

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission
FROM: Commissioner Steven Weiner
DATE: April 28, 2023

SUBJECT: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE
TO DISCUSS THE MERITS AND FEASIBILITY OF REQUIRING THAT ALL BEACH AND
TREMONT TOW TRUCK OPERATIONS UTILIZE BODY-WORN CAMERAS FOR TOWS
INITIATED WITHIN THE CITY.

ANALYSIS

Please place on the agenda a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee to discuss the merits and feasibility of requiring that all Beach Towing and Tremont Towing (collectively, the “Tow Companies”) tow truck operators be equipped with, and utilize, body-worn cameras for all tows initiated within the City.

I have received or heard about several complaints from residents claiming that their personal property was stolen from their respective vehicles that had been towed. Moreover, it’s my understanding that the Police Department is investigating certain alleged incidents involving property being taken from towed vehicles by tow truck operators. A recent news broadcast showed surveillance footage appearing to capture an incident in which a tow truck operator allegedly illegally entered and burglarized a vehicle by taking personal property without permission.

Presently, the City has towing agreements (“Tow Permits”) with the Tow Companies for Police and Parking tows. However, the Tow Permits do not require the tow operators to utilize body-worn cameras. Nonetheless, I have been advised that at least one (1) of the Tow Companies (Tremont Towing) may have some body-worn cameras for its tow truck operators, although it’s unclear to me under what circumstances, if any, such cameras are utilized.

Accordingly, I would request that the City Administration be prepared to address these issues at Committee, as to whether requiring body-worn cameras for the Tow Companies’ employees would serve to deter or mitigate any such similar future alleged incidents of vehicle burglary, including the accessibility of video footage by the City and respective car owner. Furthermore, I would request that the City Attorney’s Office be prepared to discuss any legal issues surrounding this potential initiative, including but not

limited to, the City’s ability to amend the Tow Permits or otherwise require the Tow Companies to utilize body-worn cameras, along with any Constitutional or other legal concerns.

SUPPORTING SURVEY DATA

N/A

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

N/A

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-14?

Yes

Does this item utilize G.O. Bond Funds?

No

Legislative Tracking

Commissioner Steven Meiner