

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-12
August 22, 2023
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Kirk Menendez

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Works Director, Hermes Diaz

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-12

Discussion regarding Villa Valencia.

(Sponsored by Commissioner Fernandez)

Mayor Lago: All right, on F-12, as per the direction of the City Attorney, I have to recuse myself because the owner of this project is a tenant of mine, same tenant as we discussed before. He's a tenant of mine on a property that I own. I will be recusing myself on this vote. Thank you.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll try to make it quick. I've had a few residents reach out with concerns that they have over this project's inability to secure a CO right now. They have a temporary certificate of occupancy. They obviously have issues with the developer as well that they're fighting on their end and that's something that we won't discuss. But the questions that

were asked of me were what's going to happen? I know a lot of the -- some of the items that are on that final punch list are items that were proffers to the City or things that needed to be done. So, can we provide those residents with an update as to what we're looking at and what the timetable is?

City Manager Iglesias: We have extended the TCO by 180 days to try to accomplish this. That's the maximum amount that we can extend in one shot. We -- there is no problem -- no technical problem with occupying the building. This is some issues that were, as you mentioned, Commissioner, that were actually proffers. We did have a cash bond and we will be -- and we feel that we have enough money to finish that. We will be looking -- we will not release the funds until those items are done.

City Attorney Suárez: So, Commissioner, the current manager for the developer reached out to my office, and we've met with them. They explained that they -- they've made headway in getting those -- they're actually conditions of approval that they need to complete in order to get the CO. But as the Manager mentioned, they're not in the building. They are right-of-way improvements and -- but they -- they're having a cash flow issue. And so, since we are holding a cash bond, we're going to meet internally and figure out a process so that as -- they can proceed with the work and the City can release the cash, you know, in tranches or as, you know, the Manager deems appropriate as the work is completed.

City Manager Iglesias: We will work with them as appropriate to make sure the work is done.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay, and what is pending?

City Manager Iglesias: I believe, a number of right-of-way issues, I believe drainage and some...

Public Works Director Diaz: There is some drainage that they're supposed to ensure that it can be properly cleaned and adequate. They have a new drain they're going to have to install at a corner bump out that's stopping water. And there's some pedestrian and signal improvements or inter -- at the -- some of the -- not necessarily in that area, but like a block away or so, that they're supposed to be getting approval from the County. Push buttons, I don't remember exactly the (INAUDIBLE).

City Attorney Suárez: I think it's crosswalks or something like that.

Public Works Director Diaz: Yeah, something related...

City Attorney Suárez: Something related to the crosswalks.

Public Works Director Diaz: And we could provide in more detail but...

City Manager Iglesias: Our understanding is they've already applied to the County for that, but we will make sure that every -- all the work is done before we release any of those funds. If they do the work, if they finish certain portions of the work, then we can release those funds, but we want to make sure that we get what we've -- what was agreed to.

Public Works Director Diaz: And the undergrounding from FPL, it's not 100 percent completed yet either.

City Manager Iglesias: That's correct.

City Attorney Suárez: Correct.

Vice Chair Anderson: You know, I did walk the property and go over those issues with some of the folks. I know that they said that they had put down the money already and paid FP&L so that undergrounding has been paid for. So, that's a huge, huge amount. The push buttons are on Segovia and Valencia. It's at intersection. The drainage issue is on the west side of the set of three oak trees. That's been identified for a while and known that they had to finish that and the other drainage issues that they had to take care of. And then there's a minor punch list.

Public Works Director Diaz: There's some cracked flags whenever they're...

Vice Chair Anderson: Cracked flags, yeah.

Public Works Director Diaz: Whenever they bring down the FPL...

City Manager Iglesias: Yeah, there's some waterway work.

Public Works Director Diaz: They're going to have some sidewalk flags they have to replace.

City Manager Iglesias: We review the drainage after projects are done to make sure if it's damaged, the contractor has to repair it because after that, we assume those costs and that's something that we should not be assuming.

City Attorney Suárez: And to my -- I now understand that Public Works is meeting on-site with them to go over some of those along with...

Public Works Director Diaz: Correct.

City Attorney Suárez: Gus Ceballos from our office.

Commissioner Fernandez: And are we going to be taking on the work or is...?

City Manager Iglesias: They will be doing the work. We will be releasing funds as the work is completed.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. And then timetable-wise, do we believe the 180 days will be enough to complete these?

City Manager Iglesias: If not, we will work with them, but I believe that -- it's six months, hopefully, that will be...

City Attorney Suárez: That's...

City Manager Iglesias: That will finish...

City Attorney Suárez: That's one of the -- that's some of the information we asked them to provide is kind of like timetables and things like that. We don't know for sure yet, but as the Manager said, you know, the Building Official's willing to extend the TCO, but they do need to complete that.

City Manager Iglesias: The maximum by the Building Code that it can be extended is 180 days per extension. There's no limit in the number of extensions and there is no life safety issue on this building, so it's not that we would want the residents to move out.

Vice Chair Anderson: Right.

City Manager Iglesias: That's not the issue. These are basically right-of-way issues and FP&L issues and not building safety issues.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay.

Vice Chair Anderson: Right. The biggest variable there is going to be FP&L and the drainage on that one section. That's going to be the biggest piece. And I wouldn't want to rush a CO on something until we get all that stuff worked on because they might -- you know, something might not be done right. They may have to repave it. They may have to, you know, reinstall new flags, you know. They might clog...

City Manager Iglesias: We will...

Vice Chair Anderson: They might clog the drains again. You know, there's a number of variables there.

City Manager Iglesias: The Building Department would never issue a TCO unless the building is ready to be occupied. And these are just outside issues that have to be taken care of for the final sale.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. And the bond should be enough to cover everything that's pending?

City Manager Iglesias: Yes, it should be.

Vice Chair Anderson: Yeah, I mean, I toured part of this building. It's pretty nice, you know so...

Commissioner Fernandez: All right, those are my questions. Thank you.