

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Items E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7 and E-8 are related
July 26, 2016
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Jeffrey Bass
George Hernandez
Alicia Fernandez
Meg Daly
Maria Cruz
Linda Dixie
Bradley Richter
Edwina Prime
Marlin Ebbert
Mark Trowbridge
Sonia Blumenthal
Tim Plummer
Robert Parsley

Agenda Items E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7 and E-8 are related [0:00:00 a.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting an amendment to the Future Land Use Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 15, “Comprehensive Plan Text and Map Amendments,” and Small Scale amendment procedures (ss. 163.3187, Florida Statutes), from “Industrial” Land Use to “Mixed Use” Land Use and removing the “Mixed Use Overlay District” Land Use for the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5 and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City) (PZB recommended approval; Vote: 4-0).

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting an amendment to the Zoning Map of the City of Coral Gables pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review”, Division 14, “Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments”, from “Industrial” District to “Commercial” District and removing the “South Industrial Mixed-Use District” for the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5 and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City) (PZB recommended approval; Vote: 4-0).

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Appendix A, “Site Specific Zoning Regulations,” Section A-66, “MacFarlane Homestead,” by modifying provisions for height and setbacks, and adding new provisions, for the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5 and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City) (PZB recommended approval; Vote: 4-0).

An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting review of a Planned Area Development (PAD) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 5, “Planned Area Development (PAD),” for the

proposed project referred to as “Gables Station” on the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5, and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City) (PZB - Motion to Approve with Conditions failed, Vote: 3-1).

A Resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting Mixed-Use Site Plan Review pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, “Zoning Districts,” Division 2, “Overlay and Special Purpose Districts,” Section 4-201, “Mixed Use District (MXD),” for the proposed project referred to as “Gables Station” on the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5, and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; (Legal description on file at the City) (PZB - Motion to Approve with Conditions failed, Vote: 3-1).

Mayor Cason: If everyone could please be quiet. We’re getting ready to start.

City Attorney Leen: This is agenda items E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7 and E-8. They’re all related for a time certain of 1 pm. Item E-4 is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting an amendment to the Future Land Use Map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 15, “Comprehensive Plan Text and Map Amendments,” and Small Scale amendment procedures (ss. 163.3187, Florida Statutes), from “Industrial” Land Use to “Mixed Use” Land Use and removing the “Mixed Use Overlay District” Land Use for the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5 and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. Legal description’s on file at the City. Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval by a vote of 4-0. This is also an ordinance on second reading. Item E-5, also an ordinance on second reading, is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting an amendment to the Zoning Map of the City of Coral Gables pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review”, Division 14, “Zoning Code Text and

Map Amendments”, from “Industrial” District to “Commercial” District and removing the “South Industrial Mixed-Use District” for the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5 and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. Legal description on file at the City. Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval by a vote of 4-0. The third ordinance, Item E-6, is an ordinance -- and again, on second reading -- is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida providing for text amendments to the City of Coral Gables Official Zoning Code, by amending Appendix A, “Site Specific Zoning Regulations,” Section A-66, “MacFarlane Homestead,” by modifying provisions for height and setbacks, and adding new provisions, for the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5 and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, codification, and providing for an effective date. Legal description on file at the City. Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval by a vote of 4-0. Item E-7, also on second reading, is an ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting review of a Planned Area Development (PAD) pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review,” Division 5, “Planned Area Development (PAD),” for the proposed project referred to as “Gables Station” on the property legally described as Tracts A and B, Block 5, and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for a repealer provision, severability clause, and providing for an effective date. Legal description’s on file at the City. Planning and Zoning Board, there was a motion to approve with conditions. The vote was 3-1. Because four votes are required for adoption of a recommendation, there is no recommendation. Item E-8, this is a resolution. It was referenced in the last meeting, but it wasn’t voted on because the resolution requires just one vote, so it’s going to be reviewed and voted on today. This is a resolution of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting Mixed-Use Site Plan Review pursuant to Zoning Code Article 4, “Zoning Districts,” Division 2, “Overlay and Special Purpose Districts,” Section 4-201, “Mixed Use District (MXD),” for the proposed project referred to as “Gables Station” on the project (sic) legally described as Tracts A

and B, Block 5, and Tract 1, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Albans Park (215 and 251 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions. Legal description's on file at the City. Again, in front of the Planning and Zoning Board, there was a motion to approve with conditions. The vote was 3-1. Because four votes were not acquired, there is no recommendation on that item. Now, these items are all being consolidated for purposes of the public hearing; some are legislative, some are quasi-judicial. They'll each be voted on separately. Because there's quasi-judicial items, I'm going to ask the Clerk to swear in everyone who plans to speak that's not a lawyer presenting their case. Mr. Clerk, could you do that at this time?

City Clerk Foeman: Could everyone stand who's going to speak? Raise your right hand. Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the statements you're about to offer here today will be the truth and nothing but the truth? Thank you.

City Attorney Leen: In addition, Mr. Clerk, and I do this on behalf of the Mayor, the Mayor set instructions for this matter. The -- each speaker that's recognized in the public hearing portion will have two minutes to address the Commission. If you -- the Mayor would ask that you identify whether you're within -- under our Code, you have to state your address, but we'd also ask you to identify -- the Mayor's asking within a thousand feet. And if you're specially injured in some way by this property allegedly, we may -- the Mayor has discretion to give you additional time. But please state that when you're presenting your item. The Mayor wants to stick to two minutes, though, because he'd like to have this hearing addressed efficiently. The second thing I'd like to mention is that portions of this are quasi-judicial. So, in that portion of the matter, the Commissioners are sitting as judges. So, if you're asked to speak -- I mean, pardon me. If you ask to speak, if you come up to speak and you fill out the card, understand that you could be subject to cross-examination. What that means is that one of the parties can ask you questions about your testimony. And you may see cross-examination today, and that's something that cannot be held against either of the parties. They're allowed to do that by law. It's a matter of due process. Also, we ask that there not be applause. There's actually rules of

decorum that we have, but we just ask that -- I'm sure everyone's going to follow that today. It's just that this is a quasi-judicial procedure, so we ask that those be followed, that if there's any direction from the Mayor or from the City Attorney acting as parliamentarian, that you follow them. We're trying to do that to maintain due process so whatever decision is made, it can be upheld in court. So, with that, I would turn it back to the Mayor.

Mayor Cason: Ramon, are you going to make the presentation of where we stand on the project?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes, Mayor. I have a brief presentation. If I could have the PowerPoint, please. Gables Station was reviewed last time. This is the second reading and...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Ramon, actually, before you get started -- sorry.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Vice Mayor Quesada: If you could just pay special attention if any changes have been made since the last time to this time.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: That is exactly what the PowerPoint is about.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Got it. Thank you.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Just to recap, the project is very unique in terms of its configuration and location in the city. It's truly unique in the sense that it's between US 1, Metrorail, right next to Le Jeune, and then Ponce de Leon. There are not too many buildings in close proximity. And one of the characteristics that we have of the building is that it does encourage mixed use. Now, the project has new renderings, such as this one, and I think the applicant will explain in more detail the architecture. But it has not changed significantly in

terms of the building. The public spaces, on the other hand, have been designed a bit more and you can see some of the quality of the landscape and some of the way that the building details begin to work more closely with the public space. So, in terms of the overall design, it's very similar to what it was before in terms of the public space. It has been refined significantly. The issues that were discussed in the first reading are the issues that I'm going to talk about today, and there were seven, basically seven. The first one was the height. There was some discussion about whether the building could be maybe less tall and maintain the same public space. The second issue was the location and the effect that the proposed powerlines may have on the design. There was also a need to finalize the trolley contribution. There was some detailing that had to be resolved as far as the Underline. There was an update on the traffic impact study, and we have to finalize the condition for the Art in Public Places. And then, finally, as I said, there as a desire to refine the landscape at the ground level. The first issue is the building height. Basically, upon looking at some of the conditions relating to the powerlines and some of the specifics of the site, staff has reviewed that this is a very unique site. Certainly, any decision that is made here cannot be considered any kind of precedent in any other place of the City. It's really very, very unique. And that because of the characteristics of the Metrorail right-of-way, of the effect of powerlines, and of the fact that the site is large enough to accommodate a well-designed and well-integrated mixed-use project, staff has recommended approval of the project as proposed. Now, as proposed means one building is 160 feet. The rest of the project is 148 feet. And you can see that in this diagram fairly clearly what that means. The 160 is measured to the top of the habitable top of the -- the tallest habitable space. And then, as you can see, as you come down towards the east, the buildings go down to 148. Now why is that? Well, I think that one of the most persuasive arguments of the need for the extra height, as presented by the applicant and then as reviewed by staff had to do with the Metrorail and also the proposed powerlines. And I want to thank the work from the Assistant City Manager Peter Iglesias with the discussion with the powerlines. He has been very involved with that and also Craig Leen, our City Attorney, for quite a long time. But we prepared this graphic just to show you what the current proposal is. Currently, the powerlines are proposed at 98 feet and they're fairly significant. And of course, there's also the powerlines themselves, not only the pole. And if you

look at it in terms of the site plan, the red dots are the locations. So, they're actually a little bit closer to the building and more in the location of what we would like to see developed as the Underline as they are right now. So, that is what we know today.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm sorry, I got to -- I'm sorry to break you up again. It's that I hate this so much. Can you tell me the distance -- or at least can you have someone look it up in the meantime before we're done with this hearing -- the distance from those poles to the subject project that we're looking at today, which I'm sure you know the answer to or someone in the room knows the answer to.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The distance in sections...

Vice Mayor Quesada: The distance from the red proposed pole location...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay.

Vice Mayor Quesada: To the building. And, if you go back to the next slide, distance in the other direction, to the Gables residential properties.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Okay, yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I'm curious to know the distance between the two. And I don't know if, Peter, you can answer that for me, or if someone can look that up for me. I don't need it right now, but if we can get it...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: We will -- we have staff working on that right now.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because we've all discussed up here that the impact...

Commissioner Keon: It's about 60 feet.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I just -- I want to know what the exact number is for both.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, I think it's about 60.

Mayor Cason: That's where they're at right now.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Okay. I'm sorry. You can continue.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yeah. And again, that is a proposed plan. I don't know if it's going to be like that. This is the best information we have right now based on Peter Iglesias and Craig Leen's comments. And that gives you a sense of how many power poles are going to be there and where they're going to be. So, it's going to be a very significant element in the design of that street. The mobility contribution was the other issue which has to do with the trolley. And Javier Betancourt worked on this and came up with a very good solution. And basically, it's funding the purchase of one trolley and two years of operation in terms of cost, or in the future, if there's a better way to coordinate with the University of Miami, there's some ways to make that contribution be part of the condition. So, the actual condition -- the language of the condition is, I think, very well written and it explains those two options very well. The other issue is the Underline implementation. It had to do with coming up with a design, a conceptual design that you can see has been developed fairly well, proposing a bond to be able to make sure that it's going to happen, and then proposing a timeframe that allows for the project to be implemented. That also, again, is in great detail in the condition. And keep in mind that the Underline still has to be finalized in terms of an implementation process by the County, so that's why we have some flexibility written into the condition. The traffic impact study was reviewed and approved by staff. The last issues have to do with some minor issues of geometry, nothing significant in terms of traffic flow or traffic counts. And as you know, there was a project approved prior to this project that had something like 60 percent more traffic generated. So, the

current proposal is a reduction on the prior approval. And the geometry that is proposed in terms of the access has been reviewed and approved by staff and is acceptable. The Art in Public Places, the applicant anticipates to incorporate the artwork into the project, and they would like to also acknowledge the Bahamian heritage of the MacFarlane neighborhood that we talked about earlier today, which is across from US 1, across from the project. So, all of that, I think, has been also resolved. The ground level landscaping, which happens to be a big issue because, as you know, some things count as landscape which are not quite landscape most of the time. And if you look at the open space diagram, what I tried to accomplish here with this diagram is that in the upper diagram is the arcades -- in other words, the open space areas that are covered. That's shown in the upper diagram. In the lower diagram are the areas that are not covered, the areas that are open to the sky. In yellow is sidewalks; in green is what is landscape. It's grass and trees. So, that gives you a good sense of the proportion. That's about 40 percent of the site. Now, the landscape along US 1 is meant to be a buffer that enhances the experience of the pedestrian at the arcade, so I think that's fairly well resolved. It also gives a good sense of greenery as one enters into the City of Coral Gables, which is, again, a major issue in terms of the aesthetics of the city. So, those are the, I think, bigger issues that were discussed since the last meeting. And finally, the recommendation of the five requests -- we had five requests. We're recommending approval and approval with conditions for the PAD and for the mixed-use site plan. So, if you have any questions, I believe the applicant is here also to explain further, but that's the end of my presentation.

Mayor Cason: Okay. Does the applicant speak next please?

Jeffrey Bass: Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission, good afternoon. It's nice to see everybody again. Jeffrey Bass is my name; 46 Southwest 1st Street is my address. And it's my great pleasure to present the application for the Gables Station project. There are a few very important facts that I would like to highlight because I see a lot of people here who were not here on first reading, and perhaps the viewing public might not be aware of some of the various significant facts that we believe justify the approval of this project. I'd like to highlight them

very briefly, and I'd also like to talk just for a moment or two about some developments that have occurred since the time of first reading, and then turn this over to Mr. Hernandez to walk you through a few diagrams. Gables Station is a mixed-use project. It includes a residential component, unlike the prior approval there. It is what we call a transit-oriented development that is organized around three concepts, live, work and play. We went through those during first reading. I don't need to elaborate on them now, other than to say we designed Gables Station as a place where people could live in Coral Gables, ride the rail to work because they're living right next to the rail, thereby taking that trip off of the road that is created by people driving to the rail, so that's why we say it's a great place for people to live and work. And I'd like to say it's also a great place for people to live, work and play due to the unprecedented commitment of this applicant to fund a signature segment of the Underline adjacent to it, and to fund and perform the work of converting certain city asphalt parking lots into a new recreational park area. So, live, work, play is the theme. Gables Station, as the name itself implies, is all about connectivity to transit. This is a very complex site. It has sat as surface parking lot of decades. And this project seeks to stitch into its fabric the Underline and these new parks that we are creating to really transform this into a very active and vibrant location. For those who were not present before, I think it's quite important to note that a commercial project was approved as of right here, and the Planning director mentioned it, but I do believe it merits a pause to note that by introducing mixed-use, we reduced by 60 percent the traffic generated by this development. Another way to say that is what is already approved on this project generates two and a half times more traffic than this proposal, a remarkable fact. Mr. Plummer is here to both reaffirm these facts and to correct my math if I miscalculated anything. Public realm and open space. We are very proud to bring to you a project that provides over 40 percent open space. Over 40 percent open space is just a percentage. I think for context it's important to look at it against what your Code requires. Your Code requires 20 percent open space. We have more than doubled that. Importantly, if you were to look at our project within the context that we're creating by the Underline segment and by converting those parking lots into green space. The eye will read our site as if it is only 20 percent built and rather has 80 percent open space, as Mr. Hernandez presented during the first reading. It's really a remarkable accomplishment when you think about the effort to take

those surface parking lots, turn them into green space and create a public amenity out of them. As your staff mentioned, and I'd just like to touch upon briefly, we have agreed to fund a very significant segment of the Underline. We hopefully will deliver it as its first built segment. I think that would be something for which this community would be quite proud. As it relates to the trolley, we have agreed to fund the acquisition and operation of the trolley. There are two very carefully crafted staff conditions addressing both the Underline and trolley funding and acquisition and we wholeheartedly accept those conditions as have been imposed by staff. I'd like to say you asked us to work with your staff on the conditions of approval when we left here after first reading. Your team and our team spent a tremendous amount of their collective time together, and I'm happy to say we accept all of your staff conditions as they are written as part of your staff report for our project as proposed. There seems to be some confusion in the community on this issue of density and intensity, so let me take a moment to clarify that because I think the truth and the facts are very important. Even though we are funding the acquisition of a trolley, even though we are funding the construction of a segment of the Underline, even though we are funding and performing the work to convert those parking lots into parks, even though we have left 40 percent of our project open, and even though we are reducing traffic by 60 percent, we are not seeking any additional density and we are not seeking any additional intensity. So, if you came here because you thought this project was seeking more density than allowed, we are not. If you came here because you thought we were seeking more intensity than is allowed, we are not. And lastly, while I'm in the clarification business, if you came here because we are seeking variances, we are not. Height. The height that we seek is justified by the constraints of the site, by the residential use that we seek to build, by the indisputable proximity to the Metrorail and its noise, and to the unique configuration of this narrow site. Now, since the time of first reading, we looked quite carefully at how we could possibly reduce this height. We looked at it, we studied it. We met with your staff and they studied it. But this Commission brought up a new fact at first reading that we didn't fully appreciate, and I thank you for bringing it up and giving us an opportunity to study it, and that's the powerlines. We spent a significant amount of time studying the powerlines and their implications on this project. And again, I want to thank the leadership on this Commission for bringing that up because that was not a constraint

that I think we fully appreciated when first we came here. It is our studied professional judgment that the heights of the building are correct as designed. And the powerline condition only further confirms this fact. In light of the powerlines and the Metrorail and the noise created by the Metrorail, it is our team's studied professional judgment that it would be incorrect architecturally to lower the height and bring the habitable floor spaces closer to the powerlines and closer to the noise created by the Metrorail. It would unjustifiably compromise the integrity of the design. It would compromise space that we hoped would be a lovely space for people to live. We do not see any appreciable benefit by reducing the height. In fact, we see a palpable detriment in doing so due to the noise and due to the lines. We looked at it. We studied that. I'm not just here paying lip service to it. But we concluded that the project only gets worse by lowering the height, and we are not inclined to do that. Just a few other quick facts before I turn this over to Mr. Hernandez. It is also your staff's studied and professional judgement that the heights of the buildings proposed are correct. And that's not an abstract recommendation. It is a recommendation tempered by thought of the potential precedent that you might be establishing and your professional staff told you in no uncertain terms that this would not establish any precedent because of the unique configurations and constraints of this site and its location. So, we have your staff's professional support and recommendation for approval for the reasons explained both by Mr. Trias and in his report. And we would ask that you adopt that. We still enjoy and are quite proud of the support of the Lola B. Walker Homeowner's Association, and we know that they have some membership here to address you today. We ask for your approval. We ask that you adopt your staff's recommendation of approval. We ask that you adopt their findings of fact as your own. I would like to save just a few minutes for rebuttal, if I may need them. And now I'll ask Mr. Hernandez to just briefly walk you through some of the new studies that we did since the time of first reading. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Mr. Hernandez.

George Hernandez: Good afternoon. George Hernandez, 337 Palermo Avenue. It's a pleasure to be before you today, and I will walk you through the project once again. Let me spread the

drawings because they're cluttered. So, you know, we heard Mr. Bass speak about the intent of the project. It is a unique site, as has been mentioned numerous times, bound by the US 1 corridor, the park and Ponce, and a multi -- and a mixed-use building beyond, and then, of course, Le Jeune, and to the east, nearly the boundaries of the City of Coral Gables and the beginning of the boundaries of the City of Miami. I'm going to just very briefly speak about the site and its context, if I may. Just to talk about the fact that there is a natural transition occurring at this site from single-family residential all the way up to mixed use. So, if we begin at Riviera Canal and work towards the north, there's the Riviera Canal and then there's one single-family house that backs to the Riviera Canal and fronts Riviera, that's 5040. When you cross Riviera, which is the street on which that house sits, you have the Bermuda Village. The Bermuda Village -- and the zoning map of the City is there. The Bermuda Village spans an entire city block fronting Ponce. It goes from Riviera to Suarez Street. From there and when you cross Suarez street, you enter a commercially zoned area. Those commercial properties range from one to four stories in height, and they go from Suarez on the south along Ponce to that intersection, you know, that famous intersection of Le Jeune, Grand Avenue, Blue Road and US 1, which is a kind of confluence as a number of streets. Just north of that intersection is the beginning or the tip of our site. So, it goes very naturally from single family to multifamily to commercial, up to four stories, to the site. Now, if we do the same thing on the US 1 frontage coming backwards from north to south, we have an empty lot that used to be a gas station. Many of you remember the gas station -- the three corner gas stations there. Beyond that, we have a building which has a retail store called Diver's Direct. It used to be the old (INAUDIBLE) hardware store. Just south of that is a small strip shopping center, which includes a check cashing store and a vape and smoke store and a vacant shop and Taco Rico, which is a restaurant that my kids frequent. And then just south of that is a standalone Starbuck's. At that point, you have made it halfway from the confluence of the famous intersection to Suarez. The remaining block and a half is the City fire station, Riviera fire station and the trolley depot. So, one and a half width of that frontage on US 1 is the City property. What happens afterwards is that the rail reorients and the depth of those lots, of the commercial lots on US 1 grow. Okay, the depth of the lots where the Starbuck's is, the depth of the lots where the shopping center is, the depths of

the lots where Diver's Direct and the old (INAUDIBLE) was is a hundred feet. And because of the reorientation of the rail and the confluence of geometries of all of those streets coming together, we cross Le Jeune and we get to a property that is now 175 feet deep. US 1 to Ponce, that is our property, okay. It is 175 feet deep and it is 1,200 feet long, so it is a very long, thin site, but it is a site wide enough for development at this scale. And then the rail approaches US 1 again to the very north tip of our site and the site starts compressing, which is why I think you've heard staff say this is unique by virtue of the adjacencies. It's also unique by virtue of that growth in depth. So, the site proper, as I said, is also unique because it is immediately adjacent to -- we're calling it the Underline Park. And you have heard that there is an unprecedented commitment on the part of NPI to fund this section of the Underline. It will be, I believe, the first section of the Underline certainly in Coral Gables. The size of that park, which we're calling the Underline Park, is about 2.9 acres. And that is -- let me show you a board for a second. So, this is the size of that park, which we're calling Gables Station Park or Underline Park. We don't have a name for it yet. But here are the comparable other parks. So, it is larger than these other comparable parks, which is Jaycee Park, Ingraham Terrace Park, Hartnett Ponce Circle Park, and MacFarlane Park range from 1.3 acres to 1.569 acres -- so, 1.3 to 1.7. And this park in question is 2.895 acres. So, the organization of that parkland and the incorporation of that parkland into our existing site, which has nearly 47 percent of open ground floor space will really be an asset and a green virtue for the City, as Mr. Bass stated. It's nearly 80 -- when you consider both together, it's nearly 80 percent open space and 80 percent green. It's unprecedented for a project, that level of porosity on the ground floor. More importantly, this annexation, if you will, because of the adjacency is not about a taking of the park. It's quite the contrary. It's about a giving because not only are we paying to in fact implement the Underline Park, but we're also creating pockets of urban rooms and urban spaces in our property that we interweave with that park, so when you visit as a citizen, you don't see the property line. You see an extraordinary amount of open public land that straddles public/private, but it functions as one organic public realm, which is very important, so we're saying it's about a taking, not a giving. So, let me just go to the next two boards, if I may. So, how are we dealing with this long, thin sliver of land? We are subdividing it into three parcels or three mini blocks, or three

buildings; however you want to call them. And the drawing on the right shows in the kind of salmon color the footprint of those three blocks. North is on your right, south is on your left. The southernmost one is the building that includes commercial on the ground floor, hotel in the middle, and residential units above. The middle building has commercial on the ground floor, parking in the middle and residential units above. And the right most building, the northernmost building has commercial on the ground floor, parking in the middle, and residential units above. All of the parking, as was mentioned last time and this is for the record and for the people that are here, has been coordinated in the northernmost and middle building. That allows the southernmost building to fully engage the ground, activate the public realm and create, for example, this space, which is the signature space of the project, which is a very large, generous plaza with arcades, colonnades, fountains. You saw a photograph of it earlier when the Planning director spoke. And you can see on the board to your left that the buildings are articulated. The massing of the building is articulated to that southern face so that it captures shadows and models the masses of the building. All three buildings have terraces onto US 1 so the verdant quality of US 1 because of the planted setback, which also has been spoken of, also happens vertically because there's green above it. I will just now show you a series of renderings that flesh out those qualities a little bit better. So, that's the point of the southernmost building. And as you see here -- we discussed this the last time -- that building is set back. The point of it is set way back. And the hemicycle, not unlike the hemicycle of this room, is only 24-foot high, so it's commercial height, and that's a verdant urban roof deck, which is planted as a park. We'll have beautiful views, and we'll be dining -- outside dining. You can see the view of the Underline Park beautifully landscaped, very, very verdant. And in fact, those three parking lots that exist there now in the public lands will be turned into green space. One lot will remain. We are building it as a kind of sustainable, very green lot so that when the cars are absent, it can function as a paved space and a parking lot. And I'll just keep scrolling through the drawings, if I may. This is another view, the view from US 1, where you see that all of the terraces are planted with bougainvillea and palms. So, again, this would be like a green gateway into Coral Gables. You really start to understand the green nature of the project, the arcades which wrap all sides, except the north side, for obvious reasons, because of the lack of light there. And then this is a view of

the north side with the commercial properties to the bottom of the drawing and this kind of square, this verdant square, the likes of which you saw. The last image that I have, which is this one, which talks about this kind of, you know, living room, this common living room. It was mentioned -- and I will just repeat that we have been working with the neighbors from the MacFarlane Homestead area. We are incorporating their building traditions into the project because it's little known that much of the technology of building in coral stone in Miami comes from the Bahamian building tradition. So, much of the tectonics of the architecture that we feel is Coral Gables architecture and early Miami architecture, we owe to the building traditions of the islands. And lastly, as you see, without belaboring the point, this project is heir to the architectural traditions of Coral Gables and the cornices, columns, capitals, pilasters, arches, rustications, arcades, raised lawns, fountains, verdant areas, communal public spaces. It will, in fact, continue the living tradition of the best spaces of this city. And of that, I am very proud. I would also like to thank all of you and the staff for raising the issue of the poles. And I know that a question was brought up about the poles, so I will certainly close with an answer to the question. But I would just like to say that we have included in your packet the information for the pole's vertical height, the horizontal height from the poles because of the swerving of the rail and the property line varies, that it hovers around low seventies and gets up to middle eighties -- lower to middle eighties, okay. The last thing that we spoke about the last time and it's very important now is not just the height of the rail, which with the rail and the moving car is 34 feet, and remember, the height that we are asking for is 148 feet for two of the three buildings, which are the two apartment buildings, and 160 feet for the southernmost building, which is the building that contains the hotel. But really, if you add the 34 feet of rail and moving car to heights that have been approved in this area before, like 120, you end up with the same mathematical number. We have done an acoustical study because since we've been studying the powerline, we've also engaged in an acoustical study. And without getting into the language and hard science of it, the best way that I can convey it is if we were at the height of the rail and another hundred or so feet above -- I mean, ten or so feet above, it will be like sitting in the front row of a rock concert. At the place where the apartments begin, it's like being in front of a box truck five feet away from you. And the sound at the opposite side of the park for the Gables

Ponce building is like a vacuum cleaner. That assumes no protection at the building envelope. Of course, we're going to protect the building envelope against sound. And five decibels, I have learned, is an extraordinary difference in the experience, but you're talking about an experience that is front row seat of a concert versus a vacuum cleaner. Given that and the powerlines, after much work and study with your staff, it is my recommendation that these buildings are at the necessary height, the right height for the quality of development that this project shows in its rendering and that we have in our city. Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Alright, let's start with those -- everybody who wants to speak, if they will -- if you haven't put your card in, please do so now. We'll start with Wayne Eldred. Again, two minutes, please, and state if you're a resident, where you -- Wayne was here earlier. Is he...

City Attorney Leen: Yes. Please remember your name, your address, and if you're within a thousand feet.

Mayor Cason: Leona Cooper.

Leona Cooper: I would like to speak last, respectfully.

Mayor Cason: Okay. Debra Kolsky.

Commissioner Lago: She left.

Mayor Cason: Okay. Alicia Fernandez.

Alicia Fernandez: Good afternoon. My name's Alicia Fernandez. I live in 6000 Granada Boulevard. I wasn't coming to speak. I wasn't prepared for anything. I came for something else, but since I'm here, I thought I should say something positive. And I really believe that this

project is a beautiful project. Instead of having parking lots, car dealerships, I think this would instead be a nice landmark to the entrance of Coral Gables on US 1 and Le Jeune. And I'd really like to see it happen. It's not big. It's just very beautiful property being built there to change the area.

Mayor Cason: Do you live within a thousand feet? Do you know?

Ms. Fernandez: I don't believe I do, but I -- yeah, I was here for something else and I saw this. And actually, I didn't even know this was going on today.

Mayor Cason: Okay, thank you. Thank you.

Ms. Fernandez: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Meg Daly.

Meg Daly: Hello.

Mayor Cason: Hello.

Ms. Daly: My name is Meg Daly, and I live at 1004 Cotorro. I do not live within a thousand feet of the project, but I'm speaking on behalf of Friends of the Underline, and we strongly support the Gables Station project. Why? Because Gables Station embodies what we need to be doing with sustainable development in our community. Building new transit and mobility corridors and much needed green space to balance development with adjacent parks and recreational areas and being sensitive to the community and responding to their needs. Friends of the Underline's design advisory has rigorous standards for development adjacent to the

Underline corridor. And our team has met many times with the developer and their design team. Their management and designers have implemented all our recommendations, making for mixed use development that feels part of the fabric of the Underline and its neighbors. Everyone wants to be in the City Beautiful and I understand that we need to manage growth. But development that embraces the public realm, connectivity, green space and public transit is the kind of growth we need to support because it's a sustainable vision that our city can build on for the future. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Maria Cruz.

Maria Cruz: Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road, and no, I do not believe I live within a thousand, but I live in the City of Coral Gables. And I think we're getting to the point where we need to address what we want our city to look like. And if we're looking to make our entrance another Brickell canyon, we're doing a good job at it. I think that some things are being said that are -- really make me laugh because, as I said, I live on Miller Road and I hear the Metrorail from my house, even though I have hurricane impact windows and doors. So, if anybody thinks that they can stay in a hotel room at that location and not be impacted by the noise, I have some land in the middle of the Everglades to sell. And also, I think it's time to address height, very important. And the next one is people that live there will use rapid transit. We've been dealt with that many times. People that live in Florida, in Miami expect to have a car, expect to drive it. Anybody who thinks that it'll be otherwise, once again, I have some land to sell you. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Maria.

Mayor Cason: Linda Dixie.

Linda Dixie: Good afternoon. My name is Linda Dixie. I live at 142 Florida Avenue in Coral Gables, and I live within 1,000 feet of the project. Our community, which I represent, is the MacFarlane District. We feel this will be an asset to the community, as far as providing jobs and the open space that our community will be able to use. So, we support the project. We feel with the Metrorail and the Underline, this will make our city more comparable to other cities that have beautiful parks under the Metrorail. And also the corporation has worked with us and they are going to use art and some of the historical documents that we have that represent the Bahamian community and the contributions, so we support the project.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: John Allen.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Mayor Cason: He's gone? Oh, you don't want to speak? Okay. Bradley Richter.

Bradley Richter: Hi. I'm Dr. Bradley Richter, 4569 Ponce de Leon Boulevard. As I expressed the last Commission meeting, I have been personally and professionally familiar with this section of Ponce all my life. My animal hospital is located right across the street. I have seen many projects being proposed for this area. I firmly believe that this is probably the right project for this area. I think the developer and the City has spent a lot of time getting it right this time. I think the park is a great idea. My only concern, as I have expressed numerous times, is the parking. I think the parking needs to still be reevaluated and looked at maybe a little bit more closely because you have the passport office there that will require parking. The businesses there today and in the future will expand, and I think the parking that is there now is maybe adequate

for today, but I'm not sure it's going to be adequate for the future, particularly if the park is successful. So, I endorse the project. I think we've made the right decision this time.

Mayor Cason: And you live within a thousand feet, for the record; is that correct?

Mr. Richter: I do not live within a thousand.

Mayor Cason: Do not, okay.

Commissioner Keon: His business.

Commissioner Lago: His business is though.

Mayor Cason: Business, right. Mildred at 1 -- I can't read the second -- it's 123 Florida Avenue.

City Attorney Leen: So, just to be clear for the record...

Mayor Cason: (INAUDIBLE) -- I can't -- it's the handwriting, I can't tell.

City Attorney Leen: Dr. Richter's office is within a thousand feet.

Mayor Cason: Within a thousand feet, okay.

City Attorney Leen: His office.

Mayor Cason: Gay Bondurant. Edwina Prime.

Edwina Prime: Good afternoon, Mayor.

Mayor Cason: Hi.

Ms. Prime: Madam City Manager, Mr. City Attorney, Mr. City Clerk, and members of the Commission. My name is Edwina Prime, and I reside at 141 Florida Avenue, and I live within a thousand feet. I am here today individually and as president of the Lola B. Walker Homeowner's Association to enthusiastically support the Gables Station project. I am here representing many of our homeowners who strongly support this project, but could not be here today because they're working. And at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting, I submitted a petition with 46 signatures of our residents from our neighborhood in support of the Gables Station. Mr. Brent Reynolds and his team came to a couple of our monthly homeowners meetings. He gave us a history of his company and then walked us through the various components of the project, including the request for additional height. Mr. Reynolds came back to report changes to the project. He also met numerous times with the board of directors of the homeowner's association and the foundation arm. We welcome this project and the many benefits that it brings to our neighborhood not only in employment opportunities, but also in providing a hotel and retail and service establishments that our residents can enjoy just a trolley stop away from our neighborhood. Mr. Reynolds has made a point to include us, not just as neighbors that might be impacted, but as residents and neighbors to partake and enjoy the amenities of the Gables Station and the improvements he will make to the Underline adjacent to it. Our neighborhood, the MacFarlane Homestead and Golden Gate area -- that's it? -- is probably the most impacted by this project. Please know that we want this project and support it. We look forward to seeing the vibrant Gables Station take the place of the vacant parcel abutting our neighborhood. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Marlin Ebbert.

Marlin Ebbert: Hi there. Good afternoon. I'm Marlin Ebbert, and I live at 6935 Almansa Street. I just have one question and I've been kind of walking through my memory. I don't believe there's a Metrorail stop at this location, is there?

Unidentified Speaker: It's within a quarter-mile of the stop at 37th Avenue.

Ms. Ebbert: Douglas? And the University Station is, I would say, a good mile to the south, right?

Unidentified Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Ebbert: I walk every morning at 6 am. Some of the people that I walk with are here with me. At 6 am, I'm in a T-shirt and shorts and get home at 7 absolutely saturated six months of the year. I really question whether or not we're kidding ourselves that people are going to be taking public transportation that are living there. We're just adding more and more cars and that's my opinion. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Marlin.

Mayor Cason: Mark Patrick. Bruce Bounds. Mark Trowbridge. Dressing up here for us, huh?

Mark Trowbridge: I got warm when Marlin started talking about walking outside, so I took off my jacket. Well, good afternoon, everybody. I'm Mark Trowbridge. I'm the president of our Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce. We're located at 224 Catalonia Avenue, Coral Gables, Florida. We were here with you on first reading and brought our support forth. There are a number of our board members who are here with me today. You've read many of their names in support from the earlier cards, Mr. Mayor. And I just want to be here to reiterate on behalf of our chamber and our leadership that we continue to be in support of the Gables Station project. And I just want to specifically mention kind of two components. I think the first is obviously the investment in the Underline and the green space that will not only improve that project, but

improve that gateway into our city. And then the second really is the folks who will live in those buildings who will be future consumers and partake in the livelihood of our business community here. I don't think that can be underestimated in the sense of the folks who will be visiting our shops and dining in our restaurants and contributing more than just to our local tax base, but they'll be invested members of our local community. So, it's heartening to hear from members of the adjacent neighborhoods who support the project, and I think that's a commendation to Brent and his team for going out and doing the work of, you know, building relationships and moving this forward and he certainly has done that with our chamber and a number of other stakeholders, so we continue to stand in support of this project and ask you for your approval today. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you, Mark.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Mark.

Mayor Cason: Sonia Blumenthal.

Commissioner Lago: Good afternoon.

Mayor Cason: Hi.

Sonia Blumenthal: Good afternoon. My name is Sonia Blumenthal, and I live at 615 Villa Bella Avenue. I live in a single-family home that's just west of Le Jeune Road and I support this project. If you walk to the end of Villa Bella, you could have a cup of coffee at Havana Harry's. From Havana Harry's, of course, you could look at the Gables Ponce building. If I walked back home, just a couple of homes east, I see nothing. I see nothing but a canopy of fichus trees, black olive trees and oaks. So, I'm supporting the project because, quite frankly, my view does not change. When someone here mentions live, work, play, that definitely resonated with me. I live in Coral Gables, which I absolutely adore. I work in Brickell. I take the rail to Brickell. I

love taking the rail. I love seeing Poinciana in bloom in May. I think it would be a crime not to do this because it would offer a playground, a playground for us to be able to go to parks, take our children, take our grandchildren. All I see now from the station when I ride the Metrorail is just a bunch of cars in parking lots that looks industrial. It doesn't even fit our city anymore. So, I support this project.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much. And finally, and she asked to be last, Leona Cooper.

Ms. Cooper: Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Cason: How are you?

Ms. Cooper: My City Attorney, my City Clerk, and my City Manager. I'm happy to be here to talk about this project, and I hope that it will be passed today because it is something that we need. I have lived in that neighborhood much longer than most of you have lived in Coral Gables. And of course my favorite Commissioner was not even born when I...

Mayor Cason: Whipper snapper.

Commissioner Lago: I must not really be your favorite because you haven't answered my call in a few days.

Ms. Cooper: But I want you to know that I am in favor of this coming here. Because having lived -- and my husband was born in the MacFarlane homestead. Since the beginning of time, which is almost 100 years, we have had to walk out to Federal Highway, as we called it, US 1, and look at the ugliness of parking lots with trucks and cars. And on Sunday mornings when we would return from Mass, listen to calliopes making big noises so people could buy cars. Nothing attractive has ever been on that site, and it's about the first time in 100 years it will be something that we could be proud of. And I hope that you will approve this. I could give you a long

speech, but I don't think it's needed because I think everybody up there has a just mind and you're going to vote for the approval of this. If you don't, it's going to be really bad news for you because I will really berate you in the newspaper. So, I'm asking for your approval. And I'm not going to stand up here and say all the things I thought about saying before because I don't think it's necessary because all of the speakers that have come up here have been in, you know, agreement that this is a nice thing. You've never had anything there but lots of cars or trucks and ugliness, and so it's about time that our neighborhood experiences something new and different and beautiful. We deserve it. We're all the children of, you know, that person up there, that we deserve that same happiness and beautification. So, I'm expecting that you will vote positive. And like I said, if you don't, you're going to be in trouble with me.

Mayor Cason: Thank you, Leona. Okay, that closes the public hearing part of this discussion. So, comments, any...

Commissioner Keon: You know, I spoke in favor of this project on first reading. I continue to support the project on second reading. I know that the concerns that have been raised with regard to height and the comparison to Brickell, I don't think they're at all appropriate. What is on Brickell is far higher than anything that is being proposed here. And you look at the roadway that it fronts, that height is proportional to that roadway, so it fits; it works. We've been told that it does not set a precedent. There is no other parcel along there that you can build on because of the width of the parcels. I do believe that people will take the Metrorail, despite the fact that it is -- we see now any increased ridership on the Metrorail all the time. We know more and more people are taking the Metrorail. I think if we put residential development along that site, you will see even more people using the Metrorail. The trolley service is the Metrorail stop that is there. So, if someone chooses to walk and as we move it they are giving -- they are adding another trolley to the system. They are paying for the operational cost of that trolley. And if it becomes an issue, I'm sure there will be a coordination between those buildings, just like Gables Pointe, whatever, where there are large numbers of residential properties that you can easily move back and forth to the Metrorail. Anything else that has ever been proposed there has

significant amounts of traffic. This project has far less traffic associated with it than any project that has ever been planned or proposed for that area. I also think that we, as a community, and as leaders in the community have an obligation for sustainable development, for caring for our lands for the issues of pollution. Most pollution comes from the exhaust of cars. We need to place residential properties near transportation centers so that we act as responsible citizens on this planet. So, for all of the reasons -- I think the height is appropriate because of the Metrorail, because of the proximity to the electric poles that will eventually go in there. I think it is -- I'm very happy to see that they will develop the park. I think that those are all wonderful things. But the real issue here is, is that the appropriate kind of development at that site. I think, yes, it is. And is the height appropriate? Yes, it is. So, I will vote in favor of this project.

Mayor Cason: Vince.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you, Commissioner Keon. Mayor, just indulge me with maybe a few moments, if you can. I got several issues I want to talk about. I want to talk about first thing the incredible parts of this project, which I think separate it from a lot of other projects that are not only happening in, you know, south -- not only in Coral Gables, but throughout South Florida. And one of the ordinances that I'm working on right now, as my colleagues are aware and hopefully we will bring it before the Commission for ratification, is the expansion of currently the open space requirements for the commercial projects. I think that's going to be a game changer for the City of Coral Gables as our city and South Florida and the state of Florida becomes more and more dense. I think that we, as a city, need to be responsible and we need to try to purchase as much private land and make it into open space, public open space. So, what the project is doing here in regards to having a 20 percent code requirement and, correct me if I'm wrong, please, I think currently the applicant is proffering 47 percent, is to be commended. The fact that a LEED certification is going to be attained in this project is to be commended. That was not part -- that is not something that's being proffered. That is now required as per the Code, as per an ordinance that I put forth. In reference to the beautification, the beauty of the Mediterranean design, I commend an incredible architect, Mr. Hernandez. He does an

exceptional job. In reference to the commitment to the Underline, as Meg mentioned, you know, having the City invest close to \$4 million on the Underline -- excuse me, having the applicant invest close to \$4 million is to be commended. And please, Meg, don't hold this against me, but I think -- I don't hold much faith that the whole project will get done. I hope and I'm praying and I have a lot of faith in Meg, but you know, it's a big ticket item and I think it may take many years. And I would love nothing more than to see, you know, Coral Gables be the first to have the Underline completed. In reference to the fact that there's direct neighborhood support from my friends at the MacFarlane neighborhood, along with the trolley and the operating funds for the next two years, again, like Commissioner Keon mentioned, this is a significantly superior design. And also, it's extremely more beneficial in reference to the first iteration, which you'll see, from my understanding, I'm not a traffic expert, but you're talking about close to 60 percent reduction in cars, which I think you can never scoff at that. And I also think that it's an extensive landmark entrance instead of a parking garage, a surface parking garage, which has been an eyesore to this community. But now, with that being said, those are the positive attributes in the project that I think are very beneficial. There are some site specific challenges, like was mentioned by Mr. Bass. You have the Metrorail, you have US 1, and you have the proposed powerlines -- the increased proposed powerlines. I think those are challenging aspects that make any development, no matter what it is, either it's this project -- it was the previous iteration that was approved, which is a commercial strip center -- big-box commercial...

Commissioner Keon: It's a big box.

Commissioner Lago: One way or another, the project was going to struggle, but I have my concerns, and my concerns are not new concerns. And before I get into that, I wanted to go into the ideas -- to the idea that I received several emails in favor of the project and several emails against the project. I think what we have here is a little bit of confusion and what Mr. Bass mentioned to you before. We here are not faced with a dilemma in reference to an increase in density and an increase in intensity. I received an email from the Gables Good Government, which does an incredible job in reference to getting the message out, but I was disappointed by

the email that I received on several notes, which was inflammatory and did not really express what we were dealing with today. And what we're dealing with today is height. We're dealing with height here, okay. And I have had a continued battle with height since I've been on this dais for three years, an internal struggle. This is internally. And this is not the first time this happens with me. This is probably the third time where I'm faced with whether approving a spectacular project for the City of Coral Gables versus voting no. I've had several meetings with the applicant. I've sat down with them. I've mentioned to them and I was very clear during my first reading that I would not be in favor of the project unless there was a reduction in height. Currently, as of right -- and correct me if I'm wrong, Ramon -- what's permissible by the Code is 100 feet. And what's being proposed now is close to a 60 percent increase from that. And that, to me, results in a conundrum in reference to how I'm going to either support or vote against this project. As I mentioned to you before, I've had multiple meetings with the applicants and with our staff and I have been very clear in reference to where I stand in reference to whether I would support or not support this project. I had hoped that the applicant and as I had requested and I had been memorialized in the Miami Herald, I had hoped that the applicant had come before us and reduced the project. If not at 120 feet, close to 120 feet, as was recommended by Planning and Zoning. That obviously did not occur. And I want to be clear, if the applicant would have come before us with an increase -- would have come before me with an increase in height with a slight uptick in density or intensity, as long as the public benefits are significant, I would have voted in favor of this project. But I think at 160 feet, I don't feel comfortable -- just like I did not vote in favor of Mediterranean Village and just like I did not vote in favor of the project next to Nordstrom's, I feel that it would be very difficult for me to support this project. Even though I find myself in a tough situation because I feel that the benefits are so significant currently.

Mayor Cason: Frank.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I had a few questions first, actually. Is David Plummer here?

Tim Plummer: Tim Plummer.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Tim Plummer. I'm sorry, Tim Plummer. I went through your parking study and I heard what Mr. Bass had to say and I saw the net trips down from 780 to 331...

Mr. Plummer: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think was the number that I saw in your report.

Mr. Plummer: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But that didn't answer a question for me. I was looking at the peak hours, am and pm, the -- I guess, the comings and goings each way. And I guess I didn't see anything going to the west. And I think it was Sonia Blumenthal that spoke that was in favor of the project and said she lived on the west side of Le Jeune, but I guess I didn't see anything going that way. I guess, a simple question for you -- I've given more background than I need to, but a simple question is, what is the net impact on trips going west of Le Jeune?

Mr. Plummer: We did a distribution assignment. We do have trips going west. It connects into Ponce.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I must have missed it in your report then.

Mr. Plummer: Yeah. The connection to Ponce, we have trips going east towards the roundabout and west towards Le Jeune, and same thing with the outbound on US 1. They travel south-west, if you will. And then we have the access point on Grand Avenue where it's right out...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Can you tell me what the peak am and pm is leaving the project going west across Le Jeune Road? Can you just take a quick look at that?

Mr. Plummer: I'd have to go figure that out and let you know.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Okay, because I have another follow-up question.

Mr. Plummer: Okay. Do you want to know the percentage of the trips?

Vice Mayor Quesada: I want to know the actual counts.

Mr. Plummer: Okay.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because you had it with counts, but I didn't see that one exactly.

Mr. Plummer: Yeah, right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And that's the one that -- look, I hear the traffic is down compared to the last one, but we had a long hearing for the previous project that was approved for this. For those that don't recall, it was essentially, Dadeland Station placed here, essentially a large shopping mall placed here, which the only item -- they were doing it as of right and the only issue we were having was parking, and that's when we -- when I first met Mr. Richter and we were talking about the traffic patterns and the flows and everything, and there were significant traffic issues there. And I know it's down 60 percent, so that makes me feel warm and fuzzy that that's down, but I still -- I'm still missing that one piece of information of the impact to the immediately residential area to the west. So, if you just tell me the quick number, that's all I need from you.

Mr. Plummer: Yeah, I'll do that. And one of the things to consider too, as you know, on Le Jeune, north of Ponce, those streets are all closed.

Vice Mayor Quesada: True.

Mr. Plummer: There's been some traffic calming as you travel Ponce and you cross Le Jeune Road, you go onto Blue Road, a lot of traffic calming as well in that neighborhood. That's one of the most well protected neighborhoods in the City of Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, then I guess my question would be into Blue Road coming out of the project, but I guess you can't do that.

Commissioner Lago: No, you can't. I travel...

Mr. Plummer: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: That's basically on the way to my house.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You can't do that.

Mr. Plummer: That's part of all the traffic calming that's happened for that neighborhood. It's, again, one of the more better protected neighborhoods in the city.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, then that's why I didn't see what I was looking for then.

Mr. Plummer: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Because the streets north of that -- you're right -- are all closed.

Mr. Plummer: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You're absolutely right.

Commissioner Lago: You're talking about the streets next to Havana Harry's, the streets...

Mr. Plummer: Correct.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, the ones north and south.

Commissioner Lago: The little shopping center.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Villa Bella...

Mr. Plummer: Correct.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Alminar and Cadagua.

Commissioner Lago: All those streets are closed.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Are all closed, you're right. And then Blue Road, it's a unique entrance...

Mr. Plummer: Correct.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That you can't shoot across there.

Mr. Plummer: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You'd have to be coming southbound on Le Jeune, and after the light, you make a right in there to turn (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Lago: And the only way to get on Ponce is you have -- if you're on Blue Road, you have to -- you can't make a left to get on Ponce and get to that spot.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Okay. My question has been addressed. I'm good.

Mr. Plummer: Just remember, Frank. I voted for you; David didn't.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Applicant submittal addendum dated 7/20. If I can have the other Commissioners take a look at that. I don't know if we can put that on the screen or not. I'm sure you guys don't have it. The bottom of page 3, which is actually -- Ramon -- it's a different version of what Ramon showed us in his PowerPoint when I was asking about the FPL poles.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, yeah.

Mayor Cason: Oh, yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And for -- so it's -- it gives a better idea of where those poles are situated, I guess -- what do you call that, the...

Commissioner Lago: The sag of the lines?

Commissioner Keon: The swing.

Commissioner Lago: The swing.

Vice Mayor Quesada: It gives you a better idea where those poles are situated in relationship to the Gables residential project, which is on the north side of the street, and this project on the, I guess, southeast side of the street.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, for those of you out there that maybe haven't heard about this issue in a while, the FPL poles has been the big point of contention for us. We've fought with FPL. We've sued FPL. We lost in front of the Governor. We lost in front -- well, basically, all small towns -- all municipalities did. We lost in front of the...

Commissioner Keon: Citing Board.

Vice Mayor Quesada: The Citing Board.

Commissioner Keon: Public, yeah, and utilities...

Vice Mayor Quesada: And the biggest issue for us has always been, obviously, we have two and a half miles worth that were going to be affected with these transmission lines. Our big fight has been whether we can get undergrounded or not. Our biggest concern really has been at this location, just because of the existing three buildings on the northwest side of the street, which is Gables residential and the potential for these three buildings to come in as well. Because the building on the other side of the street is just, I guess, a hundred feet or just a little bit taller than a hundred feet. So, if you're a resident living in any one of these six buildings, you look out your balcony, you look out your window and you see powerlines dead on. If you're a little bit above it, you're still experiencing that powerline, and that's not something that we've ever seen in Coral Gables before, which is why we sued FPL, which is why we took it the distance. We actually have an executive session tomorrow to determine what to do on the current situation that we're at, but it's been tough. It's been tough. You know, I'm not in favor of the height, but I'm less in favor of having a shopping mall there like Dadeland Station further south. It was the same type of project. I'm less in favor of having residents potentially living looking out a window or sitting on a balcony and seeing at eye level powerlines.

Commissioner Lago: Vice Mayor, if...

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, it puts us, at least in my mind, that's -- those are the options -- that's -
- those are...

Commissioner Lago: Just to give you a little more credence...

Vice Mayor Quesada: That's a situation that we're living in with determining what happens
here.

Commissioner Lago: Just to give you a little more credence to the statement that you made
about the powerlines and like the visual nature of it from your balcony, if anybody has been on
Douglas and 37th Avenue, next to the Bank of America building -- you know what I'm talking
about or no? There is a building that was just built probably about two or three years ago...

Vice Mayor Quesada: What street?

Commissioner Lago: Right before you get to Miracle Mile, on your right hand side before the
Pei Wei.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: There is a brand-new residential building that was built that has
transmission lines that run...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think it's called Modera.

Commissioner Lago: I'm not sure.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah, I think that's what it is.

Commissioner Lago: At the end -- they have transmission lines that literally run probably 30 or 40 feet from the balconies.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: On that -- again, it's on the City of Miami side, but that is...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yeah.

Commissioner Lago: The distance would be more significant, but that's why I mentioned to you before that's one of the conundrums that I'm facing and it deals with exactly what you stated. Do I prefer -- would I prefer a -- would I prefer this project versus a shopping center? Of course. Do I want people living where, you know, they're basically facing everyday these powerlines? You know, to me, you know, that's a big, big issue.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think it's a particularly big issue because you want to look at the sustainability of this building and the ability of the building to be able to maintain a certain level of rental price point because it's what you want to see in our city. And if you run powerlines along somebody's balcony, the likelihood is you're not either -- if you rent them, you're going to rent them from a very low price because of those conditions. We will retain a far better product for our city and a much more sustainable building at a higher end for our city if we take those powerlines as much as we can out of the picture, which in turn is going to give us height. And I know that there is such an issue in the city and concern by residents about height, and I can truly understand that when it approximates a single-family residential area. I think even as we are looking at the redevelopment of North Ponce, because it is also a residential area, that, you know, I would speak very differently with regard to height in that area and in that neighborhood.

But I think because of the conditions along here, if we want to maintain a high-quality, high-end building that is sustainable over a long period of time, I don't see another way to do it.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And what complicates things even more is, let's say we can convince FPL to bring the powerlines down, which -- I'm just -- hypothetically, let's say you could.

Commissioner Lago: How long have you been in this battle for, Vice Mayor?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Then it's going to be...

Commissioner Lago: How many years have you and the Mayor been fighting this?

Vice Mayor Quesada: A while.

Mayor Cason: And they're not going to do it. We just met with them a couple days ago.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And even if you could bring them down, then it's going to be on top of you on the Underline, which is a huge project for all of us because we see the benefit of that. So, we're really in a difficult position here because of the uniqueness of the location and everything that's going on around there. So, I guess the last part I had is in the first reading I had mentioned to Mr. Hernandez on the first floor, you know, I don't -- it's not pleasant to be along US 1 as a pedestrian. If you've ever walked on one of those sidewalks, it's not pleasant at all. I know you have some buffer. I had asked if I could see additional buffer trees or thicker brush so that if you are someone that's enjoying the lower level maybe at a restaurant or walking through, if you can dampen the noise and the visual of 2,500 cars traveling at the peak pm hour. That was it. So, I guess my question to you is did you...

Mr. Hernandez: Yes, we did.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Increase the buffer of the green there?

Mr. Hernandez: Is this on?

Vice Mayor Quesada: If the light's on, the volume might be turned down. Yeah, it's on.

Mr. Hernandez: If I could ask Robert Parsley from Geomantics to join me in answering the question. I will address the amount of space given over for landscape, and he will address the specimens which we are planting there. So, yes, Commissioner, we did, and as you can see here -- you know, the drawings are small, so that's why I want him to speak about the kinds of species we're going to plant there. But what we did even more so from the last time is the arcades are pulled away from the US 1 curb, as you can see here. So, we pulled the arcades away from the US 1 curb and we are controlling where you cross through that curb. The remainder -- in other words, there are three buildings. Most of building one, building two and building three has a planter on US 1 at a really small scale. A similar strategy was taken at the museum plaza because museum plaza, had we taken the paved surface all the way to the curb, cars speed through there on Salzedo. And what we did is we pulled the plaza back so that people walk through the space of the plaza. We don't have a sidewalk at the curb and we planted between the back of curb and the new space for the plaza. So, this is a similar strategy, but Mr. Parsley will talk about the types of trees which are being planted.

Robert Parsley: Good afternoon, Commissioners. In the buffer, we have enough space between the building and the trees and between the trees and US 1, there's some distances that are required, and we have a series of -- groups of royal palms that will match the royal palms in the median, so you will feel like you're going down a boulevard of royal palms. With the improvements on MacFarlane Park, we will have parts of it -- we'll redo the east side of US 1 as well. And then on the columns that come down from the arcades, these little small trees, we have yellow elder. Elder's half shrub, half tree. It's Bahamian. It's native to here. It doesn't really like to stand up, so we're going to espalier it up the columns, as you would a vine, but it's

kind of a half tree, half vine. It has a wonderful yellow, clear, clear, bright yellow bloom most of the summer. They tried them on Grand Avenue because it was one of the trees that the MacFarlane neighborhood asked for, but they're not great free-standing trees. So, we think putting them on the arcade on wires, on trellises, and espalier them will not only decorate the building, provide buffer, but speak to the MacFarlane neighborhood area.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Slesnick.

Commissioner Slesnick: If this project were ten stories high and they brought it down to ten stories, I would have no problem voting for it because that's as right for this area. And I -- I'll give you pluses and minuses. I love everything George Hernandez designs. He's a talented architect, and I think having open areas and having 40 percent open instead of 20 percent is fabulous. I went down to US 1 and stood there at 4:30 last week, and I hardly heard the Metrorail come by. It was sort of like it would come by every ten minutes and it was like a whoosh because it doesn't stop there. It stops at Douglas and it stops at UM. And I hardly heard the Metrorail, but what I did hear were a lot of cars honking and so forth along US 1 because people turn onto -- what's the side street?

Commissioner Lago: Le Jeune.

Commissioner Slesnick: No, Grand.

Commissioner Lago: Grand.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because the traffic was stopped at the light that's over on Ponce, so people were stacking along the right lane of US 1 heading west because of the traffic already at that location, but they were honking. And whenever you stop at a stop sign and so forth, you do

make noise slowing down and starting again. I have been consistent since I've been on the Commission that I will approve things that are as right or I will give variances or slight increases if it means having a more beautiful building and so forth, like we did for The Collections, where we gave them an extra story so they could have 11-foot ceilings instead of 10-foot ceilings. But to me, you know I sell real estate and if I have houses on the water and they're well priced, people will buy them right away. I turned down a listing because somebody wanted a million, two for a house that's right across from a school, and people just do not want to be right across from a school. And your location and what you can build on that site really makes a difference in the true value of the property. And so this property is not as desirable -- a very desirable property, and that's why you have big boxes and so forth that could be built there because it's a lot less desirable than it is like building where Publix is now. I'm sure somebody's going to come in and build a wonderful big complex where Publix is. So, again, I like what's there. I just don't like the height. And I like the open space and maybe we should have something. But if people want to build 16 stories all the way up and down US 1 -- and it's coming -- we're going to have a canyon in some spaces. We're not going to have it where the Riviera fire station is and some of the other places, but we are going to have -- starting to get a canyon like Brickell there along US 1. What's amazing though is that we have the big, new project that will be coming sooner or later over at the Douglas Station, and that's truly where we should have high-rises and complexes and entertainment and all sorts of things at Douglas and US 1. Now, that's only two blocks away. So, already coming down from Brickell, you don't see any high-rises along -- at all along US 1, but you're going to start seeing them. And if they can build 30 stories there in those four buildings, they'll build 30 stories because it's economically more advantageous to the developer. So, we are going to have probably 30-story buildings two blocks away. So, what difference does it make in building a 16-story or 160 feet just two blocks away inside Coral Gables? Maybe nothing in the long run. But right now, our Zoning Code set up by our Building Department and input from the citizens is for ten stories at that site. And I will always maintain the existing zoning codes and not do spot development and rule for developers just because they have a problem with the Metrorail, which is -- or the lines for the electric, which are on the other side of the Metrorail. They're not next to this building. They're on the other side, next to Ponce.

I will always have a problem with people coming in and saying I need to do something to be economically sustainable in this location because I bought this property. Maybe I paid too much for it, but it's not as desirable as other locations. So, I am voting against this. I would vote for ten stories. I might even vote for 11 or 12, but right now, I really don't want to see this project come in at 160 feet.

Mayor Cason: Okay, any other discussion? Anybody want to make a motion?

Commissioner Keon: No. Well, you know, I think the issue -- and I -- you know, you have been consistent and I know how you feel.

Commissioner Slesnick: It's a democracy, so everybody...

Commissioner Keon: No, absolutely. You're certainly entitled to your opinion and how you feel about it, and that's why there's five people up here instead of one, so it's a good thing.

Commissioner Slesnick: I am really happy with the supplying the trolley and so forth because I think you're going to have a lot of UM maybe upperclassmen want to be in here and not have cars or keep their cars in the garage. And I think having a trolley in that whole area between Douglas Entrance running back and forth will really cut down on traffic. So, I'm not concerned so much, even though you have almost a thousand parking spots in the garage, a lot of those cars will stay there all the time or come out maybe once a day. I really think your traffic studies are right and I applaud you for doing that. Do you think that the Douglas Road Station is going to make any difference to your project, Mr. Bass?

Mr. Bass: I'm sorry?

Commissioner Slesnick: Do you feel the heavy development at the Douglas Road Station is going to have any impact on yours?

Mr. Bass: Just to be clear, that's in a different jurisdiction. That's in the City of Miami...

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes.

Mr. Bass: The project that you're referring to. You know, our project, as I believe theirs, are both within the transportation concurrency exemption area which involves (INAUDIBLE)...

Commissioner Slesnick: No, I don't mean legally. I meant just financially.

Mr. Bass: Oh, that I don't know.

Commissioner Slesnick: Because it's another big project going in across the street from that too, so...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah, and I -- if I could just interject one second, Commissioner. I want to be clear. And I know that a lot of us here probably are going to know this statement already, but I want to put it out there. A lot of the property -- a lot of the building that you see on Bird Road and Ponce, you know, to the east, correct -- that would be to the east? -- is not in the City of Coral Gables.

Mayor Cason: No, it's not.

Commissioner Slesnick: And people think it is.

Commissioner Lago: And I got like three emails, and I've had to respond to them, like I always do. I just want to -- and they were like, are you sure about that? I'm like, yeah, but those are not in the City of Coral Gables.

Commissioner Slesnick: From the hotel...

Commissioner Lago: Yeah.

Commissioner Slesnick: To the US 1, none of them...

Commissioner Lago: Those are not...

Mayor Cason: Not ours.

Commissioner Lago: In the City of Coral Gables, so I just want to make sure that people are aware of that.

Commissioner Keon: But I think it's the...

Mayor Cason: You had something else?

Commissioner Keon: Yeah. And the -- Mr. Trias has made it very clear that because of the width of the lots outside of this particular parcel, you don't have the ability to go to that height because you don't have the width or you don't have the depth, so there is not another parcel along US 1 that you are going to be able -- within our jurisdiction of the City of Coral Gables -- that you would be able to do this. So, we would never be able -- we would never create what has been referred to as a canyon just because of the available width of the different parcels along that strip. But I also -- you know, I also saw in this...

Commissioner Lago: Both side, on both sides.

Commissioner Keon: On both sides.

Commissioner Lago: On both sides.

Commissioner Keon: You know, the issue of, you know -- the Zoning Code is a living document and has many, many, many iterations or renditions over a long period of time.

Mayor Cason: Five changes.

Commissioner Keon: You know...

Commissioner Slesnick: And very complicated.

Commissioner Keon: Yeah, but it also has provisions in the Zoning Code for things like mixed-used, for PADs, for all of these other -- for the -- to allow us to not be so tied by just, you know, mid-rise, low-rise, whatever. That -- and they're used -- those particular sections of the Code are used to allow us to deal with parcels that are either very large or parcels that are particularly irregular or parcels, you know, that sit maybe between two different codes or two different things. So, there is nothing that we are doing that is not within our Zoning Code. By doing what we're doing here today, we are using our Code to its fullest capacity. It allows us to do these things. We're not changing the Code to do this. We are using the provisions that exist in our Code in order to be able to deal with these types of things. You know, I agree with you in that we are not here to worry about the risks or the costs that it is to a developer. If you happen to pay a certain amount of money for a parcel of land and it turns out you can't build on it, you know, that's not -- that is not really our issue. And I fully agree with you on that and I don't ever -- I don't -- I've never seen any of us in the time that I've been here ever take that on. But you know, when you say, you know, that you are, you know, not acting in accordance with the Code, I think that that can be very misleading because I think we are using all of the ideas and all of the provisions within our Code to be able to deal with these things.

Commissioner Slesnick: But it seems like it's happening on a regular basis where we're always voting for these projects piecemeal. And I am under the impression that we have a planning advisory group coming along to study development along US 1 and it's already started...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Commissioner Slesnick: And there's information coming in on that. I'm just saying we should wait. And again, the developers don't want to wait -- wait until we see, like maybe two months down the road or three months down, what the results are from that planning study which our Building Department and other individuals around Coral Gables are doing. I'm just saying we have a...

Commissioner Keon: No, I understand that.

Commissioner Slesnick: Planning study, and we need it because we're going to have...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Commissioner Slesnick: Riviera Theater sold and Wendy's that sold. We're going to...

Commissioner Keon: I understand that.

Commissioner Lago: No, but I met with the developer of the...

Commissioner Slesnick: Riviera Theater?

Commissioner Lago: Riviera Theater, and again, I'm not going to speak on the project, but it falls within the Code and everything is there and you'll see it when it comes before us. But let me be very clear also here, and I see there's a growing -- not a growing, but there's been some

statements made, especially via email, that are just not correct statements. They're not. They're not in line -- and I will call Ramon Trias up here who knows every single project that has come before the City in the last three or four years and has been approved, and I can tell you that predominantly, a majority of all the projects that have come before us are as-of-right projects.

Commissioner Slesnick: But why do they have to come before the Commission if they're as right?

Commissioner Lago: Because they're mixed use.

Mayor Cason: They're mixed use.

Commissioner Lago: It's required by the Code. It's mixed use.

Commissioner Slesnick: Okay.

Commissioner Lago: So, when we vote...

Commissioner Slesnick: I've only been here a year, so forgive me.

Commissioner Lago: On a project, it's mixed-use, we have to vote on it no matter what. So -- and then there's that confusion. So, but what kind of -- I think we can do better and I think we need to be careful because we are that city on a hill, like Reagan used to say. And everyone -- not everyone -- many cities in this community, in South Florida and the state of Florida, they want to be like Coral Gables. And I think we need to be a little bit more careful when we put things in writing and we talk that we're circumventing the Code or we're adding density. Again, I've made my comments and my feelings known about this project, and I've held the line in regards to height and I've voted on projects -- against projects when I felt that the height was too intense. But I think that we need to be careful and not drum up like this negative, you know,

feelings. Let's come out and have a great discourse, like we're doing today, but let's not, you know, blatantly lie on an email...

Commissioner Slesnick: But Ramon, isn't technically ten stories or a hundred feet...

Commissioner Lago: But that's not what I'm discussing. I'm not bringing that up. What I'm discussing is very -- like Ramon could tell me right now if he wanted to. Ramon, in your professional -- I want to put this on the record because there's a lot of people here that are confused.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: In your professional opinion, with your knowledge as you're rewriting the Code today, of the projects that have come before us in three or four years -- and I'm not going to hold you to the exact number -- are a majority of the projects as-of-right projects?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes. And then many of them don't come to you, and the ones that come to you, as you said, are the mixed-use projects, which typically don't request any change of zoning or land use.

Commissioner Lago: By the way, and when you look at the cities around us, they have a lot more significant projects going on in their cities. We have a very stringent process. We have a lot of requirements from developers. And I've talked to developers who tell me, we don't want to do business in the City of Coral Gables...

Commissioner Slesnick: And our property is more expensive here too.

Commissioner Lago: And our properties are more expensive.

Commissioner Slesnick: Ramon, don't go away. Ramon.

Commissioner Lago: And by the way, let me tell you, because Dona Spain is in the back, and she'll tell you. She doesn't need to come up, but she'll tell you that the fact that we require 20,000 square feet and a lot of historic properties are sprinkled throughout our downtown make it very difficult to assemble properties. It's very, very difficult.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Guys, I think we're getting away from the subject of the matter today.

Commissioner Lago: No, no, no, no, no, but it's not. Vice Mayor, indulge me. Come on, indulge me a second, please. Indulge me. Come on, you just came back from vacation. Indulge me. I haven't gone on vacation. You know, I think it's very important points that we're making here and we're having a good, clear, transparent, truthful commentary about things that are going on in Coral Gables. Because, by the way, if you don't nip it in the bud today, guess what? These comments become truth and then it snowballs. Oh, my God. Things in Coral Gables are out of control. They're not out of control. Guys, they're not. And it's embarrassing to me, as public official who is honored to represent this community and I take my job so seriously, but I need to make sure that everybody here is educated in reference to what is the truth and what is false. I know that people have their interests. And sometimes, I side with those people and sometimes I don't. Today's a clear example because I hold height -- as Commissioner Slesnick said, it's sacred to me because I think that's what sets the City of Coral Gables apart from other cities. But I think we need to be careful. We need to be the city that everyone wants to be.

Mayor Cason: Let me say a couple things. Generally, people have equated height with traffic, with density and intensity. That's not necessarily the case. I think you can have an 18-story or a 20-story building with one apartment on each one and it doesn't bring any traffic. So, I think it's false to say that height necessarily brings more traffic. I think this particular project, even if it's higher than would normally be if it weren't in a PAD and weren't mixed-use, is bringing 60 percent less traffic than the Berkowitz building would have brought. I think that was -- the

comparison was a terrible project compared to this one. I think this is a beautiful project. It's mixed-used, and I think that's the reason that we've got less traffic.

Commissioner Slesnick: I want to ask two more questions of Ramon while he's up here.

Mayor Cason: Okay, let me just finish. And I think you can go to work on the Metro is one of the reasons it's going to -- whether you want to walk and get sweaty or not. But I think driving in that traffic, walking a little bit to get on the Metro, people are going to get on the Metro if they can. I like the fact that the Underline, at least 1,200 feet of it's going to be -- 2.9 acres is going to be funded. You're right. Who knows when the rest of the money will come, but our part will be done early on. I like the fact that it's 47 percent open space versus the 20 that's required. We're replacing parking lots with green space. I like the idea of the trolley. That's what I think we need, more trolleys in the Gables to encourage people not to get in their cars. As they point out, there's no increase in density, no increase in intensity, no variances. And the only reason for the height is you've got the Metro and you've got FPL. And FPL, we had a meeting with them recently, and they are not going to lower those -- they're going to be hardening those lines regardless of what happens to the nuclear power plant. They're going to stay there.

Commissioner Lago: One way or another.

Mayor Cason: They're going to stay there, so that's a fact. And I think the question of noise, if you're going to put -- you can't put residents next to it if you're going to make it a viable project. So, I think they had to go up, and that's the reason, not just because they want to be taller. I think -- I given credence to the fact that the staff says that the height is correct. It's not a precedent given the unique nature of this property. I like the fact that MacFarlane Homestead supports it. I think, for me, that's very important. And also, this fits in within Merrick's algorithm of permissible heights versus the width of the streets. And so, I'm in favor of this project. It's not that we like tall buildings. But one of the reasons we went to a PAD over the Euclidean formula of FAR and other things was so you could get as a trade-off for things like a

little bit more height, the quality of the project, which this one certainly brings. So, I'm in favor of the project, and I suggest we have a motion if somebody...

Commissioner Slesnick: I just want to ask Ramon a couple more questions. Ramon, we're saving historic buildings in Coral Gables because we have a transfer of development rights. When we have developers that go ahead -- I mean, like the 2020 Salzedo building has the size it has because it got develop -- the air rights and so forth, correct?

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: So, will this affect our historic properties so they won't be able to sell the air rights anymore if we keep giving away six extra stories to other properties? I mean, this developer maybe could have bought the air rights too for the historic buildings.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, not in this case because it's not in the Central Business District. So, in this case, yeah, that would not apply.

Commissioner Slesnick: But so if -- down the line, if you have other buildings, say where Publix is, they could have more density because they would buy the air rights...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Again, that only applies within the Central Business District.

Commissioner Slesnick: Where Publix is.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'm sorry. You're talking about Publix on Le Jeune right across from here?

Commissioner Slesnick: On Le Jeune.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Or you're talking about Publix...

Commissioner Slesnick: That's the only Publix I know.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The Le Jeune Road Publix.

Commissioner Slesnick: Right over here, uh-huh.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Okay, that does fall within the downtown.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Right, right.

Commissioner Slesnick: I mean, will that -- I mean, if we keep giving away -- I mean, Publix could come in and ask for extra stories anyway, but if they could buy some...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: They could ask for extra FAR, which is done through the transfer of development rights from historic properties.

Commissioner Slesnick: Okay, and last, but not least because I don't want to hold us up. We're really going to have a long meeting today. I mean, ten stories is what should actually be there, and so we're giving away six extra stories or sixty feet.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: The actual regulation is a hundred feet...

Commissioner Slesnick: A hundred feet.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: For mixed-used projects.

Commissioner Slesnick: Okay.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: They can answer that question more directly.

Commissioner Slesnick: Instead of stories -- okay, but a hundred feet is what's allowed there...

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: A hundred feet is what's allowed if it's a mixed-use building.

Commissioner Slesnick: And they're asking for 60 extra feet.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: And then on the other two buildings, they're asking for 48 extra feet.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: So, that's like 11 stories that they're asking extra, to me, variances. Anything besides what's norm is a variance. They're asking for like 11 extra stories of things because they're building in that site near the Metrorail and near the powerlines.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: Well, I wouldn't characterize it in terms of stories.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes, I know.

Planning and Zoning Director Trias: I say that because the parking is different than the -- yeah.

Commissioner Slesnick: It's different.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Well, it's tough to describe it in that manner, Commissioner, respectfully, because when that was created, there were facts present now that did not exist at that time. You had a statement earlier that said, you know, these zoning codes are created and all these codes are created and everyone votes on it. But there are factors present here specifically with this one that were not present when that was created. And actually...

Commissioner Slesnick: Oh, you mean for -- regard to Collection?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Are not even present today, but we know they will be present tomorrow, which I'm specially referring to the 98-foot powerlines. So, you got to look at the whole picture. And that's why I stated that you were either -- if you were against this project, that means you'd rather see a shopping mall there or...

Commissioner Slesnick: No, I wouldn't rather see a shopping mall, yeah.

Vice Mayor Quesada: A project where the entire -- all the residents in the building are looking at powerlines. So, that's the full factual...

Commissioner Slesnick: But that's what you get for buying in that location, just like you could buy waterfront property and get water views.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But hold on a second. But hold on a second. Let me stop you a second. And I'm not trying to change your mind. I wasn't going to say anything because I know I'm not going to change your mind, but I think you need to look at all the facts. So, if we allow -- if we do not allow this developer to go through, we all know the facts because it was presented to us the last time around when Mr. Berkowitz testified at the first reading. The contract, the drafts...

Commissioner Slesnick: I hear that, but you...

Vice Mayor Quesada: And it would go back to the project that came as of right, which was a Dadeland Station at that location.

Commissioner Slesnick: Mr. Berkowitz is busy building other things.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know something, but that's not -- it's speculative, okay.

Commissioner Slesnick: He can sell those development rights.

Vice Mayor Quesada: We know about the contract, and you're getting into speculation...

Commissioner Slesnick: Okay, so...

Vice Mayor Quesada: That we have no idea what he would build. But we do know is a project was approved...

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes, but you don't know that he would...

Vice Mayor Quesada: As of right...

Commissioner Slesnick: Come back and build that when we could build a nice ten-story or eleven-story buildings there, so...

Vice Mayor Quesada: With powerlines affecting every...

Mayor Cason: We can't speculate what Mr. Berkowitz...

Commissioner Slesnick: We can't speculate.

Mayor Cason: Will do or not.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I make a motion to approve Item E-4.

City Attorney Leen: Okay, so before we begin, if it's okay, Mr. Vice Mayor, the -- Item E-4, which is also 1 on your sheet -- I just want to make sure everyone knows what they're voting on -- that's a future land use map of the City of Coral Gables Comprehensive Plan. It's a change from Industrial Land Use to Mixed Use Land Use, and it removes the Mixed Use Overlay District Land Use. Now, one thing for all of these items is that if you're going to vote in favor of it, the motion should include a statement that it incorporates the findings that this is consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan. And also, for the quasi-judicial items, should include staff's conditions of approval and findings, along with all proffers from the applicant.

Commissioner Lago: Craig, may I ask you a quick question?

City Attorney Leen: So, can you just -- is it -- whoever's making the motion, I would just ask that that be included.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So amended.

Mayor Cason: So amended.

City Attorney Leen: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Can I ask you a quick question?

City Attorney Leen: So -- yes.

Commissioner Lago: In reference to E-4...

City Attorney Leen: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: Wasn't the land use already changed in this property when the previous approvals were made?

City Attorney Leen: You mean on first reading?

Commissioner Lago: Yeah -- no, no, no. I'm sorry, for when...

Mayor Cason: Berkowitz?

Commissioner Lago: With Berkowitz project.

City Attorney Leen: No. Berkowitz -- the reason that that...

Commissioner Lago: (INAUDIBLE) industrial?

City Attorney Leen: The reason that project came before you was because there was an encroachment that you had to approve, and all that was tied to the encroachment, which was a quasi-proprietary decision of Coral Gables because it involved land that we controlled. But this is different. And this particular E-4 is the Comprehensive Plan change.

Mayor Cason: Which you have so included.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Correct.

Mayor Cason: Alright. Do we have a second?

Commissioner Keon: I'll second it.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon seconds. City Clerk.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: No.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Cason: E-5.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So moved for approval.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner -- the Vice Mayor makes the motion.

Commissioner Lago: Give a detailed explanation of E-5, please.

City Attorney Leen: Yes. Is there a second first?

Commissioner Keon: I'll second it.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon seconds it.

City Attorney Leen: So, Item E-5 is a Zoning Map -- it's a change to the zoning map of the City of Coral Gables. It changes the map from Industrial District to Commercial District and removes

the South Industrial Mixed-Use District for this property. So, this is a change to the Zoning Map.

Mayor Cason: Okay, City Clerk.

City Attorney Leen: And you would incorporate again...

Mayor Cason: Yes.

City Attorney Leen: What we said before for the legislative items.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So amended.

Commissioner Slesnick: No.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Cason: E-6.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Move to approve Item E-6.

Mayor Cason: Vice Mayor makes the motion and seconded by...

Commissioner Keon: I'll second it.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon.

City Commission Meeting

July 26, 2016

Agenda Items E-4, E-5, E-6, E-7 and E-8 are related – Ordinances and Resolution requesting an amendment to the future land use map, zoning map, text amendments to the Zoning Code, review of Planned Area Development, and requesting mixed-use site plan review for the proposed project referred to as Gables Station.

City Attorney Leen: So, Item E-6 is text amendments to our site specific zoning regulations for this project. The City treats this as a legislative change, although we have provided all of the procedural protections for a quasi-judicial matter as well.

Mayor Cason: City Clerk.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: No.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Cason: E-7.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So move for approval.

Mayor Cason: Vice Mayor makes the motion. Seconded by Commissioner Keon.

City Attorney Leen: Is there a second?

Commissioner Keon: I'll second it.

Commissioner Lago: You second this, Commissioner Keon?

City Attorney Leen: So, the Item E-7 -- and that particular motion -- this is a quasi-judicial item because it's a review of the planned area development, which is quasi-judicial. And so, I would

also -- I've already said this, but you would incorporate all of the staff conditions of approval and the findings, and also, you would accept all the proffers from the applicant.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So amended.

Mayor Cason: City Clerk.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: No.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 3-2)

City Attorney Leen: And just please note, one of those findings is that for all these, again, just to reiterate is that this is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I move E-8 for approval.

Mayor Cason: Vice Mayor makes the motion. Seconded by?

City Attorney Leen: Is there a second?

Mayor Cason: Seconded?

Commissioner Keon: I'll second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon.

City Attorney Leen: So Item E-8 is the resolution. This is the first time you'll be voting on it and the last time, if it's approved. It's the mixed-use site plan review. This is quasi-judicial. Once again, you would incorporate all the staff conditions of approval and findings, along with all proffers, and you're making the finding, like with everything, that this is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Cason: Okay, City Clerk.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes.

Commissioner Slesnick: No.

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: No.

Mayor Cason: Yes.

(Vote: 3-2)

Mayor Cason: Let's take a five-minute break.