

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting  
Agenda Item B - Public Comments  
December 8, 2020  
City Commission Chambers  
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli  
Vice Mayor Vince Lago  
Commissioner Pat Keon  
Commissioner Michael Mena  
Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias  
Assistant City Manager, Ed Santamaria  
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos  
City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Rosaline Navarro  
Ana Romez  
Wendy Long  
Estelle Lockhart  
Julie Kanter  
David Winker  
Maria Cruz  
Paula Decarolis  
Johnathan Hadad  
Mark Trowbridge  
Myra Jolie  
Maria Magdalena Estupinan  
Brett Gillis  
Connie Neilson Noble  
Javier Banos Machado  
Stephanie Pasternak**

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**Lydia Von Cole**  
**Jennifer Restrepo**  
**Jackson “Rip” Holmes**  
**Kirk Menendez**  
**Shawn Alexander**  
**Sue Kawalerski**  
**Maria Menendez**  
**Rhonda Anderson**  
**Henry Llanes**

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Agenda Item B - Public Comments [9:30 a.m.]

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, then we'll go on to public comments.

City Clerk Urquia: We have 10...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Public comments.

City Clerk Urquia: We do have 10 speakers, Mr. Mayor, who want to speak today. The first speaker -- one second -- is Ms. Rosaline Navarro.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, and please note that you have two minutes, Ms. Navarro. Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, per the resolution that we -- the ordinance that we adopted, the speakers during public comments are awarded three minutes to speak.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, three minutes, please.

Rosaline Navarro: Yes, good morning. I am -- I'm speaking here to oppose to the Wawa project that is being proposed. Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion to the Wawa project. And

I urge you all to rethink your opinions from the previous meeting about this project. There is no need for...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I'm sorry. Ms. Navarro, we cannot hear you. Hello?

Ms. Navarro: (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Hello?

Ms. Navarro: (INAUDIBLE) directly in front of (INAUDIBLE) school. (INAUDIBLE) and the increase of traffic (INAUDIBLE).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Navarro, it's not coming across...

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear you?

City Clerk Urquia: No, we...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Can you inform that we can't hear you.

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We can't hear her.

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No.

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear me?

City Clerk Urquia: Now we can hear you better, ma'am.

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Now, we can...

Ms. Navarro: Hello?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But it was very, very (INAUDIBLE)...

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Before.

Ms. Navarro: Can you hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Now, we can.

Ms. Navarro: Are you able to hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Now, we can, yes.

Unidentified Speaker: I can hear her.

Ms. Navarro: Oh, okay, thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, Mr. Mayor, we're going to go ahead and move on to the next speaker.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, why don't we, yeah.

City Clerk Urquia: Ana Romez at this time.

City Attorney Ramos: While she comes -- while the person comes on, the next speaker, I'd just like to state on the record, this is not a public hearing. As we know, the settlement agreement does not allow for another public hearing in this matter. We do have a public comment section at the beginning of our meeting where anybody can speak about essentially anything they'd like to speak about in the Commission's jurisdiction. So, here we are listening to these, but I'd just like to state for the record that this is not considered a public hearing.

Ana Romez: May I speak now?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mrs. Romez, go ahead.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, but the sound is horrible.

Ms. Romez: No, I'm a different person. I hope you can hear me better.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh, oh, okay.

Ms. Romez: Okay. Thank you very much for allowing this moment of public comments. This is my second time addressing this Commission on the issue of the Wawa project that's planned to be built in front of Carver Elementary School. My name is Ana Romez, like it says. I am the mother of twin kindergarteners that just started school at Carver this year. The last time I spoke to this Commission, I highlighted the issues of lack of process around building this gas station in front of a school. I continue to be worried about how this was executed really in the shadows without any

public comment and continuing to underline the fact that these comments are not public hearings because, for whatever reason, this Commission, the City of Coral Gables, decided that it could do this project without getting any feedback from the community and from the families of the children that attend that school every day. I continue to be worried about that lack of process, but since that time, I have learned a lot more about what went on to build that gas station there, and I continue to be incredibly disturbed by how this Commission approached it, how the City of Coral Gables approached it. This project is not appropriate to be built in front of an elementary school with preschoolers and kindergarteners, many of whom walk to school. It is planned to be built -- a gas station with six pumps -- to be built 300 feet away from this elementary school building on what should be a residential street. Because of planning by the City, the entrances to the gas station have been moved to Grand Avenue, which is totally inappropriate. The amount of traffic, pollution and danger for the pedestrian traffic and the children arriving in cars is -- I don't believe that it's been studied. And I believe that this Commission is trying to push something through without considering all of the negative effects that the traffic will have on the children, that the environmental impact of gas that near the children will have. I urge this Commission to do everything in its power to reconsider to see how this is impacting the community and young children, and to work with Wawa and with the school and with the parents to create something that is more in line with a plot of land that's in front of an elementary school. As everyone knows here, that land has a rich history. I don't believe that history is being respected. I have come to learn that what this Commission has counted on as community feedback and approval is in fact not a reflection of the entire community and that there are members of the community that are against this project and their voices should be heard. I also understand and felt as if this Commission was dismissive of parents at the last meeting. There are -- over half of the students come from families that are residents of Coral Gables, and I believe this Commission has the duty to listen to those concerns as well. So again, I urge you to reconsider your position, to do everything in your power, which I do believe you have, to make sure that this project, that land is put to use that respects the history and respects the health of the children that are there every day. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next is Ms. Wendy Long.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Three minutes.

Wendy Long: Good morning. My name is Wendy Long. I live at 805 Majorca Avenue. I am a Coral Gables resident and a parent at George Washington Carver Elementary School. I am against the proposed Wawa and gas station for the myriad health and safety concerns that will be presented today and that were presented at the meeting on October 27. And in response to those concerns, a petition of 49 signatures was held up as overwhelming support for the project. In our research, though, we could only confirm that less than half of those signatures actually belonged to the property owners. On the other hand, the proud Carver Elementary School community includes 237 families that are Coral Gables residents, and those 237 families are your constituents. You were elected to represent our interests, and I, along with the other residents, am here today to make my voice heard during these public comments. I do not oppose development. I specifically oppose the construction of a gas station and a convenience store 300 feet from a public school entrance. And it is especially reprehensible to do this without notifying the school and without a public hearing. And as a Coral Gables resident, I also oppose the zoning updates to Miracle Mile. I want you to protect the character and the charm of one of the City Beautiful's main thoroughfares. I do not want a concrete canyon. In both of these cases, I am appealing to you as a concerned citizen and a constituent. You were elected to represent me and the other residents of Coral Gables, not the developers. I encourage you to remember this as you proceed. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, ma'am.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy, next.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Estelle Lockhart.

Estelle Lockhart: Good morning. My name is Estelle Lockhart. I'm the PTA president and George Washington Carver Elementary School, and I'm here in that capacity. I'm a Coral Gables resident. I live at 1515 Capri Street, and I have two children at Carver Elementary School. We, the more than 280 members of the George Washington Carver Elementary PTA, remain concerned about the safety, health and environmental risks posed by the six-pump gas station 300 feet from the school's entrance. Several dozen parents, some of the more than 1,100 people who signed an online petition against Wawa, are here to remind you that those concerns are not going away just because this Commission chooses to ignore us. The views expressed by Carver parents are not laughable, Mayor, as well as all of us who spoke for more than an hour on October 27 and we're dismissed. Nor should standing up for the safety and well-being of the 527 students of little Carver, nearly half of them Coral Gables residents, be characterized as incredibly offensive or tantamount to telling others what to do on their own private land, as Commissioner Mena and Fors falsely claimed. We are members of the community, and we have not been heard on this topic. As recently pointed out in the Miami Herald Sunday paper, the 1.7-acre lot on which the Wawa is to be built was originally public land given for \$10 to a tax-exempt organization to build affordable housing. Wawa is not affordable housing. The noble aim only devolved into a gas station because the City of Coral Gables and this Commission intervened in a lawsuit, changed the zoning laws on the developer's behalf and bypassed rules for public hearing. You created this problem. You need to fix it. Neither Carver nor its principal nor the District 6 Miami-Dade County School Board Member were ever told that a gas station, selling alcohol and sugary foods, was being built directly across the street from the school, an unforgivable omission that prompted the Miami-Dade School Board last month to pass a resolution requiring notification in such cases. You now have a chance to mitigate the damage caused by your mistake. We respectfully ask City Commissioners to facilitate a dialogue with Wawa, the developer, and us as part of the community, something that should have taken place months ago. We would like to address these issues that have been raised. If you do, you will find that we, as a group of parents in the PTA, would be a willing partner to seek a solution that benefits the entire community. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Ms. Julie Kanter.



Julie Kanter: Good morning. My name is Dr. Julie Kanter. I live at 6505 Caballero Boulevard. I am a Coral Gables resident. My two kids attend Carver because we are zoned to attend Carver Elementary. It is our assigned neighborhood school. I have to send my kids to Carver. I am part of this community that we are discussing. At the previous Commission meeting, I spoke about several health and safety concerns that I have as a medical doctor in Coral Gables, none of which you all have addressed. In today's public comment, the concern I will speak of is the one that I find the scariest, child pedestrian injuries. This plan for the gas station that you approved does not have any entrances on US-1; instead, this plan has two driveways entering the gas station in front of the elementary school. The driveways are smack in the middle of Carver's school zone, right where the flashing yellow lights are, right alongside the school's crosswalk. This school zone is supposed to be the safe place for children to walk to school, but this plan that you approved would bring gas tankers, delivery trucks and increased motor vehicle traffic right into our fragile school zone, where children are trying to walk to and from school. In fact, the plan you approved only allows the gas tankers to enter the gas station in our school zone; it may not use the other entrance. And it is the school's responsibility to keep the children safe in the school zone and crosswalk. Yet, you approved a dangerous change to our crosswalk and school zone without any consultation with the school. How could you approve a plan to bring all of this increased dangerous traffic into our school zone? There's no reason to bring increased motor vehicle traffic into a school zone where kids are walking. As an emergency physician in Coral Gables, what I see from this design are children hit by vehicles in this situation. So, I ask you, Commissioners, to look again at this design that you approved and think about the dangerous situation you are creating for the children at Carver. You are my elected officials, and I need you to make design decisions that are smart and that protect not harm my children. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Mr. David Winker.

David Winker: Good morning, everybody. My name is David Winker. I live at 2222 Southwest 17th Street. My law offices are located in Coral Gables at 4270 South LeJeune Road. Whether or

not a gas station across the street from GW Carver Elementary and Middle School is a good idea or a bad idea can be debated. But what we can all agree on is what that process should look like. I humbly suggest that we can all agree that the process here was fundamentally flawed. At the last meeting, Commissioners treated the Carver parents expressing concern about the gas station, the majority of whom are Gables residents, like pests and the entire process as a nuisance. Commissioners took the position that this is private property, and how can we possibly tell the owner what to do with the property. Aside from this being laughable false, given the City of Coral Gables' involvement in all of our private properties in maintaining the City Beautiful, this is not private property. This is a \$10 million-dollar prime piece of real estate on US-1 that belongs to the taxpayers. It was given to a 501(c)3 public charity for \$10 in exchange for a promise to build affordable housing. The fact that this morphed from much needed public housing to a gas station is incredibly troubling in and of itself. There are so many things wrong with this situation; lack of public notice, lack of public participation, dangerous levels of traffic in a student pedestrian area, selling beer, wine, tobacco, vapes and junk food across from an elementary and middle school. But probably the most bothersome part of the whole situation is the lost opportunity for everyone to work together to build something really special. We can do better than this. And I ask that you, the Commissioners, revisit this issue and find a solution to a problem that you created. Thank you for your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Cruz.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Hello, Maria. Hello?

Maria Cruz: There you go. Can you hear me now?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, we can.

Ms. Cruz: Alright. I -- first of all, Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I've been a resident here since 1976, same house, same location. Let me start by wishing you, Mayor, a speedy recovery.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria.

Ms. Cruz: And then let's get to the topic at hand. I would like to thank the Commissioners -- hey, what happened? What happened?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Nothing, go ahead. We're listening to you.

Ms. Cruz: I lost the view. Okay, I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well, we are seeing you very, very clearly.

Ms. Cruz: Okay, that's good. You don't want to miss me. Alright. I'd like to thank the Commissioners for listening to us last week and for proposing a public meeting to discuss the zoning code rewrite. But I have a suggestion. I don't believe that one meeting is enough for the length of the document for the items that need to be discussed. I believe that it would be wise to have one meeting just to discuss the housekeeping parts of the document, the parts that were really, really the reason for this project, the parts that we were promised by both the Major and his comments about the person that was going to do it and the City Manager at that time. And then, have a second public meeting to discuss the changes, because the changes are the big issues. And after \$284,000 -- listen clearly -- \$284,000 spent on this project, money that comes from us -- and there's only about \$10,000 left in the purchase order. So, at this point, spent already \$274,000 with still \$10,000 more to be spent -- because as long as there's money in the purchase order, even

though the contract, the agreement, has ended, it can still be spent. I think the residents, the taxpayers of the City Beautiful deserve to listen, get all the information, digest it and then express your comments and work with the City, the Commissioners, the elected officials, to come up with an agreeable re-write -- if you want to call it, not the staff, not the consultant, the Commissioners that we elect to represent us. This should not be what the staff and the architects and the developers, and the attorneys, and the people that have vested interests in the changes for them to decide what we have to have. This is our city. We live here, most of us, a lot of us lived here for a long time. We take this very seriously, and thus to invite the people that have business to do was wrong. They should have invited people like me or others that have the City of Coral Gables very, very deeply in our hearts. So, for that, I suggest that you need to consider separating the housekeeping items from the changes to give the residents a chance to express their opinion, go with what makes sense and disagree with the ones that do not. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria. Billy, next.

City Clerk Urquia: Paula Decarolis (phonetic).

Paula Decarolis: Yes, hello. Good morning. Thank you for having me and the opportunity to speak. So, I'm here just because a parent -- I have a son and a daughter at George W. Carver Elementary School. My background is in the field of architecture, including planning and zoning regulations. I would like to raise awareness, facts and process. So, I'm here to speak on the Wawa application. A gas station is environmentally the most intense use that a commercial site can bear, other than industrial uses, which would not be permitted on commercial sites. So, gas stations are not likely to be repurposed into other uses, so there is an added responsibility as to where you can locate them. Gas stations are most typically placed along streets with high vehicular traffic, purposely tucked away from residential areas, let alone schools and parks. So, we need to go back to understand how this site evolved. There were changes in zoning and land use designations from single family in 2005, 2008 and 2014 that allowed for gradually more intense uses. However, it never proposed or discussed a gas station, none of the applications did. Every single application

was presented hand-in-hand with a site plan and scope. All the modifications were done (INAUDIBLE) plans and projects in restaurant, commercial, offices and community center, never a gas station. So, the gas station was found as a change -- a substantial modification, and as such, there are processes in place that require public hearings. The intensity of the change is recognized and regulated through ordinance and processes that were in this case neglected when previous City Attorney extended administrative power granted through a resolution in 2015-303, which originally intended to provide administrative power to resolve the construction of a community center, which had been under litigation. And these powers were extended so that administratively the substantial modification could advance without undergoing standard due process; without community involvement, without public hearings and without department -- departmental approvals of zoning, planning and staff. So, this is important because the community has been taken away the opportunity to be part of a process, a process that they're entitled to. The Wawa, as is proposed today, would not be allowed without honoring the covenant from 2005. And this is important because the covenant is an instrument to record -- among several other things -- an approved set of plans, which was not a gas station. So, the zoning is allowed, but the gas station was not part of the original project. So, none of the projects presented for this site in 2005, 2008, or 2014 proposed two curb cuts on Grand, and two of the projects have façades on Grand Avenue that address the street. So, what is the solution and why am I in here? Well, we're adults and we understand that projects are negotiated, and none of the parties may get everything and all of what they want, but I ask the City to act as keepers of civic purpose and protect the identity of the public realm. Revisit the decisions and concessions made, the hierarchy place of the linear greenery versus the vibrant street that is supported would be even better -- and I'm speaking about Grand -- is disproportionate. Please revisit the project so that a minimum vehicular access is shifted to US-1 where it belongs, and allow the building to front Grand, where the legal opinion recognizes and makes the most sense from a legal standpoint, and facilitate a City representatives and encourage elements of Bahamian architecture, history and patrimony and bring pride to this area and this site. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next is John Hadad.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: How many more do we have, Billy?

City Clerk Urquia: We have -- right now, we have 10 more, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, go ahead. We can't hear you, sir.

Johnathan Hadad: Can you hear me now?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Mr. Hadad: Okay. My name is Johnathan Hadad. I am a resident of Coral Gables at 6505 Caballero Boulevard. My kids also attend G.W. Carver Elementary, and I'm speaking today to oppose the Wawa project. I won't belabor the points as to why this project and the process that led to it is wrong. We -- I think we, your constituents, have made that personal clear in the past public comments and in these public comments. So, what I'll do instead is I'll just keep it simple, and I'll ask simple ques -- two simple questions that hopefully will resonate with you guys. The first is, does a six-pump gas station in front of an elementary school make kids safer or less safe? So, you ponder that, you know. And I think also the answer of that is very clear. Secondly, I would ask, why would this project be handled with such secrecy and in the shadows? Again, I think we all know the answer to that, and I think the answer is because there are probably vested interests that go against the community, and because we know that that's not a good public use of the land. And so what I'll do is I'll yield my time since I know there are other people there, but just remember that there are a lot more people who know about this project now and the inappropriate way in which it was handled. There's media coverage. And now, I want you to, with the final thought, remember that we, the constituents, will remember this on the time -- when the time comes to re-elect. Thank you for your time.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Mark Trowbridge.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy.

Mark Trowbridge: Good morning, everybody. Good morning, Mr. Mayor. I send you good wishes on your speedy recovery, like others have, and we'll keep you in our thoughts. I just wanted to say thank you, and to the members of the Commission, for your wonderful support on Small Business Saturday. I know many that are listening today were out and about being great consumers and supporting our local small businesses. We have had an elongated period of sort of Black Friday and Cyber Monday into Cyber Week, and we're certainly encouraging folks to continue to shop small and support our local businesses. They need you now more than ever. Seventy-five percent of businesses said if they didn't have a holiday season that met or exceeded last year, they may not be able to be in business in 2021. And we are blessed as a community to have wonderful businesses that support not only so many of our workforce and members of our community, but also our great contributors to our city's tax base. And so I encourage all of you listening today to please go out. If you're not comfortable, many of them have wonderful e-commerce opportunities. And this would be a year that we would certainly encourage you to shop online and support those businesses in our downtown and in our main street, and of course at our shops at Merrick Park. And again, I just want to thank everybody. It's wonderful during the public comments to hear such enthusiastic support on a variety of items, and also folks that have differences of opinion. I think that's what makes our community great, and I want to thank all of you for allowing this type of public comment. But please get out and shop and continue to support those businesses who need you most. Thanks, everybody, and have a great holiday.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, next is my Myra Jolie.

Myra Jolie: I'm on?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, ma'am.

Ms. Jolie: Hello?

City Clerk Urquia: Go ahead, yes.

Ms. Jolie: Alright. I take this opportunity to thank myself because I'm putting myself here to talk in front of you. I don't have to thank you guys for giving me the opportunity of hearing me out because all of you work for us. And you know all the great explanation that many of the residents of Coral Gables -- by the way, Myra Jolie, 700 Jeronimo Drive. You have heard all the good and very, very detailed explanation of all the citizens of Coral Gables letting you know why this is not what we residents of Coral Gables bargained for. We have had changes in all of the decision-making that is not the responsibility probably of the Mayor who's sitting today or the Commissioners that are there today. It could be said, "Well, somebody else did it." But right now, you guys are sitting there and all of you work for us. The check that you receive is endorsed by you, not by us. We sign the check, and every day we have to pay our taxes, higher in taxes to be living in this community that we want to continue. We want the community to continue being a family-oriented community. All of you are sitting there and we slowly have seen how the deterioration of our values and the values of all of you Commissioners -- I'm not going to take any of you out of the equation -- all of your Commissioners made a vow saying that you're going to be thinking in the best interest of us, the people. And I ask you now, whose interests are you championing for? It's not our community. It's not our children. It's not our schools. It's not our businesses. It's not us. Who are you championing for? So, you can go and work for those people who are giving you money to be advancing their causes, because I'm pretty sure none of you are thinking in the impact of a gas station, of a monster community of six-, seven-, ten-story building on US-1. You're only thinking what would be the benefit of letting these developers have their say. So, what would be the percentage that is coming to the City? And then we, the people, we don't want to see the money when it comes and in forms of what? Art in Public Places percentage for the developers to give to the City of Coral Gables, or maybe it's something that -- a bench that



we're going to put there and we're going to spend \$180,000 maintaining that bench just nice and proper? You -- I ask all of you to today find out how many more, how much more can the people take with our own money, and you guys think that you are the bosses. We are the bosses, and we don't want to wait for the next election to let you know how we feel. We're going to do it on the streets, on the streets. That's what we're going to be doing. Because maybe you do know, but the people of Coral Gables is fed up, fed up; not only in Coral Gables, in Miami and everything around the country, not happy. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Miss, you've made serious accusations of corruption. If you have any evidence, please turn it in to the state attorney's office, and I would welcome you to do that. Billy, would you go to the next person?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor. The next person is actually outside City Hall. It's going to be Maria Magdalena Estupinan.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Go ahead, ma'am.

Maria Magdalena Estupinan: Thank you. Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, good morning to all. I'm here because, like you, I'm a Gables resident and I'm concerned for the future of Miracle Mile and the City. The decisions you are making will have a very real and direct effect on people's lives. I understand that you would be voting later on on Item G-5 to postpone your vote on the change on zoning on Miracle Mile and granting us residents a community meeting in mid-January of next year. This meeting, by the way, should be a learning meeting, not a feedback meeting, since I don't think that there will be enough time to accomplish both objectives. I would suggest having two meetings, even if it has to be held in the same month. I hope you all vote yes for the deferment and vote no to the changes on zoning on the final vote. I don't know how we can convey to you that we feel there's an excess of development in the City, and we need to put a stop to it for

a while. I think that Ms. Keon raised a very important point the other day. She said by denying the property owner the right to something. I don't know, Ms. Keon. Can you briefly say what you said that day about the change on zoning, and you know, deemed the City liable for a lawsuit? Are you there? Okay, well, the point is that by the City changing the zoning from three years ago behind closed doors and without our knowledge, the Commission at the time put the City in a very vulnerable position. I wonder if there's a legal way we could render void and null those changes and reinstate the old Zoning Code back. I think that we should look into that. Also, I would also like to say that I suggest to hold someone as to the go-to person that could answer any resident's questions regarding different items in the agenda for upcoming Commission meetings. We need that. The mumbo jumbo on the agendas and the items, we really -- sometimes we don't even know what it is all about. Also, to wrap it up, I think that we should include as an agenda agenda the COVID-19 impact on business and what we can do to help those businesses to survive. So, I would like to see if you could include that as an agenda item for either January or February. This is my personal opinion. This is -- the COVID-19 is the biggest fraud that has been committed against humanity ever. I thank you so much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Tell me about COVID-19 and fraud, yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead, Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Mr. Brett Gillis.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. Gillis. Mr. Gillis? Billy, you want...

Brett Gillis: Hello?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: To go to the next one, and then we'll admit Mr. Gillis...

Mr. Gillis: Can you hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: When he gets on?

City Clerk Urquia: We can hear you, sir.

Mr. Gillis: Oh. Good morning. And before I start, best wishes for a speedy recovery, Mayor. I'm here...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Gillis: I'm here to talk about the Craft Section because I was unable to participate in the last meeting, but I would like to object to the upzoning of the Craft Section for a variety of reasons. Some of these points I'll touch on this morning; that, you know, the residents that live there, I understand they want to upzone their properties and sell and move and make money, and that's good for them, but you're all elected to do what's best for the City of Coral Gables as a whole. I do not believe that this upzoning is the best outcome for this area of the City. When you were running, many of you talked about commercial intrusion into a residential neighborhood. This is an exact example of that. It's an in-town residential area that we have right now. We have a diversity of housing options in Coral Gables; this is one of them. It's a great opportunity for people that want to live near the downtown area, but live in a -- on a residential street. It's an opportunity for them to do that. And to give you a few examples, I invite you to go look at 311 Santander, 315 Santander and 356 Malaga. These are people that have recently built very expensive homes in that area, and they've done that under the current conditions. And we hear complaints from the

neighborhood talking about issues with the sidewalks, the trees and parking, but you know what, a lot of other neighborhoods have those issues too. I don't mean to take away from them in that regard. I hope the City will help them with those measures. But also in the neighborhood I live at, the trees, the oak trees and mahogany trees are pushing up the sidewalks and the streets creating an unsafe environment for people walking around. Trees are an issue in several areas, sidewalks. Walk on the Greenway and turn north on Columbus. There's no sidewalk there, and that street's been there for 90 years. So, there's a lot of issues going on here. I hope it will be studied more, or you look at the areas that are surrounding that area, the impacts with crime, traffic, parking overflow, and probably most importantly, right now, what we're talking about with Miracle Mile, we don't need any more competition for Miracle Mile. We have Merrick Park. We have commercial areas along LeJeune, 8th Street, Douglas. It isn't necessary at this point to dilute the business community anymore; there's enough competition. Miracle Mile is struggling so much as it is, so I hope that you will really reconsider that and help the people in that neighborhood, but to keep it residential. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Claire Neilson Noble.

Connie Neilson Noble: Good morning. My name's Connie Neilson Noble. I'm a resident of 815 Majorca Avenue, in Coral Gables. I'm a very proud parent to two children at George W. Carver Elementary School. I'm incredibly disappointed at the Commission's dismissive attitude to genuine concerns by a large number of parents about constructing a gas station directly opposite an elementary school. The need to develop land for the whole community is understandable and supported. However, gas pumps bring health and safety risks to the area and to our young children

who attend this fantastic school and live in the whole community. We would call on you to help us work with the Wawa to find a suitable solution to this issue before any child is harmed. If you have missed our statements during this morning, we are here to meet with you in future. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Billy, before we admit anybody else, the public comment section is one hour, and we have ten minutes to go. So, at 11:20 -- I mean, at 10:20, I'm going to cut the public comment section off, as pursuant to our ordinance. Go ahead, Billy, next person.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Javier Banos Machado.

Javier Banos Machado: Good morning, City Commissioners and Mr. Mayor. I hope that the Mayor is feeling better...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. Machado: This morning. A couple of issues that I want to address. Javier Banos, 1801 Casilla Street. On the issue of the Wawa, I keep hearing from the City Attorney that, you know, there is an agreement, and we cannot violate it, and this has been chiseled in stone. And I really wonder how enforceable this issue of not being able to have a public meeting is, or have a public discussion. I don't think it's -- I'm not a constitutional scholar, but I don't think this is consistent with Article IV or our Florida Constitution, or Chapter 286 or Chapter 119. You know, the whole notion of being in the public sphere is to be able to have a public discussion. I would personally venture out to say that I think the City Attorney's Office far exceeded -- and it could be her predecessor -- but far exceeded its authority on what was granted under the resolution of 2015. And I think there at the very least should be a public comment on that. Second and more importantly, we haven't reached out to this developer and figure out whether or not just talking with his parent is even something that does viable. That's not -- it doesn't violate anything. They clearly have concerns. They are concerns that should be addressed by the Commission. They are

concerns that are germane and are important. Why is it that we cannot be a conduit to express those concerns to the developer and see if there's some form of compromise that can be done to modify the process and address our concerns? Perhaps they need to be -- there's got to be some type of information, education. There can be some modifications to -- why have we shut down completely the conversation and we have not gone past anything that is even allowed under the settlement agreement, assuming it's enforceable to this degree. And I want to thank all the parents who have shown up to express their concerns and everybody else who has done so. This is the type of civil discourse that is essential to any democracy and certainly to our city, and to -- regrettably, I think has been missing for a while. On Items G-4 and G-5, I want to commend Commissioner Fors for putting forward his solution. I think more open government, more notice would have resolved certainly the issue of the Wawa because people would have been truly genuinely informed, not the proforma information that was done, as well as the Miracle Mile modifications. It is important that people have the ability to have an education and understanding of what it is the Commission is doing. We went through nearly two hours of your discussion. That was informative, so I appreciate you guys providing for that. It was important for all of you to also allow folks to ask their questions, figure out if this is what's really needed in Miracle Mile, what effect it's going to have. Of everyone who mentioned the residents and who were concerned about the residents, Ms. Zyberk was the one that said, "Well, we should inform the people." Commissioner Lago is right on point on G-5. We should have a meeting in January and discuss this thing until everyone's questions are answered. We should have another one in February. And if there's another one in March, we should have it in March. And if ultimately the resolution is that this shouldn't pass, it shouldn't pass. If it should be modified, it could be modified, but make sure that we have an open discussion, all the issues that are presented so that you don't have the same issue that you have with the Wawa that is now blowing in your face, and you don't have the same situation with Miracle Mile when, yes, some other boondoggle is built there and then you have to answer for it because the folks don't like it. If you have -- if public -- Florida is a sunshine state. Let's have the government in the sunshine. Let's truly have a discussion. Let's have public engagement, and let's open to everybody who's concerned and get them addressed, and hopefully, that way you will have a better government and a better resolution. Thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next, Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Stephanie Pasternak.

Stephanie Pasternak: Hi...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy.

Ms. Pasternak: Good morning. My name is Stephanie Pasternak, address 4301 Southwest 5th Street, Coral Gables, Florida 33134. Can you hear me?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, ma'am. We can hear.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, we can.

Ms. Pasternak: Okay. I'm another concerned parent about the Wawa project, and I do understand that there's a bunch of legal issues here that need to be respected; that's what I've heard. I heard last Commission meeting that property rights and commercial rights need to be respected. And though putting aside everything that went wrong with all that process from before, what's the current status is that it's commercial, and I'm speaking for myself, and I'm sure that other parents are not -- do not care really that it's commercial, because there is a lot of other suitable commercial entities that are better for a property right across from elementary school, just not a gas station, you know. Not a gas station. And I know that environmental experts were brought and other people were brought to speak about it. And if the Commission is okay with the explanation that

the environmental expert said that Florida has stringent or stricter requirements for gas stations, that's perfect for all gas stations in Florida. But is there really more stringent requirement for gas stations right across from a school? Is there like a specific thing that says something about gas stations across from a school? I don't know. That's something that should be looked at more in detail, not just someone that comes to speak in broader terms about all Florida gas stations. Also, about traffic, the Mayor compared it with Merrick Park across from the high school. And I don't think it's fair to compare a mall with a gas station. And also, the street is not narrower. The one between Merrick Park and the high school has two lanes in each direction. The one in the proposed Wawa across from the school, there's only one lane in each direction. I really don't understand how traffic is not going to impact that section, and right from where the kids cross to the entrance, the main entrance of the school. I mean, I know there's things that might not be able to get done because of legal issues, and I really hope that there's a way around it, that something more drastic can be done, but if nothing else is possible, at least why not an entrance through US-1? Why does it have to be through Grand Avenue, right across from the school? I really don't know how traffic permits from Miami-Dade will go through, and I really hope those permits don't go through. And maybe the Coral Gables Commission can check those permittings and work with us parents, just to make sure the traffic there is not going to be an issue, which I don't understand how it wouldn't, so it's a very big concern from all parents. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Billy, this will be the last speaker (INAUDIBLE) go over the hour allocated by our ordinance. And this will be the last speaker, so please go ahead.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mayor, if I may, just a quick question to Mr. Clerk. How many speakers do we have left?



City Clerk Urquia: Five more.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mr. Mayor, don't you think it would be a little -- it would be prudent just to take these last five and we can cut it off there, and maybe we can put them down to a minute?

Commissioner Mena: I agree.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Sure, but our ordinance said one hour. We'll take the last five speakers and we'll be here however long it is, but this is cutting into other items on the agenda that people are scheduled to appear and that people were convocated with proper notice. Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Ms. Lydia...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think this is disrespectful to the other people on the agenda, but go ahead. Let's finish with the five, if you want.

City Clerk Urquia: Lydia Von Cole.

Lydia Von Cole: Good morning, everyone. I'm a proud parent at George Washington Carver Elementary, and like all the other parents here today and very many that couldn't be here today because of work, stand on behalf of my seven-year-old daughter who attends first grade at Carver, and for all the other 1,500 children that attend George Washington Carver Elementary and Middle School. Just because you deem this a moot point and according to you, it's a done deal, it doesn't mean that all of the reasons why we object to this project lack substance and merit. As much as you choose to ignore it, the health and safety of our children and the impact on traffic of this project are still very real. During the last meeting, one of you made reference to the 7-11, almost two blocks away from Coral Gables High. Well, the 7-11 is not a gas station. The gas station in question will have six pumps and will be about 100 feet or 30 meters from where 6-year-olds, not 16-year-olds -- developmentally, they're different. The way their bodies absorb the toxins are

different -- spend more than six hours a day. The main entrance to the Commission assembly room where you usually sit, is probably that far from where the gas station is going to be to first-grade classes and Pre-K-4 classes. You make it a point to ask our addresses. We don't all live in Coral Gables, but we are part of a larger community, a community of Miamians, a community of Carver parents. We might not all pose a direct threat to you at the polls during upcoming and next elections, but I'd like to remind you that elections in the 21st century are not just won or lost by direct constituents. This project affects many other communities other than Coral Gables. Miamians have influence in cities they don't directly live in. We all have connections to the City of Coral Gables in some way or another; parents, family, just so many influences. This is my second year at Carver. I have a first grader there, and I would like to say that the Carver and middle school PTA and its members can move mountains. I've witnessed it; they have influence. Please listen to us and try to work with us. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Jennifer Restrepo.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ms. Restrepo, you're on. Hello?

Jennifer Restrepo: Hello, yes. I was waiting to be unmuted from the host.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Ms. Restrepo: My name is Jennifer Restrepo. I live at 2946 Southwest 26th Street. So, although I'm not a resident of Coral Gables, I am a resident -- I am a member of this community. I have one child that goes to Sunset Elementary and another child that goes to Carver Middle. So, my Sunset child will eventually go to Carver Middle, so I'm in this for the long haul within this community. I echo everything that has been said before me regarding the Wawa project and the procedures that were taken in order to get that passed through. As the parent just mentioned, although I personally don't live in Coral Gables, I have been part of and witnessed PTAs move mountains to get things accomplished. And as a parent of two District 6 students, I greatly oppose

the construction of the Wawa, and I hope that something can be made of it. And as a recent new resident of the City of Miami, very close to Miracle Mile, I oppose building a building on there. Currently, it looks beautiful, and I hope that more small businesses return to the area. Thank you so much for your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next is Jackson “Rip” Holmes.

Jackson “Rip” Holmes: Hello there. Thank you all very much. I've been waiting. I'm very grateful to you. Using this public comment section, this could be the savior of Coral Gables. I agree with everyone who's spoken out against the Wawa project. I mean, you've made a really tremendous case. And I want to zero in very quickly now because I have a little time -- they don't allow us a lot of time, do they? -- on this solution. Because I've been protesting this for long before it's finally exploded. The citizenry is awakened and we need to implement, I submit to you, the following solution. We need to get a referendum on the April ballot calling all attorneys, please help. It's to do what the City of Miami Beach has done, and that is to ban developer contributions to City Commission races. Alright, I'm going to give you a quick history, but I've already given you the solution, so please keep this in mind. We need to get a referendum on the April election ballot for the voters to say we don't want -- we want to do what Miami Beach has done, and we want to ban developer contributions to City Commission races. We have a government now of the developers. Our government is no longer of the people; that's why everyone's here protesting, and we need to end that by this referendum. A quick history thing, what I've learned over the years is that the Citizens United decision of the US Supreme Court -- did we ever think this was going to trickle all the way down to Coral Gables? It has. It treats corporations as having constitutional rights to spend unlimited money in campaigns, and did we think this would happen? It has happened; that's why we're seeing these horrible events like the Wawa approval, like this city zoning code rewrite. It's not an update, Mr. Mayor. It's not an update; it's a rewrite. We need -- alright, now going back to the history here, it's trickled down, the Citizens United, to the fact that

these developers spend so much money that they control the outcome when you get bombarded with mailers that may have false information, this affects the outcomes of races, and that's what we need to do is ban that developer contribution and we can do it. We got to do it by a referendum, calling all attorneys for help. My phone number is 305-338-5000. My email address, rip.holmes@yahoo.com. Rip Holmes. Let's solve this problem for once and for all with a referendum banning developer contributions to City Commission races. God bless you. Our citizens are awakened. Let's solve this problem. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next is Kirk Menendez.

Kirk Menendez: Good morning, City Commission. Mayor, I wish you a speedy recovery.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. Menendez: Thank you for this opportunity to speak. I'm Kirk Menendez. I reside at 325 Malaga Avenue. I'm before you on behalf of more than 30 unified property owners in the Craft Section who previously submitted a petition to rezone the area between LeJeune and Salzedo, Catalonia and Santander. The...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have lost you, Kirk.

Mr. Menendez: More than...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Mr. Menedez: For the area to be rezoned. The rezoning of this particular area of the Craft Section has been talked about and openly with public comment for more than a year. The residents here

have actively participated in the City's meetings and workshops. Many of the property owners who have lived here actually more than two and three decades, have real life safety concerns due to the increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the immediate area. As was mentioned previously in the P and Z meeting and in the workshop and in a prior Commission meeting, this area was always designated to be commercial, not single family. As was mentioned before, in the P and Z meeting by former Commissioner Chip Withers, this has been discussed within the City at all levels since the 1990s, when the San Sebastian apartments was actually a hotel. This area shares the same electrical grid and street width with commercial areas all around it. So, the residents were hoping that this particular item for the Craft Section would pass during today's meeting. However, we are very appreciative that the City Commission is moving the item forward on behalf of the residents, all of whom hope that the rezoning of this portion of the Craft Section will pass as soon as possible. And again, thank you for the time, and thank you for hearing us out.

City Clerk Urquia: Next, Mr. Mayor, is Shawn Alexander.

Shawn Alexander: Yes, good morning, and I'll be brief. Thanks for allowing me the opportunity to speak and provide public comments. I'm a parent of two students at GW Carver Elementary School. I'm a resident of the West Coconut Grove community that's frequently marginalized when it comes to matters that directly impact our lives. This is another example of this. I do want to express my concerns about the process that placed a gas station across the street from the elementary school. Not much more, you know, for me to add that hasn't been said this morning, a lot of compelling reasoning to consider here for you, except that I do feel it's a shameful procedure in the manner that you've done. It appears there's been a pretty deliberate attempt to push this through without input from the community. If you had sought the proper input, I think we could quickly determine, you know, that the project is just not appropriate for the site. Now that the issue's out on the table and in the open, I feel like you must address the elected officials whose role is to serve and represent our community. I'm asking you to please reconsider and do the right thing. There's a moral obligation here. I'll just cede the rest of my time. I know we're pressed for it, but I appreciate you giving me the opportunity. Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, last one -- last speaker we had registered at the time was Sue Kawalerski.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Oh, my gosh. Go ahead. Hello? Hello, Sue. We can't hear you.

Sue Kawalerski: Okay. Are you unmuting me?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Ms. Kawalerski: Hello? Can you hear?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Perfect.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay, thank you. Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Commissioners. And Mr. Mayor, we hope for a speedy recovery for you. I'm Sue...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Sue.

Ms. Kawalerski: I'm Sue Kawalerski. I live at 6830 Gratian Street. I'm here representing the Coral Gables Neighbors' Association this morning, and I want to speak on Item G-4 and Item G-5 that will come before you. First of all, I applaud Commissioner Fors for introducing Item G-4. This resolution and your ordinance would allow the City to widely distribute any notice to the public of any important issues that come before -- that are coming before the Commission, including the zoning code proposal. Commissioner Fors has asked that the City use its database, this email database to distribute the information. I would encourage you to also add to that, notices in the Coral Gables Magazine, which we residents actually support through taxpayer funding and any

other widely distributed means to get to every single resident in Coral Gables, so that we're all aware of what the Commission is doing so that we have a public input before any decisions are made. So, thank you, Commissioner Fors. Also, on Item G-5, I'd like to applaud Vice Mayor Lago for bringing this to the Commission today. It would require a full public hearing in mid-January to disclose all of the Zoning Code proposals before any vote -- final vote is taken by the Commission. I want to also add to that, as part of the GNA, that we do not feel that one meeting alone is going to serve the public. I think it's a beginning, but it's not the end. As we witnessed last week Monday, when we had a sunshine meeting, there were 283 people on that call. It took the Commission two hours just to discuss parts of the Miracle Mile changes. Obviously, the Commission still is trying to figure out what to do with the proposed changes just alone on Miracle Mile. And therefore, we would like more public meetings than just the one being proposed in G-5 because, you know, this is too important, our Zoning Code is too important to just give it short shrift. We, the public, has to know and has to input what we would like to see in our community on Miracle Mile or in our residential neighborhoods, so we are asking that this be expanded into more than the one public meeting before any kind of final vote is taken. Also, listening to the Wawa conversations, this speaks to what one person said that the process is fundamentally flawed. This is what we have been talking about all along regarding development all over Coral Gables for years. Our process is fundamentally flawed when the public is not made aware before things are being approved that will severely affect not only the character of our city, but the quality of life in our neighborhoods. So, I can tell the Wawa proponents that -- I should say the residents and the - particularly, the parents of the students at that school, that the Coral Gables Neighbors' Association fully supports your efforts. So, thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Sue. You made a comment about our supporting the Coral Gables Magazine with our city funds; we don't.

Ms. Kawalerski: Hello?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We don't support Coral -- any magazine with our city funds.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay, then...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Coral Gables Magazine is a commercial enterprise, very successful, thank God, and it's supported by ads.

Ms. Kawalerski: Okay, so in other words, the City of Coral Gables does not contribute a dime towards that magazine?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We do not contribute a dime except for the ads we purchase in it, like every other merchant business, whatever it is, real estate developer, real estate agency, real estate salesman, bicycle shops maybe in Coral Gables. We do not contribute except to purchase space in the magazine.

Ms. Kawalerski: Alright, then I was given incorrect information, and I recall that statement. However, I still propose that we use taxpayer-funded dollars to fully inform residents by using such widely...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That is correct, and you just proposed that, but I was just correcting information on the Coral Gables Magazine. Thank you, Sue. Billy, do we have any other members that wish to speak?

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, we do, but I know you had capped it at five.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, no, no. Mr. -- Vice Mayor Lago wants to continue, so we'll continue and eat into the rest of the agenda. Go ahead.

City Clerk Urquia: Okay, in that case, we have Ms. Maria Menendez who would like to speak.



Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Ms. Menendez.

Maria Menendez: Mr. Mayor, speedy recovery. Thank you for the opportunity...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Ms. Menendez: To speak, sir. My name is Maria Menendez. I live at 322 Catalonia Avenue with my family. And I, along with Kirk Menendez, represent 30-plus property owners -- by the way, no relationship to Kirk other than that we're close neighbors -- in the small portion of the Craft Section who submitted a petition to rezone our area. We have requested this rezoning as a result of our diminishing quality of life here in our area, resulting from the large development to our east and planned development in the future. It's just been a challenge here to be living in an area with so much traffic, so much construction, so much everything. This area is an enclave, not suitable for single-family residents. And public meetings have been held. This application has been moving forward with all public input, and we would appreciate your support of having this item move forward. We were hoping that today's meeting, we would have a consideration or a vote. But we do appreciate everybody's efforts in moving this item forward. And thank you again for allowing us to speak on this matter.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Maria.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor next is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Billy.

City Clerk Urquia: Rhonda Anderson.

Rhonda Anderson: Good morning. Mayor, I, again, mirror the comments. I hope that you have a very speedy recovery.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, ma'am.

Ms. Anderson: And don't have any lasting effects from this COVID infection. The unifying theme that we're seeing through each one of these issues that we have is lack of public notice to individuals. The more notice that we give to people, the better ideas that we can get for each one of these projects, and it starts from (INAUDIBLE) from Wawa gasoline station. That's an elementary school across from that -- where that is to be built. My children went there. These children are small and short. In fact, we used to use that lot to park in, in order to be able to drop off our children and walk them across the street. If we have had public input and public notice, we could have had a better result. And I'm fairly certain if this was a project that was planned for across the street from Coral Gables Elementary, you would be hearing this even louder. This area should not be a short shrift just because it's on the other side of US-1 on a busy traffic intersection that's even going to get worse. As to Items G-4 and G-5, I do applaud the Commissioner Fors and Commissioner Lago for bringing these items forward. The lack of public notice is evident in what's going on, because we have valuable input that we're not receiving, for instance, from residents in -- that are renters that know what the traffic impact is on their street, because only the owner of the properties receive the notice. But by including it in an e-blast that goes out from the City, and by other means that we can possibly do so, we will get better results. We can be able to make that request of developers to address those traffic problems, as opposed to our citizens paying for it out of pocket. We can fix the drainage issues before they happen, because the residents know best where the drainage issues exist. There are so many issues that residents know that we can't possibly know if you're sitting up there making decisions because you don't live there. And as for the last item, I'll reiterate what's been said before. The public notice section for that Planning and Zoning meeting was mostly workshops which the public was not invited to. And it wouldn't have been a form that they could have participated in because you're talking about a small group of people getting around a table to discuss zoning issues. The last two meetings were simply during the middle of the summer, and the ability to reach residents who haven't had a single public meeting happening before the Planning and Zoning Board at that point was not the same as if it was on

their radar that there was regular Planning and Zoning meetings occurring. So, I support Commissioner Lago's request that this be put forth in a full public hearing format, which the residents' comments are heard and the residents get to contribute to help make our city a nicer place to live. Last comment is with regard to the Craft Section. The same theme exists there. We do not want to have a poorly planned Craft Section area, because if we do that, we are going to continue to erode the other areas to the west with the impact of that traffic in there. If we sit down and thoughtfully plan out the Craft Section, we will all benefit with a better result. Thank you for your time.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Mayor, next...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Clerk Urquia: Next, I have someone, but I don't have a name. It says Llanes iPhone.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, we have to have a name and an address.

City Clerk Urquia: So, perhaps the person can state their name and address for the record. Sir.

Henry Llanes: Good morning. Am I on? Are you able to hear me?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If you give us your name and address, you will continue, yes.

Mr. Llanes: I wrote back several times on the chat, but apparently, it didn't pop up. My name is Henry; the last name is Llanes, and it's 330 Catalonia Avenue.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

Mr. Llanes: Mr. Mayor, again, speedy recovery. And thank you and the Commission...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. Llanes: For taking the time to listen to us. Simply, I wanted to echo the comments of Kirk and Maria Menendez, not related. We're a part of the Craft Section, and we urge the Commission to please take up a second hearing of the rezoning on the 9th of February. This has dragged on for a very, very long time. As stated before, the quality of life there is not the same as in the rest of Coral Gables. It does not lend itself any longer to single-family residences, and we urge you please to retake the -- take up the zoning on the 9th of February. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, sir.

City Clerk Urquia: And Mr. Mayor, the last speaker we have is the first speaker we started with, was Ms. Rosaline Navarro, but she was getting cut off and she wanted to try one more time to have her comments heard.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Ms. Navarro: Yes. Thank you. Thank you so much for this opportunity. (COMMENT NOT MADE IN ENGLISH). Thank you for letting me speak one more time. I am a parent of two students in the Italian program at GW Carver Elementary. We're here for the Italian program. As you know, it is -- the Italian Consulate is in the Gables. And as the parent before me said -- one of the parents before me said this project will affect many communities. I live in the -- north of the Falls area, but again, my two kids come here to school, so we're here daily. I urge everyone here to please do everything in their power to not let this project come through. Aside from the health threats and increase of traffic, I would like for you to think also the children who walk to Carver. At the last meeting, Mr. Mayor, respectfully, compared this project when the parents complained about the Merrick Park project to students from Coral Gables High with the possibility of attempting to skipping school and what a wonderful project that was. This is not something

beautiful being built in front of our school. We're not talking about shopping. We're talking about the danger for children who are ages five through ten, who walk to get an education. These are children who do not have parents to walk them or drive them to school, and they're walking by themselves from and to their home. The Police Department also said at the last meeting -- the police of Coral Gables -- that they are taking care of traffic in front of the school. Absolutely, they're doing a wonderful job where they can; however, they are not always present. I have been at this school for nine years. My daughter's in eighth grade, and during rush hour, I have witnessed so many cars taking that light to cross, for the students to cross, taking the light to make it across US-1. The traffic goes down two blocks on the -- east on Grand Avenue for all those cars in that one lane to cross US-1. I please urge you to consider these children who are crossing the street. When there's the (INAUDIBLE) gas station is going to -- aside from the increase of flux of traffic, these kids have to be watching at different entrances and exits of a gas station. At the four o'clock dismissal, there is no police usually. Who is going to say, "Oh, well, that's just too bad when someone gets hit, if somebody gets hit." It's a big responsibility that we have on our children. Please make your decision not thinking of your own reality, but think of these children that walk to school. It is your job to protect and to do best by your community, and these are the voices of the community. We are the voices of this community. We are the ones who need to deal with this, and we do not want it or need it. Think of everyone who is here asking you, as public officials, to represent us for what will impact us, the people, from this community. (COMMENT NOT MADE IN ENGLISH). I thank you all for your time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you. Billy.

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

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Miriam, some comments were made here on the legality and the timing and the sequence of this. Do you want to address those?

City Attorney Ramos: Yes, sir. I'd like to begin by reminding everybody that this is a privately owned piece of land where the individuals have private development rights. This is a -- this project has a very long history going back to January of 2003. I did give a historical update timeline at the last meeting, but I will give some of the brief highlights at this time. In January of 2003, the Board of County Commissioners conveyed the property to the LBW Homeowners Foundation of Coral Gables. And at that time, it was in fact for the redevelopment of a mixed-use housing and commercial project, and I believe that that is where some of the comments regarding affordable housing have resulted from. In January of 2005, the City Commission at the time here in Coral Gables, in Ordinance 2005-04, approved a change of zoning from residential to commercial and approved a site plan. In January of 2006, the Board of County Commissioners modified the deed to change the project scope away from a mixed-use housing project and toward a retail office space. The resolution also changed the start date and the completion date for the project, so that change from a residential project to a commercial project was done by the Board of County Commissioners back in 2006 and by the City Commission in 2005. Fast forward to March of 2008, the City Commission approved a change of zoning, as I had mentioned, and approved the amendments to the site plan that had previously been put forth to the City of Coral Gables. The City also approved a change of land use from residential single family to commercial low density, all of that occurred back in 2000 -- as I mentioned before -- five, six and eight, so a very, very long time ago. In September of 2014, the City Commission approved a planned area development and a site plan for what was then known as Gables Point Plaza. It had two phases. It is important to note that all of these ordinances that I have mentioned this morning were conducted pursuant to the public hearing process. There were public hearings at every single juncture, including when the site plan was approved, which is a quasi-judicial item. That resulted in an approved site plan that had two phases, the community center and office space, and a restaurant, which is the space where the Wawa is going now. The community center and office space have in fact been completed. There were concerns with the County and the individuals developing the property as to the timeline for that development and delays and who those delays were attributed to. Ultimately, that led to the county trying to exercise a reverter and take the property back from the LBW. And because of that turn of events, in July of 2015, Bahamian Village LLC, which is who

owned the property at the time, filed a declaratory action in Miami-Dade County courts. The City Commission at the time was upset about this turn of events. They acknowledged the importance of this area. They acknowledged the delays, and they urged Miami-Dade County to enter into some sort of agreement that would allow for the completion of the project. That was done in Resolution 2015-303. That resolution also authorized the City Manager and City Attorney to take all necessary action to facilitate a resolution of that dispute. The City in fact filed a motion to intervene in January of 2016, and at that time, at the end of that month, then City Attorney Craig Leen updated the City Commission, and the City Commission adopted Resolution 2016-11, urging the Board of County Commissioners to please resolve the dispute with LBW regarding the project, and again, asking the City Attorney to continue working to have the item placed on the BCC agenda. Both Vice Mayor Lago and Commissioner Keon appeared before the County Commission or at least two occasions to advocate for the conclusion of that litigation and the allowance for these people to move forward with the development of their land, which had been thwarted throughout the years. The settlement agreement was signed by then City Attorney Craig Leen, in November of 2017. And in accordance with the terms of that agreement, in January of 2020, the City Attorney opinion that we all know about was issued approving the revised site plan.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Madam City Attorney. And we will continue with the meeting, if there are no other speakers, of course.