them providing that. It's just a matter of sitting down negotiating with them and then having them and come to an agreement with them, and then have them take it to the Public Service Commission, because it's the Public Service Commission who'll approve it and if they come out and say, we want this for this city, they'll approve it.

Commissioner Castro: So, they are thinking about manufacturing, they are thinking about storage, they are thinking about that they are only making these lights for us, right, and how often do we need them replaced. So, I think those are the things that when we are negotiating with them, we need to take into consideration.

Mr. Maxwell: We'll come up with a good solution.

Commissioner Fernandez: First of all, thank you and the boards for sitting through that meeting and coming up with this plan for us. I think there's a lot of different factors of what has been said here that can be incorporated into this conversation. We asked several questions of FPL last time they were here, and they were supposed to get back to us. My understanding from the Manager's office, they still haven't on some of those questions. So, I think we still have that conversation that is ongoing with FPL. Commissioner Castro brings up a good point. We are not the only municipality who is probably looking for different options. I know that if we contact the Florida League of Cities or the Miami-Dade League of Cities, we can talk to other municipalities that have a similar historic nature to Coral Gables and they just don't want to tick whichever the best option

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is in a box, because as they themselves said, other municipalities have been historically using these same poles that we have used in Coral Gables. We are not the only ones that are using this pole. Everybody is being forced into the new poles, but not everybody is using it. I think the resolution that we passed here on the Commission on this item was to stop the installation of new poles north of Coral Way. So, I don't think that the impact is being felt by areas that do not have light poles because those are still moving forward. The only thing that we stopped was the replacement of the silver poles with the black poles. I know your team has done a great job. I've seen some of them that have fallen, and you brought a new silver pole back and replaced them. So, I don't think anybody is suffering from a lack of lighting, because of these poles. In fact, I think a lot of people are suffering from a lack of lighting because of the new poles because the location of the poles is inadequate, its shining light in the wrong direction, it's above the tree line. So, I don't think – I think we have the adverse effect. Having these new light poles in some areas is having a negative impact on parts of the community. What I would like to see is for the Manager's office, we have a new Manager in place, who's obviously gotten an understanding of the concerns that the community has on this issue, have a sit down with FPL. FPL government relations person is the incoming chair of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. So they obviously have a stake in Coral Gables and an interest in ensuring that we have the best in our community and I'm hopeful that we can use that and I think, in the past, Mr. Mayor, there's been conversations up here about undergrounding and how it was going to cost hundreds of millions of dollars to do the undergrounding and through lengthy negotiations and a lot of pushing from the City of Coral Gables, we got that number down to zero. It's not costing us a penny and I think that was also a conversation that was had with other municipalities throughout the state, and it was a larger effort to ensure that it didn't come at an additional cost to the residents. I think it's something that we can move forward with, through the Manager's office, start that conversation with FPL, and see what the process is. There's also been other conversations; one of the requests that I made of FPL last time they were here, they currently have a cement pole, which is a basic pole, which has the light feature on top, whether we would be able to create a case that goes around that cement pole that's similar to what we had before and that would fix the problem. They still have their infrastructure, and we still have the look that we're looking for. It would be a joint effort. It wouldn't come at a cost of \$13 or \$16 million dollars, as you're saying, it would be relatively inexpensive in comparison, but they didn't have an answer for us at the time. So, I think that's something that we need to continue having the conversation. The only reason I would not vote for this resolution today is because we're making, giving directives for FPL to start replacing the old poles. I think we need to have the conversation with them first, so that we can figure out what the final solution is, what that final solution is going to be, whether it's the old silver pole or whether it's a new hybrid that we can create with FPL that will satisfy the needs of the community and the look for Coral Gables would have. So, if it was up to me, I would give a directive to the Manager to sit down with FPL and start that conversation to see what the potential solution can be to make sure that we have the best of both worlds. We want to make sure that we have adequate lighting. Some of those older light poles don't have the Kelvin level that is necessary to properly light our streets. The Vice Mayor has mentioned that the coloring sometimes isn't the best either, because we have those orange lights which don't allow for identification or proper sight. So, we want to make sure that we offer the best for our residents, and I think just by having the conversation, we

don't lose anything. We didn't lose anything when we started the conversation with the undergrounding, and today, we're better for it.

Mayor Lago: So, if I may, I want to respond, because I was the one that commenced the conversation about undergrounding, and we worked on it for years. It's not correct what Commissioner Fernandez said. We started off the process by having a discussion about \$275 million dollars and finding a way to pay for it as residents with some help from the city over a ten-year period. We abandoned that process and as the director will tell you, when we found out that through the insistence of the City of Coral Gables and other municipalities that were interested in undergrounding, that they were going to come up with a new rate that they were going to spread across the entire State of Florida. So, every person in the State of Florida is going to be paying a higher rate. What we did get in the City of Coral Gables was that we were ahead of the line, in the sense of that we're getting the work done now, because we started with our consultant, Mr. Diaz can tell you, we started working on the process of undergrounding. We started having the conversations over years and years and years, so we were considered first in line. Other municipalities are also working on undergrounding their line, hardening their system, but the rates are not going to go up just for Coral Gables. It's going to be spread across the entire State of Florida. So eventually, their goal, FPL's goal, like our city, our city goal is over ten years to have 70 percent of our city underground, but to me, I think it's important the trade-off for the additional cost is a benefit, especially for the elderly, for those individuals that are disabled and for the fact that who wants to be out of electricity two or three weeks under a minor hurricane. There are benefits but there are also drawbacks because we've had to spend extra money and we had no other choice because it came through the Public Service Commission, but I don't have a problem. I don't have an issue at all having the Manager have a conversation with FPL, getting as much information as we can, trying to see if we can build consensus to deliver the poles that we want. I'm all for it. I'm there to have as many conversations as you want. I just don't want there to be an issue where lighting is an issue in the neighborhoods, and I've been contacted by certain residents say, listen, I had a light pole here before, it was going to be replaced. Maybe I didn't like the pole. Somebody told me, "I don't like the pole they are planning, but at least it had some light on it.

Mr. Maxwell: Let's see what we can do.

Mayor Lago: I just want to say staff – I imagine you're getting those calls too, when is my light pole going to be replaced or brought back. We just have to tell them, listen, we're working on a different angle.

Mr. Maxwell: Just a very quick response and I know everybody is busy. Both of the boards and the public that attended the meeting would encourage you to vote positively on this resolution today. The reason being that we're asking you to vote on the resolution rather than defer it, because the resolution gives you a political forum to go to FPL to say, our community has voted for this and asked us to do it and we've approved this resolution. Simply having us say, we'd like to have another discussion with you does not give you the tool that you need to affectively bring them to the table. So, I would encourage you to do that, and I would encourage you to pass the resolution today.

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Commissioner Castro: By passing this resolution, the person would have to come into an agreement with them, right.

Mr. Maxwell: No, you don't. You basically – this resolution basically says, we want to have conversations with you to ultimately move to some kind of resolution on these streetlights. It does not tell you anything other than that. It says it's all about conversation and moving forward with it. Ultimately, the Commission does not have to accept whatever comes out. That's up to the Commission to do. The intent of the people that came to the meeting and are speaking up is to try to move this forward to affect a resolution.

Commissioner Castro: On Section 2, the numbers one through four, you would have to go into an agreement with them to then comply with the rest of the numbers, correct. So, I was a little confused to why Commissioner Fernandez said you wouldn't vote for this.

Commissioner Fernandez: My concern is regarding the line where it says that we would be requesting that FPL begin removal of the current light poles. I think we need to have a plan before we instruct FPL to replace the poles, because we don't know what that final option is going to be. They don't currently make the poles that we have, so I don't even know where to begin the process of sourcing the poles that they would have to replace back to the old poles, because those poles are no longer available, correct.

Mr. Maxwell: They are available.

Public Works Director Diaz: The issue is not that they are not available. The issue is that FPL made a business decision not to use them.

Mayor Lago: So, they are not going to install them.

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, will you please step in and give us a little guidance.

City Attorney Suarez: Yes. I just want to clarify what the joint resolution states, and of course the Commission can adopt a variation of that or does not have to take any action, its obviously up to the Commission. But the first request is that the city approach FPL and request that they cease removal of all silver lights within the city, located in residential areas north of U.S.-1, so I want you all to keep that in mind if that is the Commission's intent or if it's something narrower. That the city approach FPL to reinstall silver lights where recently removed. Again, that is an approach, but is that what the Commission is deciding today, is that what the request to FPL will be; and that the city and FPL adopt a policy to consistently and exclusively install the silver lights in those residential areas north of U.S.-1 within the city; and that any future street light installation by FPL or the city other than installation of the silver lights described above in those residential areas north of U.S.-1 shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Board. So, there's a lot of different things

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that the joint resolution includes. I just want to make sure it's clear that if you adopt the resolution as is, that you will be adopting all of that, but of course the Commission can do something different.

Mayor Lago: If I may, just one quick thing. Everybody here wants to resolve this issue. Why don't we do something. Okay. Why don't we get the Manager and his team with Hermes who has a wealth of knowledge to listen to the previous time FPL was here, schedule time with FPL and move in a direction where we can try to build some consensus here and find a roadmap for success. I want FPL to tell me yay or nay, I'll help you, and what wriggle room do we have. I'm all for being patient, but I don't know how long it will take and if they tell us no, what do we do then. We wait two years, five years, ten years, we keep going to the table. What leverage do we have to get FPL to come to the table and negotiate with us. That's what I want to understand.

Mr. Maxwell: I've just given it to you. I've given you a resolution, given you a resolution and the resolution is your leverage. The leverage says that the community of Coral Gables which is a rate paying entity that regulates a public monopoly, the people want this public monopoly to do this for it. That's exactly what we've just said and that's your leverage. I agree with you, Mr. Mayor, we do need to have these discussions, but without a resolution to this thing, without a public commitment by this board to achieve this, I don't believe you're going to get a serious interest out of FPL, because its just like more talk. Okay. In other words, this is kind of where you put your money where your mouth is. Now, you don't have to adopt the total part of the resolution, but what you do need, what I believe you need to do is to say, FPL, we're serious about this and we want to engage with you and move this process forward. We've been here before.

Commissioner Menendez: May I make a suggestion?

Mayor Lago: Yes, go ahead.

Commissioner Menendez: Listening to everyone express their views and their concerns and ideas which, I think is a great discussion. I know Commissioner Fernandez was, you were hesitant about one of the lines. The City Attorney says we can pass, I guess we can amend or modify a line that perhaps we are all uncomfortable with, and if we're good with the rest of it, perhaps if that's what we want to pass that, but he can maybe suggest, can we add a word or remove a word.

City Attorney Suarez: So also, a point of clarification. They that this is drafted, its almost a request, a general request of the City Commission. If the Commission adopts a resolution, I'm assuming it would be the direction of the Manager. So, the Manager will need to have clear direction as to what the Commission wants the Manager to do and when he reaches out to FPL what he should be asking for and what the end goal should be or not, or maybe you want to leave it open-ended, perhaps that's up to the Commission. But for instance, it would be a direction, the City Manager approach FPL and request a cease removal of all silver lights in the city located in the residential areas north of U.S.-1. Is that the direction of the Commission? – and then, that the City Manager approach FPL to negotiate to reinstall silver lights where recently removed; but then number three, that the city and FPL adopt a policy – of course this Commission cannot direct FPL, but I think perhaps it would be that the City Manager approach FPL with the goal of the city and FPL adopting

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such a policy and so forth. And then, number four is really a direction that I think would apply beginning now which is, any future street light installation would have to go to the Historic Preservation Board and that's something that perhaps needs to be further flushed out because is it for a recommendation, is it for final approval, that's not part of our process right now. So that should be discussed as well.

Public Works Director Diaz: If I may ask for a clarification as to the areas that we're talking about. We're talking about just single-family homes, like for example, you have several developments that are going on right now, right, several being the commercial core. I don't think that's what we intend.

Mr. Maxwell: Residential.

Public Works Director Diaz: And then you have some on the peripheral, like for example, Alexan Craft or 1000 Ponce. So are we talking just about the single-family home residential, there's duplex, there's multi-family. I just want to make sure that we get a clear direction, because there's some stuff in the works right now that its going to be impacted potentially.

Mr. Maxwell: In Section 2-1, that the city approach Florida Power and Light and request that they cease the removal of all silver streetlights located in residential areas. The idea is being that this is really residential areas at this time, and that while we've suggested an area as requested by the Commission at the previous time dealing with lights in the commercial district at this point, hasn't been fully discussed.

Public Works Director Diaz: How about multi-family areas, how about new developments like Alexan Craft is a residential development.

Mr. Maxwell: Multi-family is residential.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Its zoned commercial.

Mayor Lago: I really think that we should have a little bit more discussion before we vote on this, and I think it would be beneficial if we sat down with the Manager and we put it on the next agenda. We are more than willing to put it on the next agenda. There are so many open-ended questions here and you mentioned the fact that the City of Coral Gables regulates FPL. We don't regulate FPL. We're at the mercy, as you've seen before when we've entangled with them on issues of powerlines. I just think the appropriate thing would be to defer. We can put it on the agenda immediately for the next Commission meeting so you know it's going to be on the agenda, and we can flush that out with the City Attorney and the City Manager to get a better understanding. We can have conversations off-line with each one of us, with the Manager and with the City Attorney just to get input in regard to what we believe should be on the resolution.

Commissioner Fernandez: And I have concerns still that I think would be good to have conversations off-line with the City Attorney and with the Manager. I'd be happy if we could defer

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it to the next meeting, that way we could have a more robust conversation about this. As much as we've had conversations about this, I think it's important also to have a conversation with the new City Manager and his take on what has taken place, the Assistant City Manager who was part of the prior negotiations. I think it will help us better formulate, because I agree with you. I think the biggest tool that the Manager would have is a resolution from the Commission giving a direction, because the Commission is the one that's making the decision at the end of the day on this process. And if we just send the Manager to FPL saying, the Commission would like for you to consider this, there's no teeth, and I think today is not the day to give this teeth because I don't think any of us are really ready to hammer this out completely. I don't know if my colleagues.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I will second your motion for deferral. I'm not ready to proceed with this today. We do have conversations going on with FPL with regard to the transformer issue. They've asked to speak to me ahead of time before we do a Sunshine meeting on it to see if we can reach some resolution. So, I've looped the Manager's office in on that. The response I had on the transformer issues we're just going to skip you, and my concern is, we really don't have any leverage, but we need to have a conversation to try to move it in the right direction. We don't want our community in the dark. We don't want it skipped, but we...

Mr. Maxwell: We don't want to conflate those two issues though, Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Pardon?

Mr. Maxwell: You really want to put those two issues together. They're pretty different.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Not exactly. No, they're not. It's all about talking to people about reaching a compromise and it does, because if FPL just says, no, I'm going to put this here and I'm going to install this, my ask of them is, let's have a conversation about it. There may be another option. It's really the same process that we're talking about. You are talking poles. I'm talking locations for transformers, because there are other options out there and we can do a better job, we can do a better job.

Mayor Lago: So, we have a motion and a second.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor before the vote is taken, we have members of the public requesting to speak on the item.

Mayor Lago: Alright.

City Clerk Urquia: The first speaker is Maria Cruz.

Mr. Maxwell: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

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Ms. Cruz: Maria Cruz, Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. Very interesting. As you all probably remember, I have lived in my house since 1976. Fast forward a few years after, we had issues with proposals to build housing for the University of Miami, University Village, I think its called. And through that process, the university proffered, I guess is the word that the attorneys use, to put in up to a million dollars to improve our neighborhood. I find it very interesting that we're talking about moving the poles because you know that will be a problem, because the streets will be dark. My neighborhood is still dark, and you know where the money is? Last time I checked before the new Manager came in with the previous administration, there's only about a quarter of a million dollars left in that proposed million dollars, because the university came back several times to ask for some of the money because they needed to do something, and nobody discussed it with the neighborhood. So, we ended up not improving the neighborhood. So, when we talk about dark streets, you'll need to drive in my neighborhood, and you will see what dark is, very dark. Okay. Now, the issue at hand today are the light poles. When we talked about it before and Mr. Diaz will remember, when they started installing those ugly, black poles on San Amaro Drive, I contacted him. Okay. I objected to that. I asked when was the neighborhood – when was it discussed with the community. Never. It was a decision made by the previous administration what Florida Power and Light said, that's the only thing we can do, we accepted it. Guess what, this city for years has been known for fighting when we think we're right. We have lost many battles, but we have fought. Okay. And in this instance, we chose not to fight. We chose to pick from the catalog that we were given because that was what we could do. We have fought things here that the community didn't want and yes, we fought, but when the community wanted to fight, we kind of were shy, you know, we didn't want to do it. The issue is in the old times when we drove from South Miami into Coral Gables, when we drove from Miami into Coral Gables, we knew we were in Coral Gables. We could tell we were in Coral Gables. The light poles, the residences, the way we took care of our streets, the parks, the greenery, everything was different. Nowadays, we have become like everybody else. Not long ago, I wasn't driving so I was looking around, South Miami has the same poles we do. Okay. All that unincorporated, the county has the same poles. You know what, we are not the same. We brag about the fact that we're different. It's time for us to be different. It's time for us to say, hello, stop, let's see what we can do, and there are options. It's very easy to sit back and say, oh, we were given the catalog, and we could only choose. No. We do have options and Vice Mayor, I appreciate the fact that we do have options. Okay, and it's time for us to stand our ground, we can fight for so many things that we fought, some won, some loss, but you know, we do have a voice. We don't want to be like everybody else. It's time for us to go back to the way we were, what we expect, what people want, that's why we move here. If we're going to be the same as everybody else, why should anybody come here. Okay. So, please, please, let's tell Florida Power and Light that we are different, and we would like – and I appreciate the idea of going to the League of Cities because I begged you, other people were joining the fight, because not everybody wants to be the same. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: The next speaker is on Zoom, Mr. Mayor, and its Alejandro Silva.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon, sir.

Mr. Silva: Good afternoon members of the board. My name is Alejandro Silva of 1043 North Greenway Drive. I sit on the Historic Preservation Board, but I'm here today as a private citizen. I won't take much of your time. I know you all are busy. I believe Mr. Maxwell did an excellent job of presenting the resolution. If you haven't already, I would really encourage you to review the minutes of our joint meeting with the Landmarks Advisory Board. Many of the points you brought up for discussion were discussed in detail there. Mr. Slesnick points in particular on reopening negotiations were especially apropos. This is being presented currently as an all or nothing option. I really think the city is being presented with either we keep the existing lights that FPL is providing, or the city pays an exorbitant amount to restore the historically appropriate lights. I truly believe there's a middle ground where everyone can be satisfied. And I would really ask that you reengage in discussions with FPL to explore other options, where perhaps each side gives in a little and the fiscal impact to the city could be lessened greatly to provide the historically appropriate lights, then the city can make an informed decision. Mayor Lago had an interesting suggestion to sit with FPL and city staff and would highly encourage that perhaps a member of the Historic Preservation Board or the Landmarks Advisory Committee could sit in on one of those meetings. Thank you very much for your time.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: So we have a motion and a second to defer to the next meeting and have through the City Manager's office, staff meet with FPL to try to find consensus in regards with multiple moving parts in regards to the joint resolution that was presented to us today by the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board and the Landmark Advisory Board, which I wanted again, to reiterate my thanks and gratitude to your hard work and commitment to making sure that the City Beautiful maintains the City Beautiful. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. Thank you for being here. Sir.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.