

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C – Public Comments
January 11, 2022
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Michael Mena
Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Jorge Fors
Commissioner Kirk Menendez**

City Staff

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

Public Speaker(s)

**Jackson Rip Holmes
Pedro Morales
Aurelio Durana
Marisa Chisena
Maria Cruz
Sheryl Gold
Mark Trowbridge
Angela Carrillo
Javier Banos**

Agenda Item C [Start: 9:37 a.m.]
Public Comments

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk moving onto Public Comment.

City Clerk Urquia: First speaker this morning, Mr. Mayor, is Mr. Jackson Holmes.

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Mayor Lago: Mr. Holmes, good morning. The floor is yours.

Mr. Holmes. Thanks. Thank you very much. I'd like to have the prayer, this is going to be a historic public comment, and it's made possible by the sympathy that you all show for fighting sea level rise. So, thank you Mayor Lago, all of you for fighting sea level rise. I think I may have the answer. Since I'm claiming it's going to be historic, I'll start out by saying, friends, Coral Gableites, Miamians, lend me your ear. How can we, I need your help, with only a thousand-dollar experiment, a thousand-dollar experiment, maybe Mr. Iglesias will give me a chance, because I know you can do it. I think you're sympathetic. Mr. Lago likes the Tecla's, likes – who's a fella, Nicola Tesla, told us that there is such a thing as free energy, that's direct from Nicola Tesla; and one of its forms is – let me stay grounded here. MIT's publicist, the editor of the MIT Scientific Journal, Eugene Maloff, has publicized that there have been hundreds of experiments testing that you can use heavy water, sea water containing deuterium to derive free energy. So, this is coming from Eugene Maloff of MIT. He says there has been experiments done and replicated with this finding in the United States, in Canada, in China, and in Israel. So, what could we do to replicate these experiments published by Eugene Maloff of MIT. We go to Biscayne Bay, it's the closest by, and get what's called heavy water. You go on a boat, test for the presents of deuterium. Heavy water is sea water containing deuterium. Then we take it back to a lab and run an electric current through it. It's not expensive. What the other experiments have found is that when you run an electric current through heavy water. Let's say you put a watt of electricity in, you get 1.25 watts of energy out. So that's a net increase of energy of 25 percent, its so-called free energy. If you do this on a mass scale, you've got plenty of free energy we can end the use of petroleum and end sea level rise. Every one of you has fought sea level rise. We all know that sea level rise will eventually drown Coral Gables. It will cease to exist. It will be the underwater city of Atlantis, the lost city of Atlantis under water. This experiment, if it's successful, and hundreds of others similar experiments have will end sea level rise, and I'm hoping, I'm going to make a presentation to the, I'm about to conclude, I'm going to make a presentation to the Sustainability Committee to join me in recommending that we do this. What do we have to lose? – a thousand dollars. What do we have to gain? – survival. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Pedro Morales. Mr. Pedro Morales.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Morales, the floor is yours.

Mr. Morales: Good morning, Mayor Lago, City Commissioners, and dearly respected and appreciated city staff. My name is Pedro Morales, and I am a citizen of the City of Coral Gables, a new citizen, but I love it here and I appreciate the welcome my family has had. I'd like to make and take a couple of minutes of your time to make a suggestion, regarding Ordinance F-3. This has to deal with the elimination of the Mediterranean height bonus for the M4 units to be built or developed, if you would, multi-housing south of Biltmore Way. I live in Biltmore 2, this is the largest condominium association on Biltmore Way; 232 units, about 500 people. In this association, I have been selected to be the representative to the Biltmore Way Streetscape. So, I'm here to let you know that we believe in property rights; the property rights of the developers, the

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property rights of the residents, and certainly the responsibility that all of you have in trying to balance all of those privileges. I would like to let you know that we just cannot continue to jam more and more people in that area around Biltmore Way. It's just not good for the city nor the residents, nor the area. So, I'd like to say that a tool, suggest that a tool that all of you have to balance the property rights of developers and residents is to consider going forward with the Biltmore Way Streetscape. Specifically slowing down the traffic, construct pedestrian crosswalks, provide a tree canopy, if you would, a park where all of these thousands of people can enjoy. And also, parking, flooding, all these other wonderful things that we have to take care of. So, I implore you to consider the use of the Biltmore Way Streetscape as a way to balance your, if you would, protecting the rights of all. I understand the Biltmore Way Streetscape has been a concept that's been discussed for many years. I don't know why it hasn't gone forward. It is such an easy win for everybody, and a tool for you to manage all of these different interests. So, Mayor Lago, when can we start on this project? Whose got the football? Who wants to do this? Do you want to do it?

Mayor Lago: Well, to answer your question very briefly. We do want to do it, and there has been multiple discussions on getting the project started. Right now, it's in its conceptual phase. We are garnering support from the community and having community meetings, which are forthcoming. I've had multiple discussions with Ms. Gold, as you are aware, who was adamantly opposed to wanting to do this in a two-phase or three-phase proposal. She wanted to do it in one lump-sum. But with that being said, the costs are significant. We are talking about millions of millions of millions of dollars. Are you asking me if I'm in support of redeveloping a beautiful streetscape? – I'm 110 percent in favor. I think that the street needs and can hold significant tree canopy, maybe potentially a median, extended sidewalks, but the discussion then becomes a little bit hairier, because you have residents, some that are in favor of parallel parking, some that are in favor of standard parking, some that don't want a median, some that don't want to double the sidewalks. Potentially, we could also encounter issues with drainage, like we did on Miracle Mile, because I was there with the City Manager, who at that point was not the City Manager, to witness when we had to remove extensive amounts of drainage that we thought were in good shape but were original predating probably the 1930's when the city was built. So, does this Commission support? – I don't want to speak for my colleagues, but we do, but we have to find a happy medium. We have to really first focus in on having discussions with the community and understanding what they want and trying to make as many people happy as possible, and then how are we going to fund this, coming off Covid and losing around \$20 million dollars in two years. We need to find a way to not over leverage ourselves. I have been very clear to the Manager. I will not take out more bond, debt. We need to be very thoughtful. We need to be very careful. There are extensive projects that we need to figure out how to pay for right now that are before us, including City Hall that could cost about \$10 million dollars, parking garages, and a litany of other public safety projects. So, do you have my support? – do you have the support of the Commission? – 110 percent. But we need to find out right now more than anything is continue the public outreach to see exactly what type of programming we want and start budgeting appropriately, and to figure out are we going to do a public, some sort of bond. Are we going to a special taxing district? – Is the city going to potentially budget for the next five years to be able to pay for this project? What is going to be the cost of construction in five years, in three years, in two years? – we don't know those things. So, we have to iron out a few details before we can start moving forward.

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Mr. Morales: I respect that. And I expect the Grand project and all these complicated issues, but can we just start by planting some trees in those spaces or something?

Mayor Lago: Commissioner.

Commissioner Anderson: This area is in my backyard and while we are in the Sunshine, let you know that I have reached out to particular individuals and let them know that right now, I've asked to meet with staff, see what the plans were in the past and then go building by building and getting feedback from the residents, and ultimately, let's get a vote from the area as to which project they would prefer more.

Mayor Lago: So, let me give you just a little bit of insight, Commissioner, and what you are doing is correct, and I stand with your efforts. We need to have some sort of Sunshine meeting, because we've had our previous efforts called into question, which were good efforts when those meetings were held. Did we take into account all of the neighborhood interests? So, what I would love to do is, not only get the buildings one-by-one, but I'd like to do it in the Sunshine to make sure that we record these meetings, because what I've seen that it happens all the time, I met with residents this week, who enjoy the process of derailing what we are trying to do. Instead of, so I've taken a new approach, and I'm going to take it right now when we talk about the MF4. Everything will be done in the Sunshine. We will have meetings, like I've been doing for years in regard to my Town Hall meetings, everybody will have an opportunity. We will try our best to do things in times that do not fall on national holidays, when there is no school, because there always seems to be one excuse or another to invalidate the process, to invalidate the process. No, no, that doesn't count because that was done on a Wednesday at 5 o'clock and it should have been done on Wednesday at 5:30. So, we are going to have these meetings, along with Commissioner Anderson's comments, and I know the Vice Mayor and Commissioner Fors and Commissioner Menendez all agree with this. I just want to put it on the record and allow everyone in that community to come out and tell me, what do you want for Biltmore Way? – even if it's a far-fetched dream and we can't afford it, but what do you want and what do you do not want? That to me is the first critical step moving forward, because right now, I can tell you, in all honesty, I'll tell you in the Sunshine, we do not have the money right now for that project, and I don't want to mislead anyone and say we do have the money. No, we need to properly start budgeting and allocating money and make a decision on how we are going to move forward. Okay. How many times have you and I met since you moved to the city? – three times.

Mr. Morales: Thank you for your time.

Mayor Lago: No. You are always welcome. I love when you come and visit on Fridays or anytime. You are more than welcome.

Mr. Morales: Thank you. Just one last question, and one last comment. When can we start these Sunshine meetings and define activity to try to understand what everybody wants?

Mayor Lago: I'm going to answer for you right now. Mr. Manager.

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City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, we are looking at this project now with different cross-sections. We plan on reaching out first to get some resident input, and then Mayor, we can do the Sunshine meetings after we kind of solidify a little more what the people want. There is a big funding issue here on whether we do this through city funding or through the improvement districts, which the city has done many, many times before. We need to look at that, but our Public Works Director and the Transportation Manager are currently looking at those different alternatives. Some of the alternatives the residents did not like, and we've eliminated those, and we are working on two or three cross-sections, basically three cross-sections to provide outreach.

Mayor Lago: But if I may, Mr. Manager, and again, if the Commission disagrees with me, I ask you to please interject. Just because you have one, or three, or four, or five residents that oppose, doesn't mean that the community does not agree with it. So, what I want, and what I ask my colleagues to please interject, if they disagree with me, I would like in March, it gives us two months, it's not in the summer, doesn't fall on some sort of vacation or not, or anything like that. I would like in March, at 6 o'clock, everybody has time to come in, on a Wednesday, not on a Thursday when maybe somebody goes on vacation and says they can't make it, on a Wednesday, to have a Sunshine meeting and within 1500 feet of everybody that lives on Biltmore Way that they be notified to come to this meeting, and to fill out a document that says, what would you like to see on Biltmore Way; what are your interests; what are you looking forward to? What have you seen in other cities that you think would look beautiful here in the city, would serve us appropriately? I would like to see that in March. Gather all that information in a public Sunshine meeting that is in Zoom, that has Zoom, as Commissioner Fors has pushed for and has achieved, and I would like for that to be documented and memorialized so that when we can move forward as a Commission and say, let's attack this over the next three or four years or two years, but we have at least the public input.

Mr. Morales: Right.

Mayor Lago: And we gave everybody the chance to have a bite at the apple and put their interests on the record.

Vice Mayor Mena: A quick suggestion on that and I would welcome your input as a resident of one of the buildings there. All of the buildings, I assume are – I used to live in 711 Biltmore Way – all of the buildings as far as I know have some sort of board, however formalized it is or isn't, on each given building. It seems to me like it might be helpful to, in addition to just sort of Sunshine meetings and grassroots attempts to get resident feedback, to have the boards of each building weigh in. And the reason I say that is because when we have Sunshine meetings, the people who come are those that are more engaged, who are more regularly active in whatever is going on in the city at the time, and maybe the average resident who lives in your building doesn't even know this is happening, isn't paying attention, is going about their life, but I don't know if you said you were a board member or not, I know you were appointed for this.

Mr. Morales: I am not. I am not.

Vice Mayor Mena: But I'm assuming that the members of your board have the ability to through their own formal process is engage with their residents in their building, try to create some consensus as best they can, and have the benefit of that, because otherwise it's just the public input tends to be a factor of whoever shows up that day.

Mr. Morales: I understand.

Vice Mayor Mena: Which is good, you want that feedback, and that feedback matters as well, but in a situation like this where you have all these buildings, each of which has its own duly appointed board, elected by the members of said building, I think it would be helpful to have the boards be part of the process. I don't know what you think about that. That was a thought that I had had to just try to help the quality of the feedback we are getting and make that we are getting to the Mayor's point, an accurate read on what the average people living in the neighborhood want, as opposed to just a read on what the 15 people that come to a Sunshine meeting want.

Mr. Morales: Well, you know, we are herding cats, but maybe if one of the Commissioners can say, hey, we are going to have this Sunshine meeting, is there an opportunity to get board participation individuals, that might be a good idea. I've taken up a lot of time. It's just a suggestion. It's a way to balance, I think, property rights of developers.

Mayor Lago: Oh, by the way, if I may interrupt. You are not taking up a lot of time.

Mr. Morales: I'm sorry?

Mayor Lago: You're not taking up a lot of time and I want to be very clear.

Mr. Morales: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Since this Commission has been around, and I said it to residents that I met with this weekend, and I met with this week, and met with last week, you can speak as long as you like.

Mr. Morales: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Meet me on Fridays open door. You can meet my fellow colleagues who have open door Fridays also. You can come to Town Hall meetings. You can reach us by e-mail, we'll respond immediately, but what I want to build is, I want to build consensus, and I really want to push forward with eliminating the rumors, eliminating the negativity, the assault on any idea, because maybe you disagree with it. And I've told you this before, you and I have had this conversation. Not everybody is going to be happy with everything.

Mr. Morales: Correct.

Mayor Lago: But we've got to find some sort of common ground to move forward with this project.

Mr. Morales: Absolutely.
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Mayor Lago: If not, the project won't move forward, because you have certain people that they want everything, but we need to realize that maybe you're happy with 95 percent of the project, but you are not happy with 5 percent of it.

Mr. Morales: Right.

Mayor Lago: But at least we move forward with a project that makes you 95 percent satisfied.

Mr. Morales: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: So what I'm going to push for and if my colleagues will help me, I will move the gavel to my Vice Mayor, and I will make a resolution to require a community meeting, at wherever you want, on Zoom, that is in the Sunshine that allows everyone on Biltmore Way within 1500 feet, to have a conversation to discuss what they foresee as their interest in regards to the proposed and potential streetscape project for Biltmore Way, and I would like for that to be held before the end of March.

Mr. Morales: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: And that all associations, like the Vice Mayor mentioned, are notified and asked to participate, and that all residents, owners, renters or not, are asked to participate and join in this collaborative effort. The keyword is collaborative effort, to potentially bring something to fruition that's been discussed for years. Mr. Vice Mayor.

Mr. Morales: Yes, a polite, collaborative – polite collaborative.

Commissioner Fors: If I could add one thing that always comes up, especially in this section of the city, I think we should make a decision right now and make it part of the resolution is, whether we are going to give notice to the associations or each individual unit within the building. That continues to come up. If we give it only to the associations, we are going to hear about it.

Mr. Morales: I agree. Take the effort to communicate.

Commissioner Fors: Both for sure.

Commissioner Anderson: I think we should do both. I would like the full smorgasbord of what the options were to be presented at the Sunshine meetings, because otherwise we are going to have the problem of people saying, well, I couldn't go to that last one, because I didn't get notice, so therefore I didn't get to see that option. Go ahead.

Commissioner Fors: The fact is that, I just want to make sure it's not lost that we did do neighborhood meetings here, and there were very strong, passionate voices calling for us to scrap it and start from scratch, and they are entitled to their opinion, and they may have been wrong or may have been right about whether the process at the neighborhood meetings was really effective

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in determining what the will of the majority of the residents in that area was, and for that reason everybody erred on the side of starting the process again, but to echo what Mayor Lago said, the message I would hope would go to some of the folks in that area, is that at some point we can't let the perfect plan get in the way of a good plan.

Mr. Morales: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Great, great. Well said.

Commissioner Fors: So, we can get this.

Mr. Morales: Commissioner, I know that you've been reached out, for example, on just slowing down the traffic, the speed limit and putting in some walkways. What's going to happen when somebody gets killed walking across that. So, we can do little things, okay, and start. And a great mentor of mine in Chicago when I was a young man, told me, if you can't get 10, get 9; if you can't get 9, get 8, okay. Thank you so much.

Mayor Lago: I have a motion on the floor.

City Attorney Ramos: Mayor, if I could just restate the motion. To have a Zoom meeting before the end of March.

Mayor Lago: Zoom and in person.

City Attorney Ramos: Zoom and in person Sunshine meeting before the end of March; notice mailed to 1500, residents within 1500 feet, also to the associations. You had mentioned earlier a time that I didn't hear it as part of your motion.

Mayor Lago: Anything past 5 o'clock – 5:30, give somebody the time to get there from work, to be there present, 5:30, 6 o'clock – 6 o'clock let's say.

Mr. Morales: Please let me know if I can help in some way, but you've got tax rolls and who owns what.

Mayor Lago: Just get the word out like you always do. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Morales: Thank you for your time.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you for coming here.

Mr. Morales: Always a pleasure and thank you.

Mayor Lago: What else Madam City Attorney?

City Attorney Ramos: Is there a second to the motion?
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Commissioner Anderson: I'll second it.

Vice Mayor Mena: Mr. Clerk will you call the roll?

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Vice Mayor Mena: One additional point on the point that Commissioner Fors was referencing, and it dovetails what I said earlier. Again, these boards have e-mail lists of their residents, they are in regular communication. We need to create like a list-serve for the Biltmore Way project, working with the boards, where we can send out e-mail updates and things like that, because this archaic approach that municipalities have to take to comply with the law, to provide notice where we mail notice to anybody. It's great, but there are more efficient ways of communicating and I don't just mean providing notice for a meeting, but providing updates on the actual project, what's being proposed, showing renderings, all that kind of thing. We can create a list-serve, working with the boards pretty easily, I presume, but we need to engage with again, each of the boards for these buildings in order to be able to create that. So, I'd like to ask the Manager to have somebody on staff work with each of the boards in this area, and really work on creating a better means of updating people on this project and noticing them on issues like public meetings as we go forward.

City Manager Iglesias: Vice Mayor, IT is already working on that, GIS based, and as a matter of fact, we will be presenting something on that at the next Commission meeting, something that Commissioner Fors brought up about e-mailing, and how we can work that out on a GIS basis, so IT is already working on that, and we have a working model already.

Vice Mayor Mena: And that's great on a citywide basis, we should absolutely be doing that. Again, this is a unique situation where you're talking about all residential buildings with boards that have list-serves already, where you can just say, would you be willing to provide us with a list of your residents, we can plug it right in and we are ready to go. So, let's see if we can get that done.

City Manager Iglesias: We have...(no audio)...

Mayor Lago:...that we also have a commercial portion in that area, we have the Junior League, I want to make sure the Junior League gets noticed.

Vice Mayor Mena: Absolutely.

Mayor Lago: I sit on the board of the Junior League, along with Mark Trowbridge and I want to make sure that they are noticed. One final point, I met with several residents this week. I know my colleagues have also, and the response is always, I never got notice, I never got notice. I explain
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to them, I sent over with Mr. Trias, we went over the list, we verified their address, we sent you five letters. Outside of certified mail, we are running out of options. We already have a reach that's 1500 feet, that is in comparison to the City of Miami, 200 feet. So, we can do one mailing, we can potentially do two mailings to educate people, to make sure that they are aware, but at one point we have to start accepting self-responsibility on these issues, if you are not reading your mail. I know we make an error; we are all human, we make an error, but in certain cases, I'm being candid with you, I don't know how to respond anymore when people tell me, I don't get the mail, I don't get the mail. So, Madam City Attorney, on this issue, have staff for sure do one mailing, have staff consider doing two mailings to ensure that potentially everyone is notified, that everyone is notified. Again, at another added cost to the city, but to make sure that everyone is notified. And then I ask the associations to lean on the residents and post in the lobby, and make sure that you notify every single resident that there will be a meeting sometime in late March, on the following date, in the following location, and we implore you to please engage in this meeting. Thank you.

Mr. Morales: Thank you. Let me know if I can help with something.

Mayor Lago: Thank you so much for being here. I appreciate it. So, moving forward, we have a time certain item of 10 a.m.

City Clerk Urquia: Do you want to return back to the public comments?

Mayor Lago: How much more do we have?

City Clerk Urquia: We have six more speakers.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Well, let's finish the public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: Aurelio Durana.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Durana, good morning, the floor is yours.

Mr. Durana: Good morning, Mr. Mayor, Commissioners, Happy New Year to you all. I'm here to address issues of concerning the safety of our children. Before I do that, before I delve into the substance of my concerns, I'd like to take a detour and mention that I have known Julian Perez since Tallahassee, for at least 40 years. He's a consummate professional and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of the award that he got. Now regarding the issues that bring me here today. The ongoing saga of the Children at Play Figurines. The city is now in its third attempt, legal strategy if you ask me, to remove the figurines, but that we can handle legally. We are already in court on the first attempt on the part of the city. I'm just letting you know so that when push comes to shove, I don't hear from you all, we were not aware of what the administration was doing. At the last meeting that I appeared before you, the City Attorney made an unfortunate comment. She said that all the neighbors or neighbors, plural, were complaining about the figurines. I went back with Code Enforcement, there was only one neighbor that complained about the figurines that save lives. I don't know if the City Attorney misspoke or if it was an intentional remark, but it's something that I think you ought to take up with her.

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City Attorney Ramos: We are only aware of one neighbor.

Mr. Durana: I'm sorry?

City Attorney Ramos: We are only aware of one neighbor, the same neighbor that Code Enforcement.

Mr. Durana: That's not the statement that you made with all respect, Madam City Attorney, you said neighbors, plural.

City Attorney Ramos: Noted.

Mr. Durana: Secondly, regarding the Wawa-Carver Elementary and Middle School litigation. You have a secret meeting this afternoon.

Vice Mayor Mena: Secret meeting?

Mr. Durana: Well, I'm not invited, right? The residents are not invited.

Vice Mayor Mena: You know about it, it's not a secret.

Mr. Durana: Well, the meeting will be held in secret. Am I invited? Can I attend?

Vice Mayor Mena: It's called a Shade Session, it's by operation of law, Mr. Durana, that's the way it works.

Mr. Durana: Can I attend?

Vice Mayor Mena: No, you cannot. It will be transcribed, and the transcript will be provided at a later date, because there is ongoing litigation. You know that.

Mr. Durana: To me, that makes it secret.

Vice Mayor Mena: Well, change the law. It's not a secret.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Durana, you're an attorney. You've engaged in this type of negotiation. You understand how this works. I'm not an attorney. I have four attorneys around me, but it's simple. It's not a secret meeting. Its public knowledge. As a matter of fact, when I was reached out by certain media outlets yesterday, I told them that we will be having this meeting at 12:30 p.m., but this is standard operating procedure for cities to engage in this type of dialogue with their counsel while they are in some sort of litigation. It's nothing secret about that.

Mr. Durana: That's fine Mr. Lago. I know your brother is a lawyer and he is also a lobbyist, correct. So, you are familiar with legal procedures, I presume? You don't have to have that meeting in
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secret. You can invite members of the public. There's an option that is allowed to you, but you are not required to keep the public out of that meeting. I understand, if it were me and a client, yes, I wouldn't want to broadcast the meeting to anyone, but I just want everybody to know that that is an option that you have. It's not mandated.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Durana, if I may. This is a meeting to discuss with our attorney's strategy in regard to how as a city we are going to move forward. That's all it is. It's a simple meeting, very simple. And we are going to discuss our strategy moving forward before we have to face a Judge again. Madam City Attorney, am I correct?

City Attorney Ramos: That's correct. And I think it's pretty obvious that if the public were let in, so would opposing counsel on the other side and then the city would have no strategy.

Mayor Lago: You're an attorney, you understand that. You understand that before you go to court you want to have the best strategy, the best foot forward, and that's it.

Mr. Durana: That's you individually, but as far as representing the city, I would like to be part of the discussion as well. I have an interest. I have a dog in the fight.

Mayor Lago: You do.

Mr. Durana: Which I have explained previously. I'm being candid, clear, totally clear here. It's your discretion, you don't have to do it, so you are not going to convince me that you have to do it.

Mayor Lago: I'm not trying to convince you. I didn't say that.

Mr. Durana: I can see all of the reasons why you would want to do it in private. I mean the whole process dealing with the Wawa gas station across from two, from an elementary school and a middle school has been done in secret. If you haven't, watch the video of that hearing before Judge Hanson, okay. Watch the process. And I do ask you to take into account, because I know, Mr. Mayor, you made the point before, you are balancing the interest of the residents around the school with those of the children that attend the schools. Those residents, the Lola B. Walker Neighborhood Association well know, they got tons of money from the developer.

Mayor Lago: Can I stop you there for one second?

Mr. Durana: Of course, sir. Yes.

Mayor Lago: With all due respect.

Mr. Durana: Of course.

Mayor Lago: Because I don't deal in hear-say and inuendo. Do you have proof that they got paid?

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Mr. Durana: No.

Mayor Lago: Let's stop there, because you're an attorney, you're an attorney.

Mr. Durana: No, no, I'm not here as an attorney.

Mayor Lago: Excuse me one second, excuse me. With all due respect, you made a statement saying that somebody was paid off, excuse me, wait one second, because you brought up my brother into this and my brother has never and we'll put it on the record, please, Madam City Attorney, has my brother in eight years been in this room as a lawyer or as a lobbyist?

City Attorney Ramos: No Mayor, he has not.

Mayor Lago: Because I don't allow him to, just so you know, and he is completely allowed to come before this Commission, representing a client, as per the Miami-Dade County Ethics Commission, and I, Vince Lago, since I was Commissioner, elected eight years ago, told my brother, you will never step into the City of Coral Gables, and he has never stepped into the City of Coral Gables. Now, with that being said, I know you very well and I know your sons very well, and I have done a lot of help to your family, and I have been available to help them for their own personal issues and for their business issues. So, let's take a step back before we start bringing people's family into matters, because you know very well that that's not going to serve you well here. Number two, you just said that the residents of Lola B. Walker, the residents of Lola B. Walker were paid. I don't have proof of that.

Mr. Durana: I didn't say that.

Mayor Lago: What did you say?

Mr. Durana: I said the Lola B. Walker Association had associated with the developer and received substantial sums of money, whether they donate it to charity.

Mayor Lago: They got paid, you said they got paid. They received substantial amounts of money. So now, the issue here is very simple. Your one issue is correct and that is, and I'm not going to debate you back and forth. This is public comment, by the way, which was not afforded before I got here.

Mr. Durana: But that's what you're doing. You are debating me back and forth.

Mayor Lago: But I'm correcting you on the record, which you're incorrect. The biggest issue we are having here, that's why we are sitting down having a conversation with our attorneys is to balance the interest of the residents and those of the Carver parents. I leave you with this, have you ever visited, I know that Commissioner Menendez, the Vice Mayor, Commissioner Fors and Commissioner Anderson have. Have you ever visited a homeowners association meeting in regard to the residents of Lola B. Walker? I have gone probably half a dozen to a dozen times since I had the privilege of serving. Have you ever met with those residents to have a conversation to see what

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they want and why they are in support of having this project in their neighborhood? Have you or are you just dictating from the other side of the tracks what should and what should not go in that piece of property.

Mr. Durana: I don't know what you mean by the other side of the tracks, because that has some very bad connotations.

Mayor Lago: I'm asking you. I'm asking you.

Mr. Durana: And I'll have you know, you are speaking to the former General Counsel to the State's Human Rights Commission, so don't lecture me on the other side of the tracks.

Mayor Lago: I'm asking you. I'm asking you. Have you, yes or no, yes or no.

Mr. Durana: I'm not a Commissioner. I have no interest. I know Mr. Pride. Mr. Pride have served with me on city committees.

Mayor Lago: The name is Mr. Prime, not Mr. Pride, so you obviously don't know who you are talking about.

Mr. Durana: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Mayor, Mr. Lago, and you're the one who brought up my being an attorney here.

Mayor Lago: You are an attorney.

Mr. Durana: I'm here in a personal capacity, and you should know that.

Mayor Lago: You're acting like an attorney.

Mr. Durana: Otherwise, I'll be suing you, if I were in an attorney capacity.

Mayor Lago: You have every right to sue me, you have every right.

Mr. Durana: That's a low blow sir. I'm here as a resident.

Mayor Lago: You have every right to sue me if you'd like.

Mr. Durana: I am here as a resident.

Mayor Lago: What you don't have, what you don't have is the right to bring up my brother in anything or any of my family members, because I have too much respect for you and for your family to do that.

Mr. Durana: Stop mentioning my family. I mentioned yours because he's a lawyer, he's a lobbyist, okay, and I am an attorney. You brought that up that I'm an attorney. I'm here in a personal capacity.

Mayor Lago: Moving on, please.

Mr. Durana: Okay, as a resident.

Mayor Lago: What else do you have, tell me.

Mr. Durana: Sir, do the right thing, okay. Stop getting commissions, real estate commissions, you're not a realtor, you are a construction guy from developers.

Mayor Lago: Let me stop you there one second. Let me stop you there. First off, I am a licensed realtor, you can look it up on the DVPR and I'm allowed, again, Madam City Attorney. It was never an issue when there were previous elected officials conducting real estate outside the city and now all of a sudden, I have an issue being a realtor. So why was it that before, why was it before when there were, not one, but two realtors on the Commission that were doing business, all of a sudden, it's an issue with me and you are going to take cheap shots like that. Madam City Attorney will you clarify on the record whether I'm allowed to conduct real estate as a licensed realtor.

City Attorney Ramos: Yes Mayor, of course, you can have outside employment, and you do.

Mr. Durana: It's just that I've always known you as a construction development, business development guy for construction company.

Mayor Lago: Again, again...

Mr. Durana: Not as a realtor and I had no idea you have special expertise in Allapattah. I didn't even know you had visited Allapattah from Gulliver to Allapattah is a long way sir.

Mayor Lago: I wish you the best. Now it's just become personal, so I won't engage in this back and forth. You are bringing up my education, you are bringing up my expertise, you are bringing up a lot of things. Listen sir, I think it's embarrassing. You are a licensed realtor, excuse me, you are a licensed lawyer and I commend you on that, and at the end of the day, we move forward, but there is no reason to take personal attacks on anybody and that's what you've done.

Mr. Durana: You made it personal, sir by involving my profession. For the record, I'm a retired attorney. I don't practice anymore, alright. Now do the right thing. Whatever conscience you have, please do the right thing for the children. Stop the gasoline tankers driving down the street in front of the school. There are little children there. Stop the contract, the contract zoning of the Wawa property.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Just for the record, Mr. Durana had six minutes and 29 seconds, to provide his opinion on this issue and we are moving forward. Mr. Clerk next person please.

Mr. Durana: Three of those five minutes were taken up by the Mayor in personal attacks.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Chisena.

Mayor Lago: Good morning. Twice in one week, the floor is yours.

Ms. Chisena: Yes. Good morning to you, Mayor, to the City Commission and the staff. I appreciate the time you dedicate to the city, I really do, and you are being extremely cooperative meeting with people, with residents. So, I do appreciate, and I don't want you to think I'm taking advantage of your time. I am here originally to speak about the up-zoning, the zoning of the Biltmore Section. If I'm allowed, I would like also to address the Biltmore Streetscape that came up in conversation just a few minutes ago. I'm not prepared to speak specifically on that, but I would like to ask Commissioner Anderson how many buildings has she met on Biltmore Way in this reference, which buildings have you met with?

Commissioner Anderson: I was telling you that I was going to have meetings after I meet with staff to get some feedback from the folks. We just voted on a resolution to do meetings in the Sunshine. So, in answer to your question, I have not met with anybody about the streetscape in an organized fashion. Residents have come in and spoken to me about moving this issue forward. I think the time is to get this ball rolling and we've taken a resolution in that fashion to move it forward.

Ms. Chisena: And I appreciate, by the way, thank you Mr. Lago for doing this. And I appreciate also Vice Mayor Mena for involving the association. I have been association board member in Gables Plaza 625 Biltmore Way for 18 years. I am no longer, I stepped down about a year ago, and I've been a board member of 721 Biltmore Way for the last 10 years. So, involving the boards is extremely crucial. I appreciate that suggestion. However, I want you to also bring another aspect. Some boards, luckily, I have not been a member of one of these boards, but some boards operate in a very different fashion than open meetings, Sunshine meetings on all subjects. So, I think it would be wise to also send the notice to the residents, along with contacting the boards, because some residents are not made aware of things.

Mayor Lago: If I may interrupt, I apologize, that's why I said, not only are we going to send one notice, if we can send two, let's send two notices.

Ms. Chisena: I have always received your notices when they were mailed, I've always received. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Ms. Chisena: So, I would like to move onto the other subject that I'm here to speak about and that's the up-zoning of the Biltmore Section. So, I can mention being a resident on Biltmore Way
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in different buildings for the last 20 years. My husband, one of my sons and myself moved there because we love the city. We didn't want to be in a single-family home, but we chose that section because it has some green around it. It's not as busy as downtown. However, I've seen changes as new buildings come up, townhouses come up, I see the green spaces getting smaller and smaller. And for a city who advocates to be so big on green spaces, I wish that didn't happen, because when you live in a condo you are already between walls. It's a choice, I understand you can say, you move to a single-family home, but for other reasons you might not want to move to a single-family home. And people that reside in condos are already kind of locked into these walls and to see the green spaces go away, it's sad. So, I'm afraid if we do this up-zoning, we are going to see more and more condos come up bigger, especially if developers who are very smart and have the money to hire great lawyers assemble lots, so maybe in a little small space they cannot build a big building, but when they start assembling they may be able to build bigger and bigger condos that we have seen, buildings that we have seen come up in the Gables. So, it's not something that is unreasonable, we have seen it happen. So, what I'm asking for you, and I appreciate and all that, by the way, Mayor Lago is probably going to propose if I'm not mistaken, a Sunshine meeting between today's reading and the second reading, so that everybody in the neighborhood understands what's happening. However, I still ask that you postpone today's vote, that you hold today's vote, because this amendment only addresses one side of Biltmore Way, which in my point of view doesn't make sense. You are going to go down the street and you have one street where you have one height and on the other side of the street you have another height possibly. My understanding and maybe I'm incorrect, is that this rewrite of the zoning was supposed to make everything easier and clear. So how would you approve half of a street of one height and half of the street another height, and this particular amendment addresses density and FAR which is what developers are looking for. So that's not being – this is not...to move forward with today's vote, it's not addressing density and FAR in the south side as well of the Biltmore Way.

Mayor Lago: May I answer?

Ms. Chisena: Yes.

Mayor Lago: We are going to have a long discussion about that soon, coming up. Like you said, I'm going to be calling for a Sunshine meeting between first and second reading and staff has a presentation that will provide a lot of clarity in regard to FAR, in regards to density and intensity; and I think that once that's provided on the record, I think there is going to be a lot of appeasement in regards to the concerns and a little bit of the confusion that we have out there. But more importantly, between first and second reading there will be a Sunshine meeting in Zoom as per the request of the hour and 25-minute meeting that we had on Friday with Ms. Clock, Pat Clock, right.

Ms. Chisena: Pat Clock.

Mayor Lago: Yes, and her husband who also attended the meeting, and I promise you that if we don't have enough clarity here, there will be a significant public comment that I'll be calling for through a resolution, through a motion that I will be making, now when we speak about it, okay.

Ms. Chisena: I appreciate it, sir. May I ask why would you want to vote today?
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Mayor Lago: I'll talk to my colleagues first. It takes five of us on the Commission. I can't make the decision on my own.

Ms. Chisena: Right. I understand.

Mayor Lago: So, I'm going to have a conversation with my colleagues and what I would like to do is, again, to move this item forward, to cure this issue, we've got to come to a vote eventually. It doesn't become ratified until the second reading, so we can move forward on first reading and then have the Sunshine meeting, which I will be in attendance, and I know my colleagues will probably be interested in attending also, and on the second reading if we have to make any changes, we can make those changes. It's just moving the process so that we can correct any issues and address the zoning concerns that the community has. Even if we vote on first, on second, if there are any changes that have to be made and the Commission wants to make that change, and there are three votes to make those changes, we'll make those changes, and we'll move forward.

Ms. Chisena: I understand that, just wish to involve today.

Mayor Lago: Oh, we'll have that conversation now.

Ms. Chisena: That's my request. And I thank you for your time. I appreciate, like I said at the beginning. Thank you everyone.

Mayor Lago: No, as always. Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Maria Cruz.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz, I imagine she's here on Zoom.

Ms. Cruz: I'm here.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Cruz the floor is yours. Good morning. Happy New Year.

Ms. Cruz: Good Morning. Happy New Year to all. I am doing Zoom today for obvious reasons. I have very close relatives that have health issues, and I was concerned about picking up something that they do not need to get. So, I'm here, and am very happy to be here with you all, and it's an interesting meeting so far. Let me tell you what I have in mind, and I've had to fix a few things because as the meeting went on, I realized some of the stuff that's going on. So here it goes. Based on past experiences, I expect you all, this elected body to be asked as part of Agenda Item J-1, to give permission to proceed an appeal what had just happened about the Wawa issue. This is going to be another appeal, another appeal. Not just this case, I'm not just talking about this case, I'm talking about another appeal. I'm here today to ask you to put an end to the continuous litigation that this city have become known for. Its beyond what anybody can imagine that we are the talk of the town, the state, and sometimes beyond the state. I would like you to, and this is addressing all of you, I think it's time for you all to get more involved. I think there should be an audit of any

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and all cases in the last ten years that the city has been involved and have resulted in appeals. I would like to know what the results were, and how much money we have spent appealing quite a few losing cases. How much money we have paid in settlements? We are talking about financial responsibility. And I'm going to tell you, we are talking about not having enough money for certain items. We are talking about having to tighten our belts and yet the legal department has very deep pockets, an open purse. They have, at this point, more attorneys than in a long time. As far as I know there are four full-timers, several part-time are employed by the city, plus all the outside counsel, plus all the experts. My goodness. This city is being drained by legal expenses. We need to see what's important and what is not. What chances do we have of winning or losing, and maybe, maybe, by having an audit you will get a clear vision of what's going on, and I hope I'm wrong. I hope the audit shows that we've done wonderfully. But I think you need to see it in black and white, and so do we, the people that end up paying for the expenses.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Ms. Cruz.

Ms. Cruz: I'm only asking to consider it, and you know what, if I'm wrong, I'll be happy to admit it, but I think the general consensus of the residents, the taxpayers in this city is that we are gone litigation crazy. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. If I may say something for the record, please, Madam City Attorney. Your budget from last year to this year dropped by how much exactly?

City Attorney Ramos: I don't have it in front of me, and I don't want to misspeak Mayor. But there was a drop in the previous fiscal year. I do want to make a couple of statements when you are ready.

Mayor Lago: Of course, please.

City Attorney Ramos: One, I want to make it clear that this department has brought under the former administration and this administration, send the Commission a litigation report every six months, that is detailed as to every single case that's being litigated. Every decision to appeal a case has been brought to the City Commission for a decision to be made. The only case in recent history that I recall that the city brought was the firearms litigation. Every other case was in a defense posture. Unfortunately, the legal department in this city or any other city cannot control when the city gets sued. So, we typically are in a defensive posture and are duty bound to defend the city.

Mayor Lago: Thank you Madam City Attorney. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Next speaker is Ms. Sheryl Gold.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Gold, the floor is yours.

Ms. Gold: Good morning, Mayor and Commissioners. First of all, I'll depart from my prepared remarks and say, I want to thank you very much for your commitment to the streetscape on
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Biltmore Way. Your commitment to having a Sunshine meeting in late March. This is all very encouraging news, and I would ask you to consider, however, that any cross-sections that staff is working on be stopped at the moment until you have the opportunity to hear public input and feedback. I don't think that they should be reacting to something that's being prepared without already assessing what are the priorities that the residents in the neighborhood. That would be very helpful, I believe, if we put off the cross-sections until we assess what the neighbors want. So, now I'll go to my prepared remarks, so I don't speak too long. Sheryl Gold...owner, residing at 721 Biltmore Way and co-founder of the Biltmore Condominium Coalition. I'm here today to give sworn testimony. In light of the Planning and Zoning Board.

City Attorney Ramos: Excuse me, Ms. Gold.

Ms. Gold: Yes.

City Attorney Ramos: If you wish to give sworn testimony it needs to be done during the actual item, which has not been heard yet. You're welcome to come back when we call the item and then at that point the City Clerk will swear everybody in, and you can provide sworn testimony.

Commissioner Fors: I can also assure you that even if your testimony is not sworn, obviously it's your prerogative, Ms. Gold, but even if it's not sworn, we will duly consider it. I'm sure everybody up here will.

Ms. Gold: I appreciate that, but I did correspond with Ms. Ramos, and it was never indicated to me. I said I intended to give sworn testimony by Zoom because I'm immuno-compromised and cannot be in the Chambers. She never said that that sworn testimony had to be when the item came up, and since the item...

City Attorney Ramos: That's always true, Ms. Gold, and it's the state of the law, it's not my rule.

Ms. Gold: Excuse me. Since there was no time certain for this item and the last time I appeared before the Commission, I waited 10 hours to make a public comment, attached to the agenda item. I decided I could not endure such a thing again, and I will give the public comment this morning. So, I'll continue on, but I have to tell you, it is unacceptable that this is not considered sworn testimony, since I already went through all this communication, and nobody advised me that I would have to do it while the item is being heard. So, I'll get back to my prepared remarks, but I find this really unacceptable. It's a suppression of public participation, once again. So, back to my prepared remarks. Thank you. In light of the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation to the Commission to take a hard look at the zoning north of Biltmore Way and their support for decreasing the height 250 feet, and the city's failure to address the zoning changes as-a-whole in the newly created MF4 district, I am requesting a postponement of the vote today of item F-3, zoning code text amendment to remove the Med Bonus height for properties south of Biltmore Way. You are all aware that the previously noticed text amendment proposed for the removal of the Med Bonus height was for all properties in the MF4 district. It was...(inaudible)...not restricted...and lobbyists for developers that the scope of the rollback was limited to properties south of Biltmore Way, selected an inequitable remedy to the city's admitted mistake. The staff's
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explanation for why only half of the MF4 District were realized removal of the height increase is because those properties are in the former MFSA District. Why would the city create a brand-new zoning district, MF4, the highest and most dense residential district in the city and then apply different regulations in the four blocks. The simple unvarnished truth: a developer or developers want to demolish and redevelop properties on the north side of Biltmore Way and Coral Way. The Biltmore Condominium Coalition...26 request for a Sunshine Neighborhood Meeting, to affected residents of the zoning code changes before the text amendment would be heard, was ignored by the city. I'm glad that Mayor Lago is now agreed there will be a Sunshine meeting. Thank you for that. The December 8th request to postpone today's hearing, signed by residents from almost every building on Coral Way, Biltmore Way, and Valencia, also did not receive a response from the city. My opposition to the up-zoning of the Biltmore Section is based on my personal knowledge of the issues and my commitment to preserving the residential character of our neighborhood. I attended seven sessions on the zoning code rewrite and never heard a single reference to the Biltmore Section. What I did hear was the city's consultant state that the objective of the zoning code update was to incentivize smaller projects and prevent the larger developments possible under the old code. She obviously misspoke, since the total opposite has happened in the Biltmore Section. The Commission and public were also assured by the consultant and staff that the zoning code update would not affect neighborhoods and that's a quote from a slide. This was misleading as well. I am the resident in February, following the approval of the new code first discovered the up-zoning and its harmful consequences. When I asked Ramon Trias for a before/after chart and maps. It turned out not to be complete and misleading. I organized a site tour in May for Mayor Lago and Commissioners Fors and Anderson, so they could observe the existing physical conditions and hear residents' concerns firsthand about the adverse impacts of the zoning code changes – increased density, intensity to all larger buildings, more traffic congestion, less green space, loss of specimen trees, loss of site views, the sky and light, all resulting in a loss of quality of life and property values. Also, we raised concerns about the destabilizing forces of demolitions and new construction on adjacent buildings in an area already challenged by excessive flooding and underlying hydrological conditions. I support the reversal of all zoning code changes in the MF4 District and the removal of the Med Bonus in Blocks 1, 2, 8 and 10 of the Biltmore Section. Over development is radically changing forever, the character and historical legacy of the City Beautiful. I do not want to see the replacement of low and medium-rise buildings with all high-rises in our neighborhood. We deserve better than a Gables version of Miami 21. Wise and responsible policy making depends upon the engagement of the people, planning for a resilient and sustainable Biltmore Section deserves no less than the same time and consideration that was given to the Craft Section and Miracle Mile. Thank you very much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Thank you so much. Mr. Clerk before we move unto the next person, may I bring up Mark Trowbridge who has to step out at 10:45 and he'd like to put his comments on the record. Good morning, sir, thank you for being here. Thank you for being so patient.

Mr. Trowbridge: Thank you so much. Happy New Year to everybody. Great to be with you. Thank you for allowing me to kind of step into the ongoing public comment. I think some of you know that we are hosting our 10th Annual Burgerliscious event, and you very kindly approved a resolution for us to host that on January 13th, but due to some of the issues related to Covid-19 and our numbers being higher than we had hoped for this week, we are punting on that a few weeks,
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and so we are going to be doing that on February 3rd, just ahead of the Food and Wine Festival, and so, my understanding is from our city partners that we need to come back and ask you all to amend the resolution that was originally proffered and approved by the Commission, that's 2021-325, denoting now that the new date is Thursday, February 3, 2022.

Vice Mayor Mena: I'll move to amend it.

Commissioner Menendez: Second.

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Vice Mayor Mena: Yes

Commissioner Menendez: Yes

Commissioner Anderson: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Lago: Looking forward to Burgerliscious.

Mr. Trowbridge: We are looking forward to it too. It's a fully outdoor event and so many great new restaurants that have opened since we were last able to host, and we'll be doing it in front of our new offices there on Alhambra Circle. So, I want to thank our City Manager, and of course his team and the Parks Department, working very closely with us, our police and fire, and of course all of the departments that make this happen, and certainly to our Economic Development partners as well. Thank you for the amendment.

Mayor Lago: Please do us a favor, Mr. Trowbridge, send my office, send the Commissioners, along with the city all your photography, your photos, any media you may have, so we can start publicizing it, on our newsletters and website, so we can make sure that its as successful as possible.

Mr. Trowbridge: Appreciate that. Appreciate any additional support that you all always provide us, and we look forward to hosting it. It's a fully outdoor event, so I hope folks will feel comfortable being together on February 3rd and thank you for letting me step into the public comment.

Mayor Lago: Its one of the best events of the year.

Mr. Trowbridge: We agree. Thank you, and Happy New Year everybody. See you tomorrow.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Ms. Angela Carrillo.

Mayor Lago: Ms. Carrillo from the Junior League, the floor is yours.

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Ms. Carrillo: Good morning members of the Commission. Thanks for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Angela Carrillo and I'm the President of the Junior League. I'm here today to speak on the Biltmore Way up-zoning. The Junior League of Miami is an all-volunteer organization made up of 600 women with the vision to empower and mentor Miami's women, children, and families to conquer tomorrow's challenges and to build a united community. The Junior League of Miami has always had a strong connection with the City of Coral Gables. Many of our members have served in elected and unelected city offices, including Jeannett Slesnick and Rhonda Anderson. Many of us have ties to the City of Coral Gables, not only as residents and a place of employment, but it is the home of our historic headquarters. HQ, as we call it, located at 713 Biltmore Way. The Junior League purchased HQ on December 28, 1995, to serve as its permanent headquarters. Extensive renovations were required to bring the building into compliance with current building code and fire safety requirements. We were even fortunate enough to locate and preserve some key historic features of the building. HQ has won the City Beautiful Award for Historic Preservation. As you can imagine, HQ is very important to us. It holds a very special place in our hearts. HQ is emblematic of Coral Gables. It's the window into the vision of George Merrick and the preservation of what makes the City Beautiful a beautiful place to live and work. Our Venetian Palace HQ Building was designed by the famed architect George Fink and was built in the same year as the City of Coral Gables in 1925. It was the first commercial building constructed in Coral Gables and the only remaining commercial building in this style west of City Hall. I speak today on behalf of the Junior League membership to urge the Commission to reconsider the proposed amendment and consider addressing the zoning on the north side of Biltmore Way. The changes passed in February 2020 were misleading and caused confusion amongst the residents. The zoning that was passed implemented increased height, increased density, increased FAR, and reduced setbacks. The amendment in front of you today does not address these issues. Due to the changes in the zoning, the Junior League of Miami is gravely concerned about the potential threat of a large development immediately abutting our hundred-year-old George Fink designed Coral Gables landmark property. JLM is not anti-development, but our organization and our members have spent over a million dollars to preserve this building and want our home protected from massive increased zoning. Our beloved HQ should not be a victim of the over-development that has plagued other parts of the county. HQ deserves the protection by the city that prides itself on historic preservation and beautification. Thanks so much.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Have a nice day.

City Clerk Urquia: Mr. Javier Banos.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Banos the floor is yours.

Commissioner Fors: Before Mr. Banos comes up, just a message for Ms. Carrillo, not a message but a suggestion. Perhaps the most powerful person or entity when it comes to the development of the adjacent parcel, the parcel adjacent to...is the owner of that property, and if you have not already, I would strongly recommend that you begin dialoguing these concerns with the current owner in addition to the city. But nevertheless, your comments and opinions are well taken by the Commission and thank you for making comments.

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Mayor Lago: Thank you Commissioner. Mr. Banos the floor is yours.

Mr. Banos: Good morning, Mr. Mayor and to the Commission and Happy New Year to you all. I wanted to speak on two items this morning, supporting the...Miami and Ms. Gold. Specifically, as to the modifications in the zoning map for the Biltmore Section. I believe if there was a mistake made that it should be undone completely. The Planning and Zoning meeting had a considerable discussion on this item, and a lot of the issues were flushed out, and I think its important that if we need to correct a mistake that was made to do it fully, and then, if ultimately the developer or anybody else wants to bring their concerns and their action back as to what rights they have, then we may address those at a proper time. But let's undo what was done wrong. And second, I want to commend the Carver parents and the results of the hearing that took place the other day. I was present at the hearing as an observer, and I can tell you that the Judge was quite adamant as to his perspective of what the city had done and should have done. I heard the Mayor speak with Mr. Durana as to the concerns about the local members of the community that are adjacent to Carver. I can understand, I think the Mayor is right that those views should be put into place. I also want to remind the Commission and the Mayor that the folks that are the plaintiffs in this action are very much our residents as well, and they have a stake in this matter, and they have presented their concerns so much so that they have to engage in litigation to get the city to undo what they had done before. All they have asked, all they have asked from the very inception is the city takes the procedural route that is within the code, and I think from my view that is the minimum they could possibly have asked. They are just asking for their basic due process to be able to participate in the approval process. If ultimately the Commission decides that it still wants to have this thing built, that is your prerogative. That is something you can decide to do, but they want a voice in the process. When you go back there and go to the Shade meeting, however appropriate you think that should be done. Take into consideration that these are the people who you represent as well, are asking you to give them a remedy that is the least they could possibly ask. They are asking no more than that. Thank you very much for the time this morning. I appreciate the Commission. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

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

Mayor Lago: Thank you. Let's close the public comment. For the record, how long was the public comment today?

City Clerk Urquia: About an hour and twenty minutes.

Mayor Lago: Its not a problem. I just want to put something on the record. It pains me to say this, it really does, because I started this with really, really good intentions to have a public comment that would allow people to speak unequivocally as long as they deemed appropriate in regard to their advocacy, but I'm going to be sitting down with staff and I've been left with no other choice that we are going to have to clean this up. We are going to have to implement time limits and start implementing Robert's Rules, because this rebuttal back and forth, this addressing one person on

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the Commission is not working out, is not working out, and it doesn't paint the city in a good light, and I tried my best but I'm willing to admit that I failed, and its not serving the city, its not serving the people who are here today for time certain items and its not serving, in my opinion, the city as-a-whole, some of the comments and some of the things that are being said here, and the amount of time that is given is just, in my opinion, excessive, and we have to be very thoughtful and be very careful respecting every individual's time, because people are texting me saying, I don't even want to come and speak at the meeting because its basically a circus. And I want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable in having a conversation and being front and center during these meetings. So, moving forward, I'll have a conversation with the Manager to see how we address the public comment, and I will be taking input as I always do from my colleagues on the Commission. So, thank you for your time.