

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-8 and E-9 are related
August 26, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Planning and Zoning Director, Ramon Trias

Public Speaker(s)

Laura Russo, Representing the Applicant

Cherry Smart, Resident

Edwina Prime, President of Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association

Agenda Item E-8 and E-9 are related [Start: 11:31:52 a.m.]

E-8: Review of Planned Area Development (PAD). 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 the "Gables Pointe Plaza" on the property legally described as Lots 7-27, Block 1B, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Alban's Park Section (280 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for severability, repealer and an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City).

E-9: Change of Zoning. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting a change of zoning pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review”, Division 14, “Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments” from Commercial Limited District (CL) to Commercial (C) for the property legally described as Lot 13 and Lots 17-23, Block 1B, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Alban’s Park Section (280 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; and providing for severability, repealer and an effective date. (Legal description on file at the City).

Mayor Cason: Alright. Before we take a break we are going to go to E-8 and E-9 because it’s related to the Homestead area and we have people who have been waiting all morning. After that we are going to take a break and then we’ll come back and we’ll probably take a break after the first round of discussions on the Streetscape, so we can have lunch and then we’ll continue on with the rest of the items on the Consent Agenda and all the other things that we have. Go ahead.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Item E-8 and E-9 are related. Item E-8 is Review of Planned Area Development (PAD). 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 the “Gables Pointe Plaza” on the property legally described as Lots 7-27, Block 1B, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Alban’s Park Section (280 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; including required conditions; providing for severability, repealer and an effective date. Item E-9 is a Change of Zoning. An Ordinance of the City Commission of Coral Gables, Florida requesting a change of zoning pursuant to Zoning Code Article 3, “Development Review”, Division 14, “Zoning Code Text and Map Amendments” from Commercial Limited District (CL) to Commercial (C) for the property legally described as Lot 13 and Lots 17-23, Block 1B, MacFarlane Homestead and St. Alban’s Park Section (280 South Dixie Highway), Coral Gables, Florida; and providing for severability, repealer and an effective date. Ramon could you please present the item?

City Attorney Leen: Mr. Mayor we would ask that the two items be heard together as a public hearing and separate votes on each.

Mayor Cason: Alright – and we have two speaker cards afterwards when you are finished your presentation.

Commissioner Quesada: If I could just interrupt for one second. Mr. Mayor, I think the majority of the crowd here is here for the Streetscape item. Do you have a ballpark idea when we are going to be getting to that?

Mayor Cason: How long do you think your presentation will be?

Ms. Russo: My presentation is extremely brief, less than 10 minutes.

Mayor Cason: OK. After that we are going to have two minutes with two students, who are here on a presentation on Personal Appearance, then we are going to take a break, bathroom break or whatever, then we are going to come back and move onto the other item. I would say by about 12:15 (p.m.), Streetscape.

Commissioner Quesada: Streetscape will start at 12:15 p.m. approximately. OK.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Mr. Trias: Mayor, I will give you a very brief PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the issues. As you know the location is right on US-1 and Grand Avenue. The proposed change in zoning, which is one of the items before you, affects the area right next to US-1, which is a proposed restaurant site. Right along US-1 there is a park, as you well know an existing park with a wall and some landscaping. The location has a project history of several projects; they have been reviewed and approved in the past, mostly mixed use. They are provided for your background and for information; and the current project proposed has two buildings, a restaurant building along US-1 and then a community center in the back of the site, in the middle there is parking, as you can see. Phase one is the community center plus the parking associated with that building. That is an overall view of the site in context with the neighborhood around it. This is an image of the community center, which is the first phase, the project that is really before you at this point; and this is the restaurant site. Just for your information, the restaurant has changed, this was the prior proposal that the applicant may explain that a little bit further, but at least conceptually it is still located in the same place. It has been reviewed by the Board of Architects and it complies within the requirements, entrance of the area FAR and other zoning.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Ramon just very quickly on the proposed FAR....

Mr. Trias: Yes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Its point 015 (.015)...

Ms. Russo: It's miniscule.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Does that mean its forever?- that's the size of the site? Can they expand on it at any point?

Ms. Russo: We could expand in the future, but it would require a – anything that is different from what we are presenting today would require a site plan amendment if it deviates more than what's required for administrative.

Mr. Trias: You are approving a PAD with a specific site plan; any changes will come back to you.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK. OK. OK. Very good.

Mr. Trias: So just to summarize. The PAD complies with the zoning requirements and as I said before, any changes would have to come back to you. I would expect that changes will come back to you as the restaurant is influx at this point; however Phase One, which is the community center, should come for a building permit shortly. There are some conditions of approval which are listed in your staff report. They deal with some design issues in terms of the site plan conditions, and also some operational issues as of the hours of operations of the future restaurant, which are generally the main conditions.

Commissioner Lago: You are talking about the restrictions in regards to the usage?

Mr. Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: And the hours, and music and stuff like that. Can you discuss a little bit in regards to the exterior usage of the building?

Ms. Russo: Yes. As part of our site plan we are proposing a restaurant along the US-1 corridor, which is the reason why we have a change in zoning application for that portion, which is to allow for outdoor dining. As you will see on the site plan the outdoor dining is facing Grand, we've kept it away from Florida Avenue, which is the residential component. We've geared it or designed it to be toward Grand Avenue, which as you know across the street we have a continuation of the City's Linear Park and Carver School and we are also providing a connectivity to the City's park, so it is to allow active use and for it to be a successful restaurant, but we are taking into consideration that we are near and adjacent residential neighborhood and we've been meeting with the residents on a regular basis, and getting their input and we are going to make sure that the neighborhood is safeguarded.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mr. Trias: OK. That concludes the presentation. If you have any questions, I'm here to answer and the applicant is also here.

Commissioner Keon: I only have one question. Again, we are approving a specific site plan...?

Mr. Trias: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: Is it that rendering?

Ms. Russo: Not the rendering, but the site plan.

Commissioner Keon: The site plan, the footprint – OK.

Ms. Russo: Correct. Correct. If I may, I'll be as brief as possible. Good morning Mr. Mayor, members of the Commission, for the record my name is Laura Russo, and I'm here this morning representing Bahamian Village, which is a public/private joint venture that is made up of Redevco Grand, whose representative Deborah Kolsky is here and by the LBW Homeowners Inc., whose representative Leona Cooper is here. I have with me the design architect Chloe Keidaish, and the landscape architect Dina Bell. As you've been told by staff this property is located at the intersection of Grand, Florida and US-1, it's an irregular shaped piece of property, currently vacant. Running parallel along US-1 is a City Linear Park that continues northeast as well as southwest of the site. We are here today proposing a phase development. Some of you may remember that we've been here before in the past on other projects and due to some illegal utility encroachments and governmental encroachments progress was not able to allow – we weren't able to commence those projects, but we are here with a new name, a new project, and it's a phased project that you've heard from staff, and we are also requesting a change in zoning from CL, Limited Commercial to C, Commercial, for that portion of US-1 on which the restaurant footprints sits. Phase One is the community center and an office building of approximately 2,600 square feet that will house both the developer as well as the LBW Homeowners Inc. Phase Two is a proposed restaurant use with outdoor seating. We were in negotiations with the tenant, those negotiations fell through, sadly, but we are working with others and we will be proposing a new operator there soon. Part of our site plan as you heard from Planning staff, we worked very hard with Planning staff to look at operations and in terms of the residential neighborhood, as well as interacting with the City's Linear Park and parking. We've addressed – we've worked very closely with the Planning and Zoning Board staff. We've been approved with conditions by the Planning and Zoning Board and by the Board of Architects. So if you have any questions you may ask them, but we respectfully request that you approve our applications today, and just wanted to let you know we've also had numerous meetings with the homeowners and people within 1,000 linear feet of the subject property and everybody would like to see this implemented. So we respectfully request your approval.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: We've been talking about this for several years. I can't remember when exactly you were here, but it's been a long time when you first came up and broach the City with this. When do you think you will start this project?

Ms. Russo: We are ready to start construction drawings on Phase One now.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: OK.

Ms. Russo: So we would like, literally if we get approval today, the architect will start construction drawings, so that while we wait for the Second Reading or actually ahead of the game, we'd like to get this done as soon as possible.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: And then just a follow-up question to Commissioner Lago. The timing – 2 o'clock at night-time, staying open for the restaurant.

Ms. Russo: In doors. In doors. We've restricted the outdoors to midnight and the 2 o'clock, so you know is what is currently allowed by the City of Coral Gables if in fact there is a full liquor license, which is a whole different subject.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Right.

Ms. Russo: So we are following the Code, but we've restricted the outdoor hours.

Commissioner Lago: Ms. Russo if I could just clarify just so to give the Commission a little bit more background information, especially the Vice Mayor since he made the comment. I've had two meetings with the County in regards to this project. I have no vested interest in this project. I'm neither design nor construction site, but I'm involved because I think it's an important project to that area of our City. I've met with the Deputy Mayor for the County and I've also met with staff in reference to how the parcel of land was acquired from County; and I bring that up because time is of the essence. It is in the best interest of the developer to get this project started immediately and when I mean immediately, once we take a vote they need to go out there and put shovels in the ground. Obviously, I'm aware that there is a process in reference to the design documents and permitting, but this project needs to be commencing as soon as possible; and I want to do if you could just for one second, just speak briefly in regards to the community center, which to me is the most important part, component of this project, even though it doesn't generate the funds to make the project come to fruition, but I think it's the most important part of the project.

Ms. Russo: The community center, I'll have Chloe to give you a little bit, but it is to house some of the documents of the Homeowner Association, as you know the MacFarlane District is the only nationally designated historic district in the City of Coral Gables and so this is a place for this community to have documents, files, to be able to have meetings and continue its mission, which is to continue to preserve its Bahamian culture, its neighborhood, and to preserve as you may or may not know, but we've already been responsible for the preservation of some houses and for some construction of new houses replication in the Bahamian style. So it's very important for the neighborhood to have a sense of place and Chloe will tell you a little bit about the siting of the community center on the site.

Commissioner Lago: And if I could interject also. Currently the residents in the MacFarlane Homestead area, they currently meet at Carver Elementary, which they are extremely grateful, obviously that the Miami-Dade County Public Schools allows them to use their facilities, but this is going to give them a sense of place, this is going to give them a little bit of ownership in their community with this great structure, so it's a good thing, this is great for our community.

Commissioner Keon: I think that one of the really interesting facts that I don't think many people really know or understand is that when this parcel of land was conveyed by the County, it was conveyed to the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association, which is a 501(c). They have met all of the requirements, they have received this particular piece of land, they entered into a partnership with a developer to develop this property, but portions of the revenues related to the retail space of this property will go back into that community. So this is truly a real community project that is here for the benefit of the community that the community has given so much direction and input into and that will continue to serve the community. They have been an extremely, extremely, responsible, the Homeowners Association has been extremely responsible financially in dealing with this project and they really deserve to be commended for their input and their work within their community, to preserve and to improve and to work within their community. We are very grateful to have them as a part of our larger community Coral Gables.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. We have two people who want to speak and then we can have a motion. First of all Cherry Smart and then Edwina Prime again.

Ms. Cherry Smart: Good morning, my name is Cherry Smart and I live at 210 Florida Avenue, which is not exactly adjacent, but the second house down from where the community center would be built; and while I may have had some initial concerns regarding traffic on my street and also where the loading dock might be and trucks coming in and out, those are my only concerns. I am here to support the Lola B. Walker plan and the people who have worked so hard for so many years to make this improvement in their community. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Edwina.

Ms. Edwina Prime: Here I am again. As President of the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association, I have permission from the active members and other residents to report that we have had regular meetings with input into the Bahamian Village Project known as Gables Pointe Plaza and we support the same. We look forward to acceptance of the project. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you Ms. Prime.

Mayor Cason: Alright. Do we have a motion?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: So moved.

Mayor Cason: Vice Mayor makes the motion.

Commissioner Keon: Second.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Keon seconds it. City Clerk – E-8 and then we will do it on E-9 as well. This is on E-8.

City Clerk

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Cason: E-9.

Commissioner Quesada: I'll make the motion on E-9.

Commissioner Lago: I'll second the motion.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Quesada makes the motion on E-9, and seconds by Commissioner Lago.

City Clerk

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

City Commission Meeting

August 26, 2014

Agenda Items E-8 and E-9 are related Review of PAD and Change of Zoning
MacFarlane Homestead and St. Alban's Park Section

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

Ms. Russo: We thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

[End: 11:49:26 a.m.]